

DOGS & JACKALS

by Damian Walker

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information about the game of dogs and jackals can be obtained from the following books (also listed under Hounds and Jackals, and Palm Tree Game):

Bell, R. C. *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, vol. 1, pp. 20-22. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.

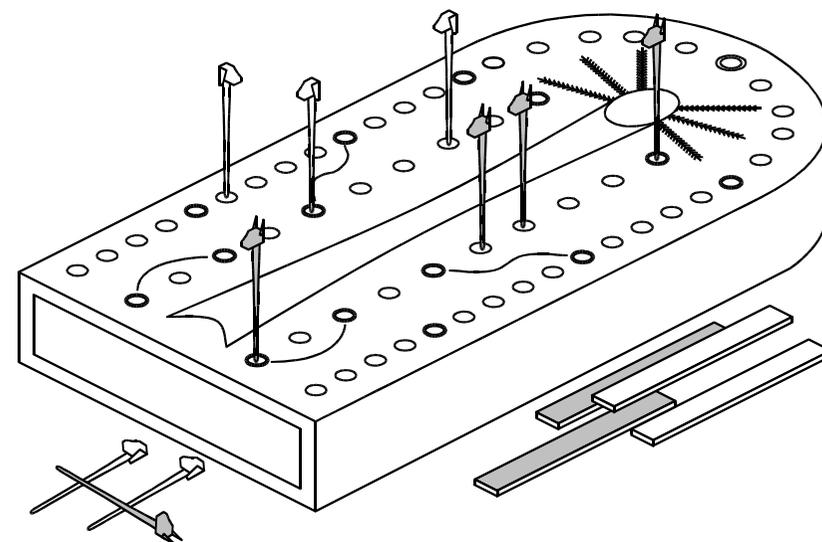
Bell, R. C. *The Boardgame Book*, pp. 44-45. London: Marshall Cavendish Ltd., 1979.

Botermans, J. et al. *The World of Games*, pp. 19-21. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1989.

Murray, H. J. R. *A History of Board-Games Other than Chess*, pp. 15-16. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Parlett, D. *The Oxford History of Board-Games*, pp. 68-70. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

We do not know what the ancient Egyptians called this game. Today it has many names, inspired by the design of the ancient boards and pieces found at archaeological digs. The most common is *dogs and jackals*, from the pieces of a beautiful ebony and ivory set found by Lord Carnarvon in 1932, the set dating between 2000 and 1788 B.C. Other names include *the palm tree game*, *shields* and *hounds and jackals*, inspired by the shapes and decoration of various boards and pieces.

The game seems to have begun

in Egypt in around 2000 B.C., the board mentioned above being the oldest yet known. From other boards we know that the game was played in Palestine in about 1300 B.C., and in the Assyrian empire after 700 B.C. Boards for a similar game from the Christian era have been found in Egypt, too.

From the one-dimensional track it appears that dogs and jackals is a race game. The original rules have not been preserved, but a number of board game experts have made plausible reconstructions.

HOW TO PLAY

A number of differing reconstructions have been offered. The rules here are based on those by Jack Botermans (see Further Information, later), but have been supplemented with information found in the other books listed.

The game is played by two players on a board with fifty-nine holes fit for pegged pieces, of which each player has five. Four casting sticks are used to determine the moves of the

pieces.

Beginning the Game

1. At the beginning of the game each player has all his pieces in hand, and the board starts empty.

2. One player chooses a side of the board on which to play (top or bottom half in Illustration 1).

3. The player who makes the first throw is decided at random.

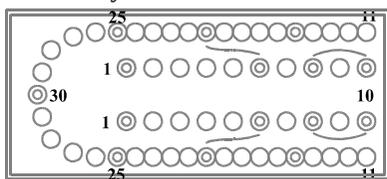


Illustration 1: the game board, with points numbered. Point 30 is shared.

Entering and Moving Pieces

4. A player starts his turn by throwing the casting sticks.

5. The number of marked sides facing up is counted as the player's score; if all sides showing are blank, the score is five.

6. On throwing a one, the player may enter a piece in hand at point 1 on his side of the board. He then throws again.

7. If pieces are already in play, any throw (including 1) may be used to move a piece the appropriate number of spaces along the course shown in Illustration 2.

8. A piece on point 10, 15, 20 or 25 blocks the way and may not be passed. It is permissible to jump over other pieces, however.

9. No piece may land or enter on a point already occupied.

10. A piece landing at one end of a marked line proceeds immediately along that marked line to the point at the other end, forwards or

backwards, if possible.

11. No piece may be moved past point 30.

12. A throw that can be used must be used, otherwise it is lost.

Ending the Game

13. A piece on point 30 may be borne off the board on an exact throw of five.

14. A player may only bear off a piece if all his pieces have been entered into play.

15. The winner is the first player to bear off all five pieces.

Variation

16. The pieces do not stop at point 30, but continue round the board to the opponent's point 1, bearing off from that point as per rule 13.

17. If all pieces are jammed up against each other such that none can ever move, then the game is drawn.

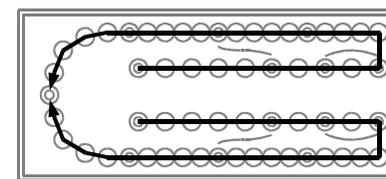


Illustration 2: the direction of play for each player.