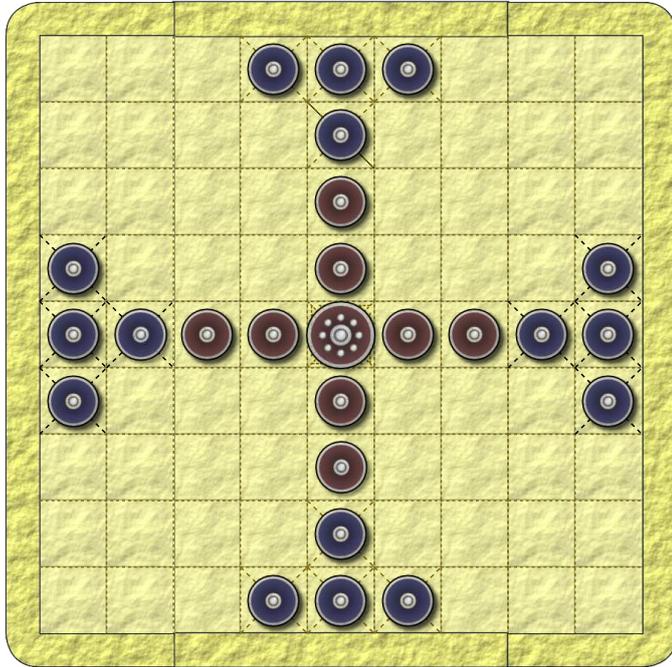


## TABLUT PRINT-AND-PLAY



Some time during the mediæval period, the game of hnefatafl made its way from Sweden or Norway to Lappland, where the Sámi people adopted the game as their own. While hnefatafl died out in the rest of Scandinavia by the end of the middle ages, among the Sámi it survived until the eighteenth century. There it was encountered by the young botanist Carl Linnaeus, who was on a tour of the country and noted the details of play in his diary.

The Sámi called this game *tablut*, and this form of hnefatafl was played with 25 pieces on a board of nine rows of nine squares. There have been a few boards and many sets of pieces appropriate to this game found across the Viking world, showing that it was a very popular size not just among the Sámi but among other peoples under Viking influence.

While Linnaeus omitted a few details from his account and is not entirely clear on others, examination of his text (in its original Latin) has been supplemented with a small number of minor assumptions, such as who goes first. This makes it the most authentic historical hnefatafl game still remaining to us; other variants have needed a lot more assumptions or imagination to make them playable.

This print-and-play is loosely based on the description of the Sámi board, with a simple embroidered theme. It is designed to be printed by a colour printer on A4 sheets of card or paper. A black and white printer can be used, but some extra step will be needed to ensure the pieces can be distinguished from one another. The game can also be printed on U.S. Letter paper.

### ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

*Page 1*, this page, is the story and instructions. You may print it or not as you please. *Pages 2 and 3* contain the fabric board on which the battle will be fought. The starting squares of the pieces are marked. *Page 4* contains the pieces, in the form of shields: a large red one for the king, eight small red ones for the defenders, and sixteen blue ones for the attackers. This page also contains reminder cards, one for each player. *Pages 5 and 6* contain the rules leaflet for the game of tablut.

**1.** If printing the front page, paper is sufficient and a black and white printer will do.

**2a.** If you wish to laminate the board, print pages 2 and 3 on paper or card. Laminate the sheets with good quality laminating pouches: poor quality pouches may stick only at the edges. Then cut out the board parts with scissors or a craft knife.

**2b.** If gluing the board to backing card, then print pages 2 and 3 on paper, glue the paper to thick card, and when dry, cut out the board sections with a craft knife.

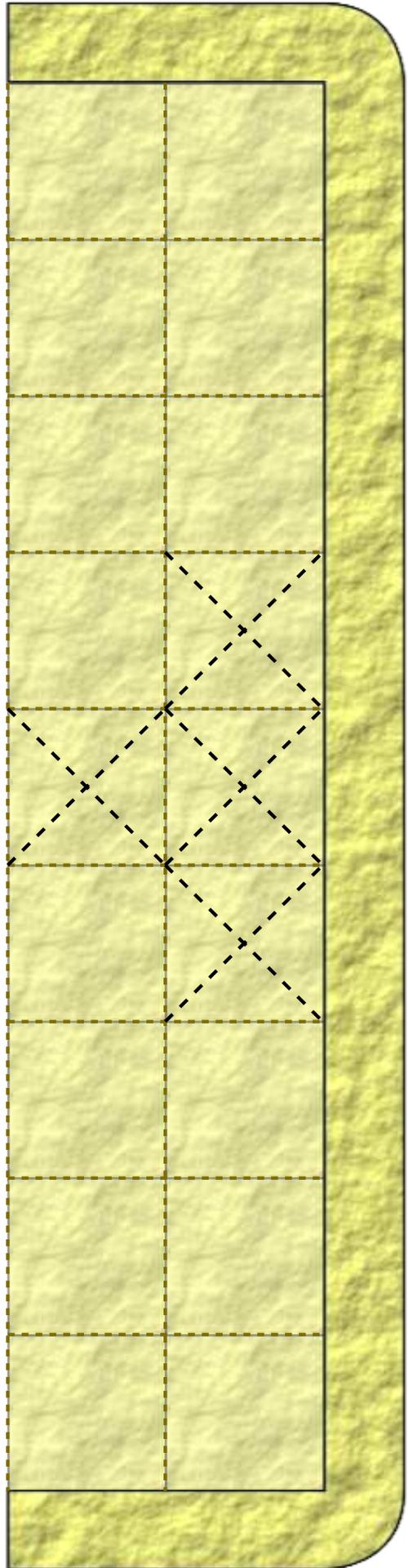
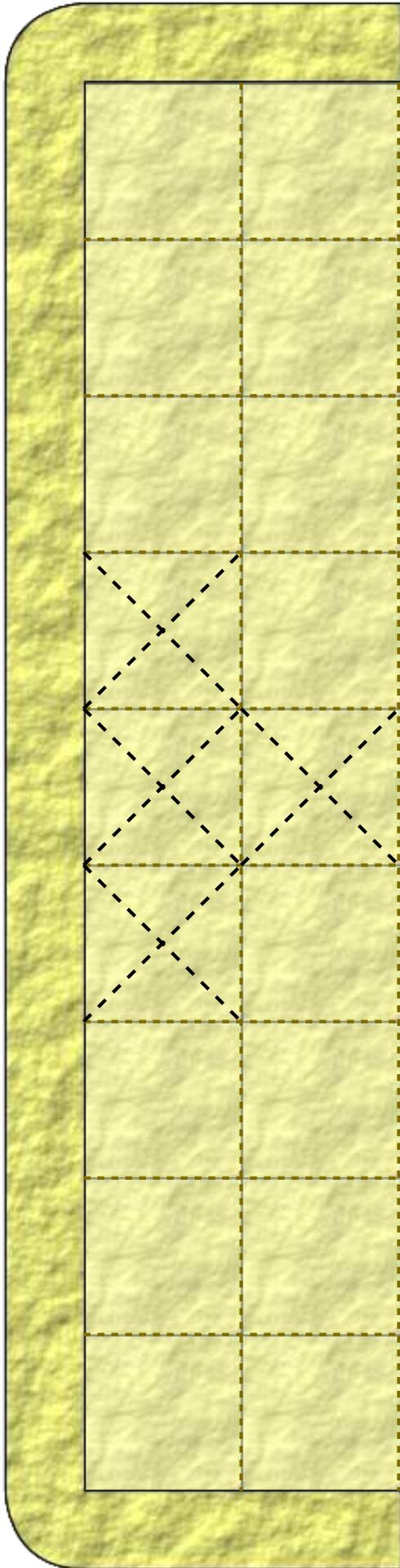
**2c.** Alternatively, you can print pages 2 and 3 on card as thick as your printer can handle, and cut out the board sections using a craft knife.

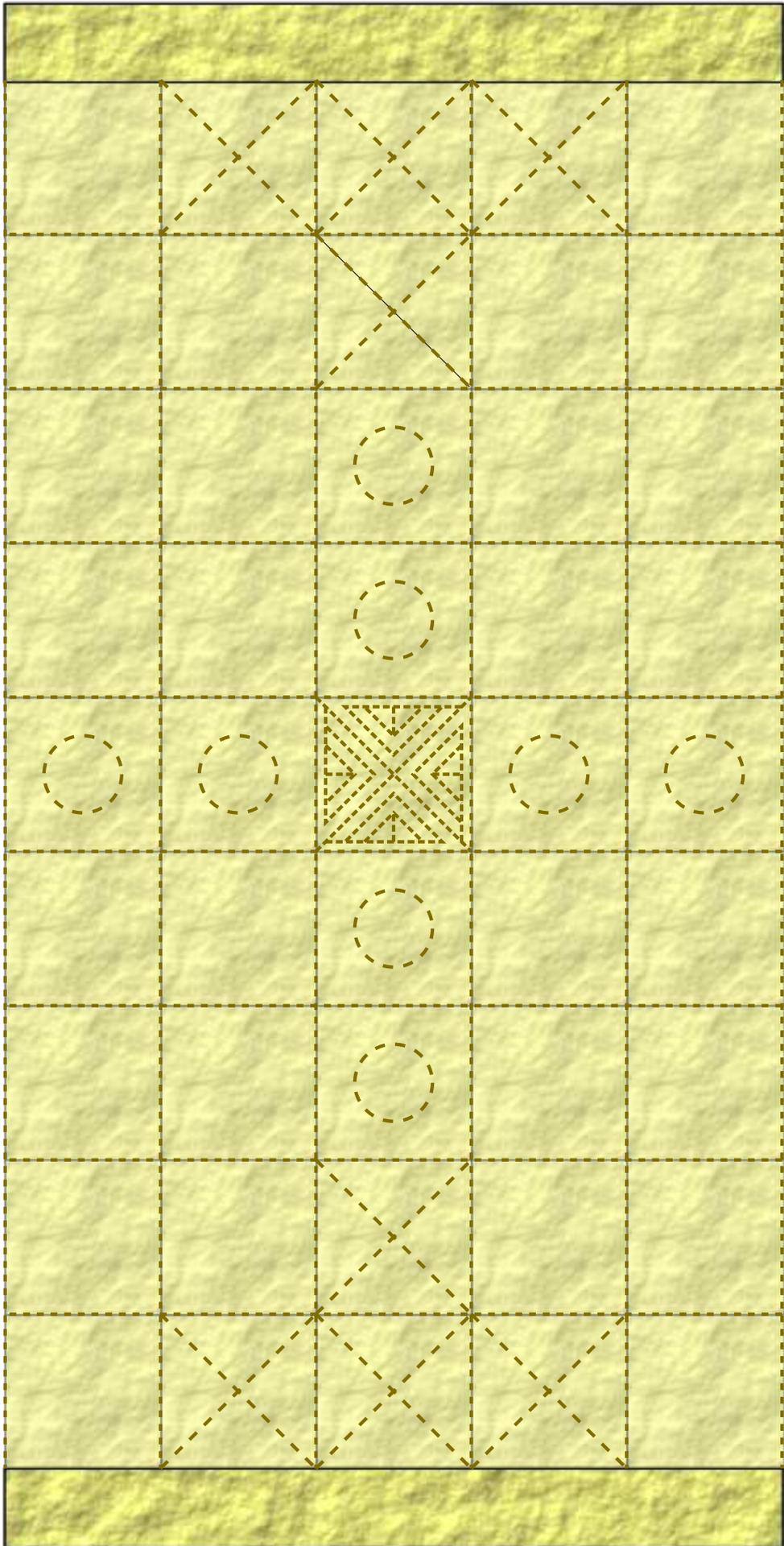
**3.** You can print out page 4 for the pieces and reminder cards, and finish and cut it in the same ways as the board and reminder cards; gluing onto thick backing card is recommended. Alternatively, you can print a first copy for the reminder cards, and a second copy onto transparency or an A4 sticker sheet, cut the pieces out and fix onto wooden discs of 1 inch (25mm) for the king, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches (19mm) for the other pieces. A colour printer really is needed for these, unless (i) you want to stick transparencies onto coloured wooden discs, or (ii) you want to print page 5 twice, on to two different coloured sheets of card or paper, in order to supply forces of the relevant colours.

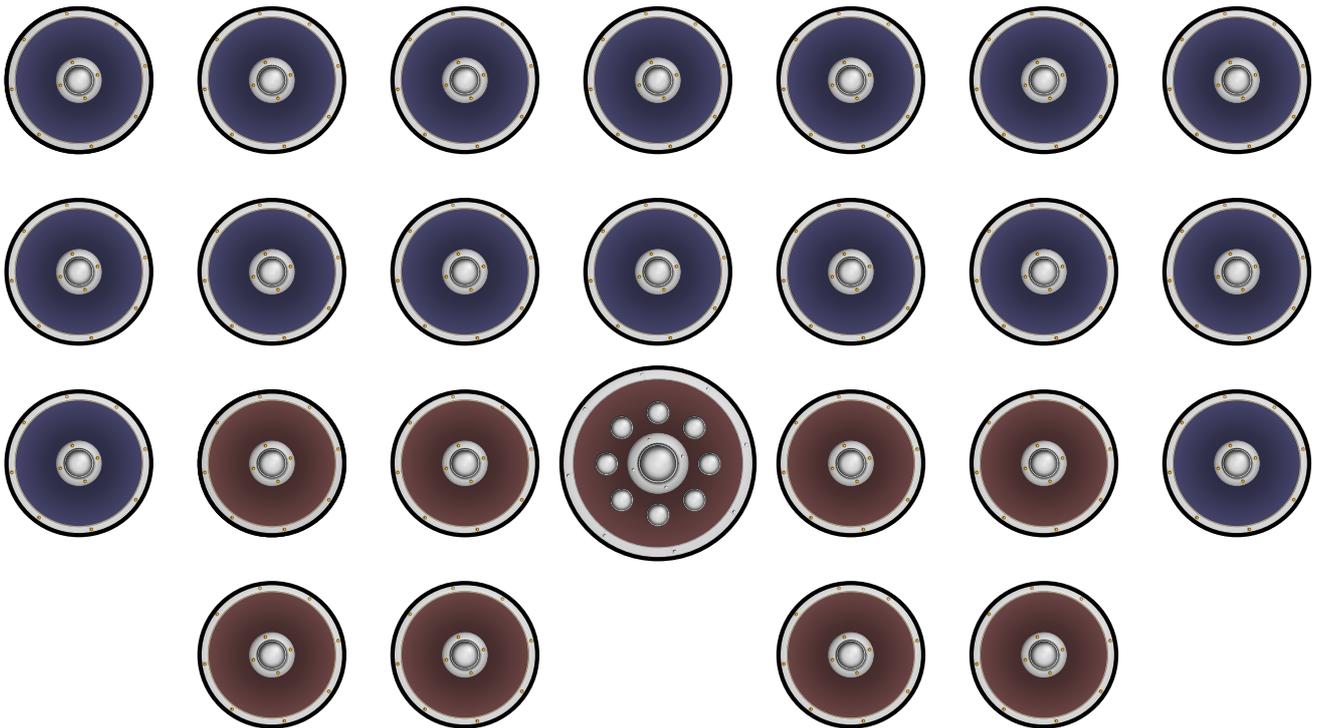
**4.** Print pages 5 and 6 onto the two sides of a single sheet of A4 paper. Fold this in half to create a 4-page A5 rules leaflet. Be careful when printing the second side; ensure the inside of the booklet isn't upside down after printing!

### THE WEB SITE

Much information about the game of hnefatafl is available on our web site, *Hnefatafl: the Game of the Vikings*. The site is arranged in sections about the game's history, its rules, and strategic hints and tips. You can also play the game on-line, and there is The Hnefatafl Shop, from which you can buy games and other merchandise. The address of the site is <http://tafl.cynningstan.com/>.



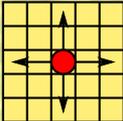


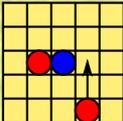


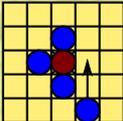


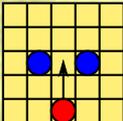
## Reminder Card

See the rules booklet for full details.

 **Movement:** the attackers move first. All pieces move as far as they wish along a row or column. None can land on the castle.

 **Capture:** pieces are captured by surrounding on opposite sides. A piece may also be captured against the empty castle.

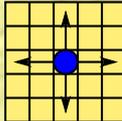
 **In the castle:** the king must be surrounded on four sides if in the castle, or on three if beside it.

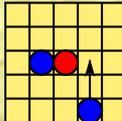
 **Safety:** it is safe to move between two enemies voluntarily. One of the enemies must move away and back again to capture.

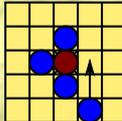


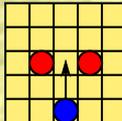
## Reminder Card

See the rules booklet for full details.

 **Movement:** the attackers move first. All pieces move as far as they wish along a row or column. None can land on the castle.

 **Capture:** pieces are captured by surrounding on opposite sides. A piece may also be captured against the empty castle.

 **In the castle:** the king must be surrounded on four sides if in the castle, or on three if beside it.

 **Safety:** it is safe to move between two enemies voluntarily. One of the enemies must move away and back again to capture.

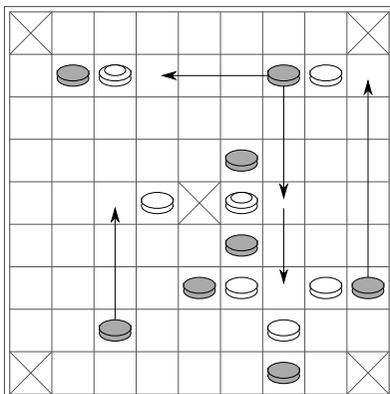


Figure 3: The white pieces may be captured by any of the moves shown. Note that the three white pieces at the bottom right can be captured at once.

at once, if all become surrounded against separate enemies in the same move.

11. The defenders win the game when the king

reaches any square on the edge of the board.

12. The attackers win the game when they capture the king.

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## TABLUT

### INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

Hnefatafl is a game invented by the Norse, often referred to as the Vikings. A king at the centre of the board, with his band of faithful defenders, faces a horde of attackers twice their number, who are lined up at the edges ready to attack from all sides. The king must escape from the board, while the attackers must capture him.

It was first played in the first millennium; boards and pieces from that era have been found in all parts of Scandinavia. As the Norse raiders, adventurers and settlers spread further afield, the game was introduced to other cultures: the Sami in the north, and the English, Scots, Welsh and Irish in the west. Norse traders took the game east with them to Russia and Ukraine.

From the east, however, hne-

fatafl would have come face to face with another game, one that would eclipse it and drive it from fashionable tables in all the lands it had invaded. By the twelfth century, chess had replaced hnefatafl in Scandinavia itself. Only in remote lands did the game survive, in Wales till the sixteenth century, and in Lapland till the eighteenth century.

Tablut was the version played in Lapland in the eighteenth century. It was documented by the famous botanist Carl Linnaeus in 1732, in a diary he kept about his tour of Lapland. It eventually died out, but in 1811 Linnaeus' diary was published, as an English translation. It is from this that many people learned the game. There were some errors in the translation, which made the game too one-sided and therefore

brought about a great variety of alternative interpretations.

The original Swedish/Latin text was eventually published in 1889, and both the original and the translation were digitised in the early 21st century.

This has allowed a highly authentic version of the game to be played, free from the ambiguity or the need for alternative interpretations except in some minor points. It is this authentic version that this leaflet covers.

## HOW TO PLAY

1. The game is played with a king and eight defenders against sixteen attackers. They start the game laid out as shown in Figure 1.
2. The attacking player takes the first turn.
3. In each turn, a player may move a piece as far as desired along a row or column, as shown in Figure 2.
4. Pieces may not jump over each other, nor can one piece land on a square already taken by another.
5. Only the king may land on the marked central square. Any piece may land on the corner squares, however; their markings are decoration only.
6. A piece is captured by surrounding it on two opposite sides along a row or column by two enemies.
7. A piece may also be captured by surrounding it between a single enemy and the empty central square.
8. When the king is on the central square, he must be surrounded on all four sides by attackers in order to be captured.
9. When the king is beside the central square, he must be surrounded by attackers on the remaining three sides. This and some of the above methods of capture are illustrated in Figure 3.
10. It is possible to capture two or three enemy pieces

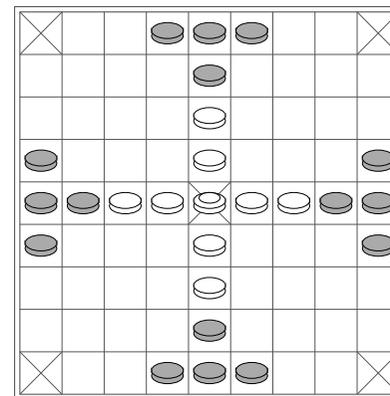


Figure 1: The initial layout for tablut.

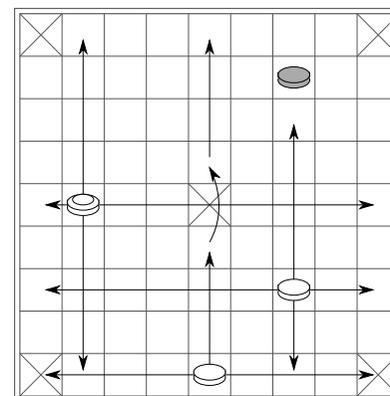


Figure 2: Examples of movement for the king and defenders.