

Swedish king is in a position where there are two separate paths to the edge of the board, and he can escape by either path next turn, then his escape cannot be prevented, as the Muscovites will only be able to block one path. At this point the Swedish player must announce “tuichu”, at which point the game is

over and the Swedes have won.

13. If the Muscovite attackers capture the Swedish king, then the game is over and the Muscovites have won.

14. If play becomes repetitious, if one player is unable to move, or if the players otherwise desire it, then a draw may be declared.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Those requiring further information would do well to consult the following books:

Bell, R. C. *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, vol. 1, pp. 77-79. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.

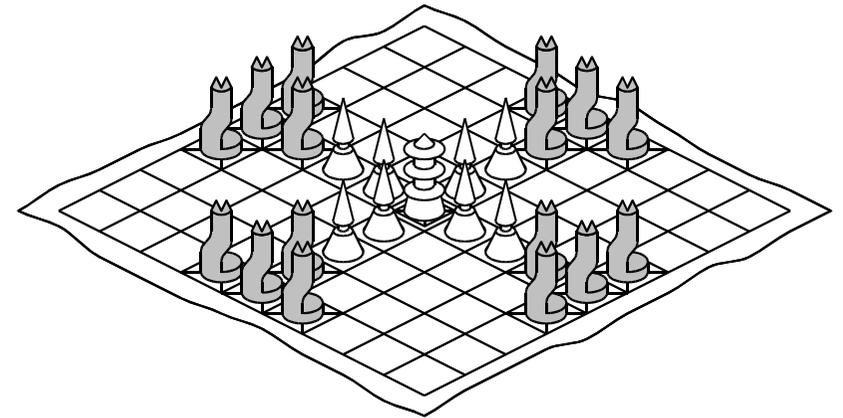
Murray, H. J. R. *A History of Board-Games Other Than Chess*, pp. 63-64. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Parlett, D. *The Oxford History of Board Games*, pp. 203-204. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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TABLUT

by Damian Walker



INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

In 1732, the famous Swedish botanist Linnaeus took a tour of Lapland, keeping a journal of all that interested him. Among the non-botanical observations that he included in this journal were the rules of an unfamiliar game being played by the Sami people among whom he found himself. This game is *tablut*, a late survivor from a family of games

called *hnefatafl*, much played by the Vikings and taken to the various lands they visited, raided and settled in.

The object of this game, played between Swedes and Muscovites, differs for each side. The Muscovites must capture the Swedish king, while the Swedes endeavour to help their king to safety.

HOW TO PLAY

Linnaeus, being unfamiliar with the game, omitted one or two particulars in his rendition of the rules. These omissions have been the cause of a diverse collection of reconstructions, some of which are better than others. The one provided here cannot claim universal pre-eminence, but is recommended as an attempt to provide a reconstruction that is balanced and playable, while remaining consistent with Linnaeus's original, and not presuming to try and identify errors on his part.

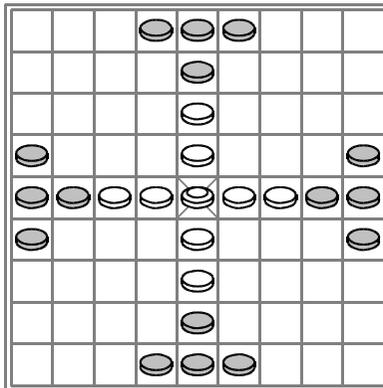


Illustration 1: the tablut board, with pieces set out for play.

Beginning the Game

1. Tablut is played by two people, on a board of nine squares by nine, one player taking control of the Swedish king and his eight defenders, the other taking control of the sixteen Muscovite attackers. The king's central square is called

the castle.

2. At the start of the game, the king and his defenders occupy the space in the middle of the board, with the Muscovites distributed around the edge, as in Illustration 1.

3. The Swedish side makes the first

move, after which the Muscovites make a move, play alternating thereafter until the game is finished.

Moving the Pieces

4. All pieces move horizontally or vertically, but not diagonally. A piece may move in this manner as far as the player wishes, but it may not leap over, nor land on, another piece. See Illustration 2.

5. No piece other than the king may land on the castle. Pieces may, however, pass over it, as it does not block the way.

Capturing Enemies

6. A Muscovite attacker may be captured by sandwiching him between two Swedish defenders, horizontally or vertically but not diagonally. A defender may be captured by two attackers in the same manner. The king may not himself take part in capturing attackers.

7. The Swedish king may be captured by surrounding him on all four sides by Muscovite at-

tackers.

8. If the Swedish king is sat beside the castle, it is impossible for the Muscovite attackers to surround him completely. In this case, he can be captured by attackers if they surround him on three sides, the castle being on the fourth side.

9. If the Swedish king is surrounded on three sides by Muscovite attackers, and on the fourth side by a Swedish defender, the defender may be captured by sandwiching it between the king and an attacker.

10. A Muscovite attacker may move voluntarily between two Swedish defenders without being captured. A defender must move away and back again to capture the attacker. A defender may likewise

place himself between two attackers without harm.

Ending the Game

11. The Swedish player has won if the king reaches any square at the edge of the board. If the king is moved to a place whence he can make this escape next turn, the player must announce "raichi".

12. If the

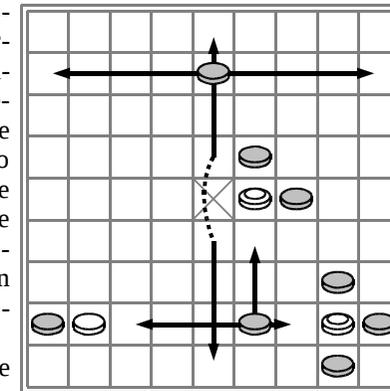


Illustration 2: some examples of movement and capture. The upper black piece cannot land on the central square. The lower piece may capture the white piece at the left, the king above or the king to the right. Two kings are shown for illustration purposes.