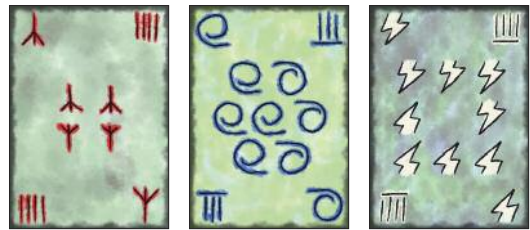


Railog Playing Cards

A basic deck of Railog playing cards consists of eight suits with eight numbered cards and four face cards which vary by region. The suits also vary by region but are typically divided into two groups of four with paired cokorsings. In all, there are thus 96 cards in the deck.

Number Cards

The suit is indicated in the left corner with the number in the right corner. The numbers are hash marks with an under score indicating +4. The suit symbol is also produced a matching number of times on the card's face. Some examples from an omyr deck (4 of rblus, 7 of sitar and 8 of thrim) are shown to the right.



Face Cards

Although the deck is not standardized the function and ranking of the four face cards do not often vary. In omyr decks the face cards are usually named alak, arl, deiskatun and arlas, in order from lowest to highest rank.



Alak (ah-lahk)

The lowest ranked of the face cards, the alak represents an exceptionally fierce warrior who inspires the troops to great feats. When portrayed as an omyr this card is an alak wielding a medra, a hafted weapon with curving tines intended to represent a claw. The alak is characterized by a red mane with red ticks in the fur. The card's rank is indicated by a stylized medra.



Arl (ahrl)

Ranked above the alak is the arl, representing effective military leadership whose tactics increase the effectiveness of the troops. When portrayed as an omyr this card is an arl, usually wielding a ra, a hafted weapon with a narrow, curving blade. The arl is characterized by stripes that run parallel with the fur grain. The card's rank is indicated by a ra.



Deiskatun (day-ihs-kah-tuhn)

The second highest rank card is the deiskatun, or priest. The deiskatun provide protection from the supernatural through intercession with the gods. When portrayed as an omyr this card is an amri, usually wielding a staff. The amri is characterized by stripes that run perpendicular to the fur grain. The card's rank is indicated by a sun wheel.



Arlas (ahrl-ahs)

The highest rank card is the arlas, or sorcerer. As a wielder of magic he is supremely powerful and dangerous. When portrayed as an omyr this card is an arlas, usually wielding the suit symbol. The arlas is characterized by blue spirals. The card's rank is indicated by an eight-pointed star.



Suits

Although there are always eight suits there is substantial regional variation in the suits themselves. Although traditionally divided into four gener and four larer suits this dichotomy is not set in stone. It is typical, however, for the suits to represent gods, archetypes or principles. This is seen in the eight suits used in the traditional Markat and Getha decks.

Sitar (sih-tahr)

The sitar, a beast with enormously powerful hind legs that it uses to sprint in great leaps and bounds—and to turn 180° in the blink of an eye, is the favored mount of omyr and represents speed and agility. The symbol for this suit is a stylized representation of the defining hind leg. Its color is blue. Sitar is opposed by Larfu and paired with Meth.



Meth (may-th)

This is the god of the sea whose eye is painted on the prow of ships to enable them to see through the dense mists that cover the Misty Sea. The symbol for this suit is Meth's stylized eye. Its color is blue. Meth is opposed by Rblus and paired with Sitar or Heimur.



Thrim (thrihm)

This is the god of storms and war symbolized by a silver lightning bolt. He is defender of omyr, particularly from the kronin. The symbol for this suit is a lightning bolt. Its color is white. Thrim is opposed by Kron and paired with Raimon.



Railog (rah-ee-lohg)

This is the goddess who personifies the entirety of the world. She is understood as the earth goddess and mother to all. The symbol for this suit is a square that represents the four corners of the world. Its color is brown. Railog is opposed by her sister Raimon and paired with Larfu.



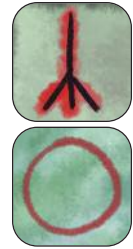
Larfu (lahr-foo)

This is a concept, a pejorative used by omyr to insult someone. Someone who is larfu is big and strong, but slow, awkward and stupid, naive and deceived. The symbol for this suit is a maul. Its color is brown. Larfu is opposed by Sitar and paired with Railog.



Rblus (ur-bloos)

This is the god of fire who is feared more than revered. Fire is an important part of life providing warmth and used in cooking and crafts. But it is also dangerous, inflicting burns and destroying homes and towns. At the annual Fire Festival the priests bless each omyr's firestone. The symbol for this suit is a stylized fire or a ring. Its color is red. Rblus is opposed by Meth and paired with Kron or Vait.



Kron (krohn)

This is the god of destruction and earthquakes whose minions erupt from crevices that open in the ground to harrass and attack omyr and Iarin. The symbol for this suit is a crevice. Its color is red. Kron is opposed by Thrim and paired with Rblus or Vait.



Raimon (rah-ee-mohn)

This goddess is sister to Railog and appears as a silvery disk in the sky that turns like a spinning coin and traveling from here to Ylansi, the sideways world. The symbol for this suit is a bisected disc representing her when fully turned to Railog and the remaining visible edge when turned to Ylansi. Its color is white. Raimon is opposed by Railog and paired with Thrim.



Arlios (ahrl-eeohs)

This is the god of wind and sky. The symbol for this suit is a stylized representation of a cloud. Its color is white or silver. Arlios is opposed by Umath and paired with Yll.



Heimur (hayemoor)

This is the goddess of farm and field. She is a peaceful goddess of prosperity. The symbol for this suit is a stylized representation of a hay stack. Its color is green. Heimur is opposed by Vait and paired with Meth.



Yll (Yihl)

This is the god of sun and light, rising each dawn only to die at sunset. The symbol for this suit is a sun wheel. Its color is yellow or gold. Yll is opposed by Styj and paired with Arlios.



Umath (oomahth)

This is the god of caves and closed spaces. The symbol for this suit is a stylized representation of a cave entrance. Its color is brown or copper. Umath is opposed by Arlios and paired with Styj.



Vait (vaheet)

This is the god of greed and betrayal. It is said that it was his counsel that turned Jai against his brother Terlta. The symbol for this suit is a stylized representation of a dagger. Its color is grey. Vait is opposed by Heimur and paired with Kron or Rblus.



Styj (styihj)

This is the god of cold and darkness, rising each sunset from Yll's death and dying in turn at dawn. The symbol for this suit is a sun wheel. Its color is black. Styj is opposed by Yll and paired with Umath.



Games

Although these cards have multiple uses an obvious one is to play games. The standard game for mercenaries is sometimes called yamiro in their honor, but it is also known under the more general title of "war."

Yamiro (yah-meer-oh)

The goal of yamiro is to defeat an opponent through a war fought through various engagements. It is difficult to win every battle and winning the war is as much about picking which battles to lose, and how to lose them, as it is about winning engagements.

Starting with a shuffled deck each player is dealt four cards. These form the resources available to the player and are constantly replenished: each time a card is played a new card is drawn from the pile to replace it.

Hands are played with each player alternating going first. Traditionally the dealer is the defender in the first hand so the other player goes first. A hand consists of four cards played by each player. A player must play a card on their turn, they cannot skip over or yield their turn. So a hand ends when the defending player plays their fourth card.

At the end of the hand the cards are counted to see who won that hand. Number cards are worth their face value and added together to give a total for the rank-and-file troops. If at least one alak is played then the total is doubled, and if—in addition to the alak—at least one arl has been played then the total is doubled a second time. There is no benefit to playing two alak or two arl, or even playing an arl without an alak. The highest score is achieved by playing two eight cards, an alak and an arl giving a score of 64.

However, regardless of the score, the first player to play an arlas wins the hand. Unless the opposing player plays a deiskatun. In that case the *second* arlas played wins the hand (one deiskatun cancels one arlas), unless the opposing player played a deiskatun, and so on for each arlas-deiskatun pair. Thus if the attacking player plays two arlas then the defending player must either play two deiskatun, or play a deiskatun and an arlas, with the arlas played *before* the attacking player's second arlas.

In summary: victory is obtained by having a higher score where number cards are worth their face value, playing an alak doubles the score and playing both an alak and an arl quadruples the score. The first arlas played always wins, unless negated by a deiskatun.

The winning player captures the opposing players hand, adding it to his capture pile and discarding his own hand.

In the event of a tie both hands are discarded.

Play continues through eight hands after which the capture piles are counted. When counting captures, number cards are worth their face value while face cards are always worth eight points. This is different than their victory value during a hand with a maximum value of 32 points for the four cards captured in a single hand and a theoretical maximum of 256 points for the game (though theoretically possible it requires a very contrived set of hands to achieve). Average game points are sixty to one hundred (average of around twenty points per hand), though much larger variation is common.

Four Players

Two teams of two players with the players in a team sitting opposite one another. The dealer deals four cards to each player. The player to his left starts the first hand, the player to their left (the dealer's partner) starts the second hand, the player to their left starts the third hand and the dealer starts the fourth hand. Only four hands are played.

The starting player plays a card then draws a card, followed by the player on their left, until all players have played four cards. The cards are counted by team to determine which team wins the hand. If a team plays at least one alak then their card total is doubled, and if they play at least one alak and at least one arl then their card total is doubled again.

However, regardless of the score, the first player to play an arlas wins the hand for their team. But one deiskatun cancels one arlas. So if the opposing team played a deiskatun the *second* arlas played wins the hand unless the opposing team played a deiskatun, and so on for each arlas-deiskatun pair.

The winning team captures the opposing team's hand, adding it to their capture pile and discarding their own hand. In the event of a tie both hands are discarded.

Once all four hands have been played the capture piles are counted. When counting captures, number cards are worth their face value while face cards are always worth eight points.

Solitaire Play

Although the strategy of the game comes from playing against a second player, a single player game can be managed by dealing four cards for the player. Each hand starts by turning over the top card of the deck. The player then plays a card, turns over the top

card of the deck and draws a card, a total of three times. For the fourth and last card in the hand the player turns over the top card of the deck and plays a card. Victory is determined normally with the winning hand discarded and the opposing hand captured.

This is repeated until eight hands have been played. The goal isn't to just win (which is fairly easy as there is no opposing strategy), but to win by the greatest margin.

There Must Be A Winner

Although the classic game sticks strictly to four-card hands in a variation favored by alak if there is a tie at four cards play continues until the tie is broken. Though typically this will result in only a five-card hand it is possible to have a long run. In the extremely unlikely event that the end of the deck is reached the discarded cards are shuffled and become the pile.

Playing With Standard Poker Cards

The game can be played using standard poker cards where jacks are alak, kings are arl, queens are deiskatun and aces are arlas. Due to the smaller deck size either two decks should be combined or the game played in sets of four hands with capture totals being done at the end of the set and all cards reshuffled into the deck for the second set. When counting capture points, face cards are worth ten points each raising the maximum capture value of a hand to 40 points and a game to 320 points.

Ra-e-Gore-o-Getha [Getha Card Contest]

A traditional omyr gambling game that originated in the Getha region this is best played with a deck that clearly differentiates the suits. There are many variations and house rules so it is imperative to clarify before play is started just what rules will be used.

Gambling establishments use an ante bet to build the pot before any hand is dealt. This practice is less common in informal games. An ante bet is normally the smallest chip, traditionally a quarter hysten coin though some establishments use higher ante bets.

Play starts with the dealer dealing eight cards to each player (including the dealer). If there are only three players then an extra hand is dealt and if there are only two players then two extra hands are dealt so that there are a minimum of four hands.

The players pick up their hands, sort the cards by suit and evaluate the quality. The dealer sets a bring-in bet that each player (including the dealer) must put in the pot in order to remain in the game. The players who remain can discard up to six cards, drawing as many cards as are discarded. All of a player's discards must happen at once: as soon as a replacement card is drawn no additional cards may be discarded.

The hands are evaluated again, selecting two suits to play and setting the other cards aside. Any player can open betting, declaring the amount of their bet and adding it to the pot. The other players then either fold, see the bet (adding the amount to the pot), or raise the bet (adding the amount to the pot). Once a player has bet they cannot do so again unless another player raises the bet, at which point the player can fold, see the

raised bet (adding to the pot), or raise the bet again (adding to the pot). A player can go “all in” by adding their entire stake which allows them to stay in the hand no matter how high the bet goes.

A player wins the pot if all other players fold. Otherwise the winner is determined as follows:

Each player who is still in the game plays their cards face up on the table. If an arl is played then any cards of that suit that have been played, or are held in reserve, or in folded hands, or in extra hands (those dealt when there are fewer than four players) join the arl. However, discarded cards remain out of play. If a player loses a suit due to an arl then, if possible, he must play another suit from his reserve cards so that he has two suits in play. If this results in another arl being played then any cards of the same suit that have been played, held in reserve, are in folded hands, or are in extra hands join the arl. Any time a player has less than two suits played he must play another suit from his reserve cards if possible. This continues until all arl cards in play have been resolved.

If a player's played cards include an arl then any other player who does not have a deiskatun in their played hand must drop out. If only one player remains they are the winner, otherwise battles ensue. Only the alak and number cards figure in these battles. The hands are ranked by the number of alak in them, with ties in alaks broken by the number of number cards, and ties in number of cards by the total value of the number cards. Battles are then fought in order of the highest ranked to lowest with the loser of a battle dropping out and the winner proceeding to the next lower ranked hand.

For example, if hand A has two alak and two number cards, hand B has one alak and three number cards, hand C has one alak and five number cards and hand D has no alak and seven number cards then they are ranked A, C, B and D. A will battle C, with the winner battling B, and that battling fighting D.

In each battle an alak removes another alak from consideration. If the other hand does not have an alak then it removes the highest value number card from consideration. The remaining number cards are then totaled with the highest total winning. A hand with only alak and no number cards can only win if the alak remove all number cards from the opposing hand. In the event of a tie both players drop out.

For example, if hand A has two alak, a five and six, hand B has one alak, two sixes and a five, hand C has one alak, an eight, a seven, a four, a two and a one while hand D has two eights, two sevens, two sixes and a five then the match ups occur in order of A, C, B and D because A has the most alak and C has more number cards than B while D has no alak at all. When comparing hand A to hand C, the alak in hand A remove the alak and the eight in hand C from consideration. This leaves hand A with $5 + 6$, or 11 points and hand C with $7 + 4 + 2 + 1$, or 14 points — hand A drops out and hand C is matched up against hand B. In this case the alak remove each other from consideration leaving hand B with $6 + 6 + 5$, or 17 and hand C with $8 + 7 + 4 + 2 + 1$, or 22. Hand B

drops out and hand C is matched up against hand D. The alak in hand C removes one eight in hand D from consideration. This leaves hand C with $8 + 7 + 4 + 2 + 1 = 22$ and hand D with $8 + 7 + 7 + 6 + 6 + 5$, or 39, making hand D the winner.

Outline of Play

Ante bets are added to the pot

Deal eight cards to each player

- Deal no fewer than four hands: if there are fewer players deal them as “dead hands”
- Dealer sets the bring-in bet after looking at his cards
- Each player who is still in can discard up to six cards, drawing as many as are discarded
- A player must discard all cards at once, once a single card is drawn no more can be discarded
- There is no special order for players to discard
- To facilitate play the dealer may deal the cards out instead of the players drawing them directly
- If there are more than six players all discards happen before any draws and the discards are shuffled back into the deck

Each player selects two suits from their hand, setting the cards in those suits face down on the table and retaining the remaining cards. Betting commences led by any player and proceeding in any order though once a player makes a bet they cannot raise it unless another player raises the bet first.

Once betting has completed the cards are turned over. If a player plays an arl then they can claim any card from that suit from another player’s hand — either from the cards played or retained — but not cards that have been discarded or not yet drawn.

- Only arl that have been played can claim cards — if an arl is retained then it cannot be used to claim any cards
- Cards in extra or folded hands can be claimed by arl
- If a player loses a suit to another player’s arl then they choose another suit from their remaining cards to play

Once all players have played their cards, all arl claims have been resolved and all retained cards played as necessary for a player to have two suits in play then the hand is resolved.

- If a player has no cards left (because they were claimed by another player’s arl) they drop out
- If any player has an arlas then other players must drop out unless they have a deiskatun

- If only one player remains they win
- If more than one player remains they compare alak and number cards in per-player match ups
- Each alak defeats one opponent card having the highest value
- If a player's alak cards remove all of an opponent's alak and number cards then that player wins the match up
- Once alak have been considered the remaining number cards are summed and the highest total wins the match up

Players are eliminated in match ups until only one player is left, that player is the winner. Variations in matchup ordering are common. Although in general this does not change anything, sometimes the order of matchups makes a difference — hands with circular wins are quite possible.

- Hands are ordered for match up with the winner of a match up going against the next hand
- Hands with two alak go first, followed by those with one and finally by those with none
- Hands with the same number of alak are ordered by number of number cards
- Hands with the same number of alak and number cards are ordered by the total value of the number cards

If a player wins then they claim the pot, otherwise it remains for the next hand.

The player to the dealer's left becomes the new dealer who collects all of the cards and shuffles the deck.

Order of Matchup

Although in general it doesn't matter what order the matchups are done in, there are cases where it does. Consider hand A with two alak and a four, hand B with an eight, seven and three, and hand C with two, three, four and five.

Comparing hand A to B, the two alak from hand A remove the eight and seven from consideration leaving hand A with four points and hand B with three points so A wins.

Comparing hand B to C, there are no alak so it is just a matter of points. Hand B has $8 + 7 + 3$, or 18 points while hand C has $2 + 3 + 4 + 5$, or 14 points, so B wins.

Comparing hand C to A, the two alak from hand A remove the four and five from hand C, leaving hand A with four points and hand C with $2 + 3$, or 5 points so C wins.

So if the matchups occur in order A, B, C then C wins (A defeats B, but C defeats A). But if the matchups are ordered B, C, A then A wins (B defeats C, but A defeats B). And if the matchups are ordered C, A, B then B wins (C defeats A, but B defeats C).

This is why there are so many rule variations for the order of matchups. In the rules as given B wins because the matchup is in A, C, B order as A has the most alak, C has the most number cards leaving B for last. But if the Reverse Matchup rule is used then the order becomes B, C, A so A wins. In Point Matchups the order is B, A, C so C wins; but in Reverse Point Matchups the order is C, A, B so B wins. With In Order Matchups who wins depends on the order of the players.

Jokers

When using jokers a player stipulates when played what card the joker will be. A joker cannot duplicate a card that is in play. If both jokers are used for the same card then the high joker wins and the low joker must be designated to be a different card. Once a joker has been played it can only be changed to a different card when doing so is required. For example, if it is designated as arlas of arlios and that card is then brought into play (for example, being brought into play from an extra hand by the arl of arlios) then the joker must be designated to be a different card.

Second Deal

When playing with no more than four players each dealer deals two hands from the same shuffled deck before passing the deck to the player to his left. All cards from the first hand are added to the discard pile and not used for the second hand. When this rule is used it pays to pay attention to cards that are used (and then discarded). For example, if the arl of arlios was used in the first hand then it cannot reappear in the second hand dealt from the deck.

Shuffle Discards

Players cannot draw until every player has discarded. The discards are shuffled back into the deck before replacement cards are drawn.

Reverse Matchup

The matchups are done in reverse order. The hand with the fewest alak, number cards and point total is highest in order.

Point Matchups

The matchups are done in order of highest point totals with alak counting as eight points. Thus a hand with two alak is higher order than one with a two, a three and a four — though the second hand would win.

In Order Matchups

The matchups are done starting with the two players to the left of the dealer and proceeding to the left. This is the system most susceptible to the winner being determined by the order of the matchups.

Discard Folded Hands

Folded hands are not retained but immediately discarded. This prevents an arl from taking cards from the folded hand.

One Suit

Players only select a single suit instead of two.

Tie Breaker

In the event of a tie in a matchup the players select an additional suit from their retained cards to add into consideration. Added cards are removed for subsequent matchups.

Play Extra Hands

Any extra hands dealt are considered for victory. An arl in an extra hand will cause other cards from the suit to join the hand. If an extra hand wins in a gambling establishment the pot goes to the house, otherwise the pot is retained for the next hand.

Discard Bring In

Instead of the dealer setting the bring in bet, each player's bring in bet is equal to the number of cards discarded.

Fixed Bring In

Instead of the dealer setting the bring in bet, the bet is fixed for the entire game, usually at one or two chips.

Discard Four

All players must discard four and only four cards.

Eight-Card Stud

No discards are allowed. This allows Second Deal rules with up to six players. The dealer has an advantage when using Dealer Bring In rules.

Somachi

Deal four cards to each player. Starting with the player to the left of the dealer, each player takes a turn. If a player has an alak or arl then they can play a single card (either an alak or an arl) and draw a single card, otherwise they stand. Once each player has either played or stood regular play starts.

On their turn, each player draws one card and must either play or discard one card. They can either draw from the deck or the top card on the discard pile. However, if they draw from the discard pile they must either play or discard a different card — drawing from the discard pile and discarding that same card is not allowed. During their turn a player may add any cards to a played alak or arl, either their own or another player's.

When an arl is played, any other played card of that suit goes to the player's hand. This includes the top card on the discard pile, with the arl collecting from the discard until a different suit is encountered.

A player with an arl played can collect from the discard pile out of turn — for example when another player discards a card of that suit. However, this claim can only be done while the card is on the top of the pile. Once another card has been discarded on top of it the card can no longer be collected (unless it once again becomes the top card, either because of other players drawing from the discard pile or collecting cards from it).

An arlas can be played against another player to remove all cards of that suit that have been played — unless the other player has played a deiskatun in that suit or has one in his hand in which case it can be played out of turn to prevent the loss of his cards. Removed cards are returned to the bottom of the deck, including the arlas that was played.

Play ends when a player has no cards remaining in their hand. Each player then tallies their played number and alak cards (including any cards another player played on them). The player with the highest score wins the hand. Running tallies of all players' score in all hands are kept with the highest tally winning the game.

Note that adding or collecting cards is never counted as playing a card. When another player has played an alak, a player may add a card of the same suit to that alak. When another player has played an arl, a player may either add a card of the same suit to that arl or discard the card. In the former case the player must still either play or discard a card (allowing him to remove cards from his hand) while in the latter case the other player may claim the discarded card.

After each hand the players' cards are removed from play. When the deck runs out the discard pile (excepting the top card) and cards that have been removed from play are reshuffled so as to allow play to continue.

Outline of Play

Deal four cards to each player

- play starts with player to dealer's left and passes to the left
- if a player has an alak or arl they can play it
- no more than one card can be played
- if a card is played the player draws a card to replace it

Once each player has taken one turn regular play starts. On their turn a player:

- draws one card
- the card may be either drawn from the deck or from the discard pile
- (optionally) adds cards to a played alak or arl of the same suit
- plays or discards one card
- a card that was drawn from the discard pile cannot be discarded in the same turn

Only face cards can be played

- playing an alak allows the player to add number cards of the same suit
- playing an arl allows the player to collect all cards of the same suit that have been played or are on the top of the discard pile
- an arl can collect cards even when it isn't the player's turn
- playing an arlas against another player removes the arlas and all cards of the same suit from play
- a deiskatun negates an arlas so that only the arlas is removed from play
- a deiskatun can be played even when it isn't the player's turn

Play ends when a player has no cards left in their hand

- number cards are worth face value
- alak cards are worth eight points

All Cards Count

Under this rule all face cards that have been played count for points, eight points each, not just the alak.

Thousand Points

Game is played until a player reaches 584 points (ⅢⅢⅢⅢ or eight hundred eighty eight in Railog octal reckoning, the largest three digit number).

Any Face Card Opens

Under this rule any face card, not just the alak and arl, can be played and have other cards of the same suit added to it.

Seed Discard

After the first round and whenever the deck is reshuffled the top card on the deck is "discarded" to seed the discard pile. When reshuffling the entire discard pile is used.

Gambling

This game is a popular subject for gambling and when played in a gaming establishment is always played in this fashion.

Bring In Bets

During the opening round the first player who plays an alak or arl can make a bring in bet, each subsequent player must make the same bring in bet. Players who also play an alak or arl can raise it. Thus if the first player stands (for lack of an alak or arl) they will not make a bring in bet. All bring in bets go to the pot.

Stay In Bets

Whenever a player plays a face card they can make a stay in bet that every player must match in order to remain in the game. If a player makes a stay in bet when playing an arlas then a player who plays a deiskatun can make a separate stay in bet with both having to be paid to the pot in order to remain in the game.

Challenge Bets

On their turn a player may issue a challenge bet. If all players meet the challenge the bets are added to the pot, otherwise the bets are cancelled but the points for the hand are doubled.

All In

If a player lacks the chips to make a bet they can go “all in” in which case they are considered to make every bet in the hand. However, a player without chips cannot be dealt into a hand.

Side Bets

Players (and observers) will frequently make side bets that do not go to the pot. Such bets are frequently about who will win a hand, the points a player will achieve in a hand, or the point spread. Although side betting may continue during play the odds will inherently shift as the proportion of money between bettors on the winning side of a bet determines payout proportions. In general, gaming establishments prefer to work on spreads where the spread is adjusted as needed with each card played. In either case the establishment collects vigorish on the bets they handle.

Kupi-o-Dotak (Solitaire)

This is a bare-bones solitaire game that is simple to play and allegedly devised by the philosopher Mari-o-Mari for children to while away the time — though in practice it is more of an adult game. Although on the surface it is not particular to Railog playing cards without the eight suits it would not be the game that it is. It works by having four cards to choose from with the goal being to play them in as few piles as possible. A card is played onto another card of the same suit or rank, or is used to start a new pile. After a card is played a new card is drawn so that (until no more cards are left to be drawn) there are always four cards to choose from. Play ends when the last card is played. The game is scored by the number of piles that have been played. A game with more than seven piles always loses. A game with only six piles is fairly easy to accomplish while a game resulting in only four piles is difficult.

The strategy lies in minimizing the number of piles that are made based on the cards that have been played and the cards available to play. Because cards are played into piles so that the last card played covers the other cards in a pile the player must use their memory as to the cards already played. Selecting a card to play should be done so as to maximize the opportunities that are left to play the remaining cards.

Outline of Play

Starting play

- Deal four cards face up
- Play a card
- Draw a card

Play continues by playing a card and drawing a card

A card can be played:

- On a new pile
- On a card of the same suit
- On a card of the same rank

The game ends when all cards have been played

Score is how many piles were created

Win or Lose

The player sets the difficulty of the game they will play before dealing. If more than the set number of piles are created the player loses. Easy is 7 piles, average is 6 piles, hard is 5 piles, very hard is 4 piles, extremely hard is 3 piles, nigh impossible is 2 piles and impossible is 1 pile.

What Is Railog?

These cards, the omyr (and their four anthyr) and larin, gods and so on all come from a fantasy world named for the earth goddess. It is a magical place where the world is flat, the sun dies each day (to be reborn as the *dark sun*, which itself dies in the east to be reborn as the sun), reality is comprised of the eight elements (which can be woven by the arlas) and the land is populated by omyr, larin, kronin, arlioin, great lar, low lar, and so on, but nary a human in sight (much less elves, dwarves, etc.). The prevalent civilization has no notion of marriage or of traditional families (or parentage) with professional associations filling those roles. To change the nature of something (such as a metal alloy or even creating a mirror) requires mystical ability that is granted by the gods through spirit intermediaries to select members of those professional associations. And outside of that, most adults have at least one spirit bound to them in the form of a fetish.

In short, it is a very different sort of place though their cosmology includes our Earth as one of the eight worlds (Umath) and the souls of the departed from Umath collect in another of the eight worlds (Thuigamu), albeit bereft of memory.