SOME MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ANCIENT ROMAN GAMES

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El-Qurna, the temple of Sethos I and the origin of some board games

Henry Parker is at the origin of some false ideas as to the age and history of certain board games, especially of Mancala and Merels. Having spent 30 years in what today is called Sri Lanka, where he had worked for the Irrigation Department from 1873 to 1904, he published his "Ancient Ceylon" in 1909. It is in this book that he talks at some length about the designs engraved into the stone blocks that cover the roof of the temple of Sethos I in el-Qurna near Thebes (Upper Egypt), erected in the 14th century B.C.[1] We do not know, when exactly Parker visited the site. Until today, Parker remains the only one to document and publish these patterns, which are of different nature: some are geometric patterns, others are outlines of feet and hands, still others are crosses of different type and shape, and finally there are more complex symbolic compositions. Some of the patterns resemble game boards for Mancala (p. 589), Nine men's morris, Three men's morris or Alquerque. Parker thought that all those designs were cut at the same time by the workmen in charge of the construction of the temple, i.e. 1370-60 BCE (p. 646, 578). He based this assumption on his observation of three drawings that were partially cut away when the stones were finally trimmed to their definite shape: a pentagram with a sign in the centre, a circle crossed by three intersecting lines (like a Chi-Rho christogram) and another circle with three or maybe four intersecting lines.[2] It must be said

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[1] Henry Parker, *Ancient Ceylon*, London 1909, p. 644 fig. 273.

[2] Ibid. p. 644 fig. 273 ns 8, 15 and 16.

that none of these three diagrams can definitely or exclusively be identified as a game board.

Parker then makes a somewhat rash conclusion: Having described the Sri Lankan Nine-men's-morris game of *Nerenchi*, he turns to the Sethos temple roof, where a similar diagram occurs (n. 12) and then concludes[3]: "If, as it appears most probable, the persons who cut these damaged designs also made the rest, it is evident that the knowledge of this game must have been possessed by the ancient Egyptians in the fourteenth century B.C.". Then he goes on saying that this seems "the more likely since on the same slabs there is an upright cross enclosed in a square [i.e. Three men's morris], which … was used for playing a still simpler form of the game, that was like the "Noughts and Crosses" of English children".

The whole argument is somewhat confusing, since supposed the "if"-part of his argument is correct, the only thing one could conclude would be that the masons knew the "Nine men's morris"-pattern. Whether or not this pattern for them was a game board or something else, is another question. As a matter of fact, already on the next page (p. 579!) Parker explains the "guarded cross", i.e. the cross enclosed in a square, as a magic symbol. Still later, he adds[4]: "Thus it is certain that it [i.e. the Nine men's morris pattern] had some other signification than a mere decorative one, and also that it was not simply a diagram used for playing a game like *Nerenchi*". Therefore, Parker himself could not decide himself whether these designs were to be understood as game boards or rather magic signs.

Leaving Parker's theories about the symbolic value of the designs aside, HJR Murray selected only those seven patterns that looked to him like game boards. He did not copy Parker's drawings, but redrew them in order to give them a more regular geometric shape. Some important differences: Murray's "Three men's morris"- board A is square, but rectangular in Parker's illustration (10). The 5×5 squares board (D) lacks the third diagonal line (13) and the pentagram (7) has become a perfect five-rayed star (E). The cross in the centre of the "Nine men's morris"-pattern (12) omits the split endings of the branches (F) in Murray's drawing. Murray accepted the date of 14th century BCE and stated: "It is difficult to see any reason for the

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[3] Ibid. p. 578.
[4] Ibid. p. 647.

cutting of these diagrams other than for use in playing board-games".[5] However, Parker's assumption that all the designs were made at the same time by the workers during the construction of the temple, is hardly convincing. Apart from numerous repairs and restorations the temple underwent during the centuries, some of the figures are definitely Coptic crosses and magic signs, while other patterns of 5×5 and 7×7 holes are for the game of Sîga. This means that it is simply impossible to date these cuttings[6], many of which may more likely date to Islamic times. In short, Qurna cannot be taken as an archaeological reference for the existence of games such as Mancala and Merels in Pharaonic Egypt.

Based on Parker, and often via HJR Murray and RC Bell[7], the opinion that games such as Mancala, the supposed "round smaller merels"[8] and Nine-men's morris were already played in Ancient Egypt in the 14th century BCE has become, for many authors, especially on the Internet, a fact. An accurate documentation of the designs, their exact locations, overlapping and different states of erosion, in order to better determine their function and chronology remains a desideratum.

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[5] Harold James Ruthven Murray, *A History of Board-Games other than of Chess*, Oxford 1952, p. 18-19 fig. 7; Harold James Ruthven Murray, *A History of Chess*, Oxford 1913, p. 614-15.

[6] Friedrich Berger, From circle and square to the image of the world: a possible interpretation for some petroglyphs of merels boards, *Rock Art Research 21.1*, 2004, p. 11-25, p. 15, with ref. to Christian Wagneur, « Inventaire. La mystérieuse triple enceinte », GERSAR 1995 (unpublished). See also: Marisa Uberti, Ludica, sacra, magica. Il censimento della Triplice Cinta (2012), p. 18-21.

[7] Robert Charles Bell, *Board and Table Games from many Civilizations*, rev. ed., New York 1979, p. 47, 92, 93, 114.

[8] Many arguments speak strongly against the existence of such a game, as has been demonstrated recently by various scholars. See Florian Heimann, The loop within circular three men's morris, *Board Game Studies Journal Online 8*, 2014, p. 51-61; Claudia-Maria Behling, Der sog. Rundmühle auf der Spur – Zug um Zug zur Neudeutung römischer Radmuster, in: Elisabeth Trinkl (ed.), *Akten des 14. Österreichischen Archäologentages am Institut für Archäologie der Universität Graz vom 19. bis 21. April 2012*, Wien 2014, p. 63-70; Ulrich Schädler, Encore sur la « marelle ronde » : 100 ans après Carl Blümlein, in : V. Dasen, T. Haziza (ed.), *Jeux et jouets, Kentron 34*, 2018, p. 87-98. Parker referred to Maspero and his interpretation of the « wheel pattern » as a map of the sky: Gaston Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilisation. Egypt and Chaldea*, New York 1894, p. 726.

The "dux latrunculorum"

Of none of the Greek and Roman board games known from literary and archaeological sources the exact rules have come down to us. In order to get an idea of how these games were played, we need to examine the information given by ancient authors, which are usually less than more precise, relate them to archaeological finds of gaming material or iconographical representations of the game and compare all this to better known games in the ethnographical record. This leaves room for different interpretations and conclusions and, of course, we will never be sure to have found the exact ancient rules, if ever they existed. These lines are not about different opinions on certain details of the supposed rules, but about misconceptions, i.e. proposals concerning the way *ludus latrunculorum* was played that contradict the sources and therefore cannot be correct. Together with the *ludus XII scriptorum*, the *ludus latrunculorum* is the Roman board game about which we are relatively well informed.[9] From Varro, who compares the board to a declination table, we learn that the game was played on a board structured by an orthogonal grid, similar to a chess board. The game was played with many counters, which were knocked off by custodian capture and taken off the board, where the players held them in their hands. From the so-called "Laus Pisonis", a verse panegyric probably dedicated to Caius Calpurnius Piso, we learn that at the beginning of the game the counters were kept outside the empty board and entered turn by turn, similar to the way the counters are brought into play in the Egyptian "Sîga" or the Tunisian "Kharbga". Martial and Ovidius inform us that single pieces were hit by custodian capture. What we do not know is, among other details, how the pieces moved. What is never mentioned in the sources, nor attested among the sets of counters hitherto found in archaeological excavations, is a special piece with a power different to the normal "little soldiers".

Nonetheless, one can often read, especially on the Internet, but also in a recently published article[10], that in the *latrunculi* game, there was a special piece called "dux" or "aquila". The author of an article recently published in *Caissa* takes this detail for a given fact! We may immediately say that such

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[9] The basic reference is still: Ulrich Schädler, Latrunculi – ein verlorenes strategisches Brettspiel der Römer, in: *Homo Ludens. Der spielende Mensch IV*, Salzburg 1994, p. 47-67.

[10] Bastian Kissing, Latrunculi – Soldatenspiel im alten Rom, *Caissa 2*, 2017, p. 44-51.

an idea contradicts completely the whole intention of the "Laus Pisonis". Here, the game is compared to a real battle, in order to underline the strategic capacities of Piso as a military commander. The concept is that the "dux", if we may use this term here, is not a piece on the board, but Piso as a player! It is the player who leads his troops into battle.

But where does this idea of a special piece in the *ludus latrunculorum* come from? It seems that the idea made its way as a consequence of a superficial and optimistic reading of Philip Crummy's preliminary interpretation of the Stanway find, i.e. the vestiges of a game board and pieces unearthed in the so-called "doctor's grave" at Camulodunum.[11] What was found were the traces of a wooden folding game board and two rows of more or less regularly distributed thirteen blue and white glass counters placed on it. One of the white counters, placed in the centre of the board, was smaller than the others. And on the blue side, there was one counter in the corner of the board that had flipped and turned upside down. It is these two counters that have been interpreted as "special" pieces, giving 12+1 counters per side. Very quickly, Crummy's preliminary considerations, though very cautious and balanced, resulted in the conviction that the "doctor's game" was played on a grid of 8×12 squares with an extra piece per side, that the pieces were arranged in a starting position at the beginning of the game and that the game was the *ludus latrunculorum*. These ideas circulate as given facts on the Internet, although each and every one of those four conclusions is highly speculative and contradicts all the known written and archaeological sources. The final publication of the Stanway burial site has obviously less been taken into consideration, probably because a closer analysis has shown that things were far more complicated and uncertain as they seemed at first sight, showing that the preliminary conclusions depend on a number of dubitable assumptions and on presumed rules of the unknown game.[12] The surface of the board is not preserved, so that we do not know whether the

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[11] Ph. Crummy, Your move, Doctor!, *The Colchester Archaeologist 10*, 1996/1997, p. 1-9 esp. p. 8-9; Ph. Crummy, *City of Victory: Story of Colchester –Britain's First Roman Town*, Colchester Archaeological Trust (1997), p. 69; David Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games*, Oxford 1999, p. 236.

[12] Ulrich Schädler, The doctor's game – new light on the history of ancient board games, in: Philip Crummy et.al., *Stanway: An Elite burial site at Camulodunum*, Britannia Monograph Series No. 24, London 2007, p. 359-375. For a corpus of *latrunculi*-type game boards from Roman Britain, see Tim Penn, Summer Courts, A corpus of gaming boards from Roman Britain, *Lucerna 57*, 2019, p. 4-12, esp. p. 5-7.

board had a grid structure for *Latrunculi* or even exactly 8×12 squares, or perhaps a layout for *XII scripta*. Neither is the position of the pieces an *a priori* indication for the layout of the board, since we do not know whether the person, who placed the counters on the board, was familiar with any board game and therefore able or willing to place them in a position relative to the board or game. And the fact that one white counter is much smaller than the others and one blue counter turned upside down, cannot *a priori* be taken as an argument for these two counters being pieces of special power, because on the one hand it is difficult to understand why the white "dux" should be smaller than the others and not bigger, while on the other hand the blue inverted counter is likely to have turned because of post depositional shocks and movements of the board. To cut a long story short, the find from Stanway leaves us with more questions than it gives answers and cannot be taken as a reference for the reconstruction of the *ludus latrunculorum*. Philip Crummy's statement of 1996 is still valid: "It is of course not possible to say what game, if any, was being played".

Hopscotch – a military exercise of Roman legionaries?

One of the most popular children's games of the last centuries is certainly Hopscotch. Despite its enormous diffusion, the origin of the game remains enigmatic. However, numerous Internet sites (it would not make sense to cite one, it suffices to do a search with the keywords "hopscotch" and "Roman") pretend to know that the game was already played by Roman legionaries. And more precisely they add that it was an exercise of Roman soldiers they "played" on the road from London to Glasgow on a playing field of 100ft length. Most of these texts are identical, they have simply been copy-and-pasted and never give an ancient source for this statement. The origin of this "hypothesis" is unknown to me; perhaps it goes back to Frederic Grunfeld, who wrote in 1975[13]: "One of the oldest known hopscotch diagrams is inscribed into the floor of the Forum in Rome. During the expansion of the Roman empire, the legions built cobblestone roads connecting the northern countries of Europe with the Mediterranean and with Asia Minor. The paved surfaces were ideal for this game, taught by the soldiers to the children of France, Germany, and Britain". In reality,

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[13] Frederic V. Grunfeld: *Games of the world*, Zürich 1975, p. 165.

there is no such diagram on the Roman forum and more generally, there is not the slightest evidence for hopscotch prior to the 16th century. In the Roman military literature such as Vegetius and others, no such exercise or game is ever mentioned.[14] And of course it would not be sufficient if a source attested that Roman legionaries were trained to hop on one foot, since hopping on one foot alone does not make a game of hopscotch, which has precise rules including a diagram drawn on the ground and the use of a pebble.

As far as the history of the game is concerned[15], it is interesting to observe that already around 500 BCE Buddha counts among the games he recommends not to play a game that consisted in "walking over squares drawn on the ground, and stepping only where it is allowed", but this is certainly not yet hopscotch.[16] In his *Onomasticon*, Julius Pollux (2nd cent. CE) describes a game called *Askoliasmos*, a game that consists of hopping on one foot, for example as long as possible or as far as possible[17], which is of course not hopscotch either. Neither the impressing list of more than 200 games François Rabelais gives in his "Gargantua" from 1534 nor Pieter Brueghel's painting from about 1560 in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna depicting 91 children's games include hopscotch.[18] Maybe the earliest source for the game is Johann Fischart, who in 1575 published his first

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[14] Among the military exercises Vegetius mentions appear only running and jumping over obstacles and ditches: *Epitome rei militaris*, I 9 und II 23.

[15] For the history of the game: John William Crombie, History of the Game of Hop-Scotch, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 15, 1886, p. 403-8. See recently: Ulrich Schädler, Vertreibung aus dem Paradies? Über das Tempelhupfen, in: Ernst Strouhal, Manfred Zollinger, Brigitte Felderer (ed.), *Spiele der Stadt, Ausstellungskatalog Wien Museum*, Wien/New York 2012, p. 44-51.

[16] T. W. Rhys Davies: *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Bd. I, Oxford 1899 (Reprint 1923), p. 9f: "Keeping going over diagrams drawn on the ground so that one steps only where one ought to go". Paul Brewster: The Earliest Known List of Games. Some Comments, *Acta Orientalia* (Kopenhagen) 23, 1958, p. 36–42, hat dieses Spiel mit "Chikri Billa" gleichgesetzt. The description in Vinaya Pitaka is different: I. B. Horner (transl.): *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-pitaka)*, Vol. I (Suttavibhanga), London 1949, p. 316 (III 180): it is about a circle with several lines, of which some may not be touched.

[17] Pollux: *Onomastikon* IX, 121 (ed. Bethe 1931, p. 180). See now Salvatore Costanza, Giulio Polluce *Onomasticon*: *excerpta de ludis*. Materiali per la storia del gioco nel mondo greco-romano, Alessandria 2020, p. 155-159.

[18] Michel Psichari: Les jeux de Gargantua, *Revue des Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 6, 1908, p. 138. Rabelais knew a game called "marelle", but it is more likely that he had "Nine men's morris" in mind.

German edition of Rabelais' "Gargantua" entitled "Geschichtklitterung". In his version of the list of games he mentions a game he calls "Inn die Höll" ("Into hell"). In the second edition 1582 he calls it "In Himmel, in d'Höll" ("Into heaven, into hell")[19], which corresponds to the name "Himmel und Hölle" usually given to the game in German speaking countries and still popular nowadays. It is very likely that he mentions the same game under two more names, i.e "Mörselstein tragen" ("carrying the stone mortar") and "Venus Tempel" ("temple of Venus"). In England, it is in Thomas Shadwell's comedy "Sullen Lovers" from 1668 that Sir Positive lists the following games: "Cat, Stool ball, Scotch-hopp and Trap-ball".[20] Particularly important, however, is Francis Willughbys chapter "Scotch Hopper" in his unpublished manuscript produced between 1662 und 1672. Here, for the first time we have a description of the rules together with a drawing of the plan.[21] At the same time, in the 17th century, the game becomes a popular motif in Dutch iconography, depicted in paintings and on tiles.[22] Obviously, the diffusion of this wonderful game progressed rapidly in Europe and the World, giving room for numerous variants of the plan and the rules, but it is an early modern, not a Roman game.

Polyhedral Dice

During the 19th century, several museums gave notice of the presence in their collections of a number of particular dice. Some are simply cubic, others hexagonal, others hexagonal with flattened edges, and others are rhombic dodecahedrons. What these dice, which are usually made from dark green serpentine stone, have in common is that six faces bear inscriptions consisting of two letters: NH, ND, NG, SZ, LS and TA. The

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[19] Heinrich A. Rausch: *Das Spielverzeichnis im 25. Kapitel von Fischarts "Geschichtklitterung" (Gargantua)*, Straßburg 1908, p. 50-51.

[20] *Thomas Shadwell, edited, with an introduction and notes*, by George Saintsbury, London 1907, S. 92 (Ende 4. Akt): "If I don't fence, dance, ride, sing, fight a duel, […] play at cat, stool-ball, scotch hop and trap-ball, […] I am the greatest […] blockhead, buffoon, jack-pudding, tony, or what you will". See also Poor Robin [i.e. William Winstanley]: *An Almanack after a new fashion …*, London 1677: "The time when School-boys should play at Scotch-hoppers …"

[21] David Cram, Jeffrey L. Forgeng, Dorothy Johnston: *The Book of Games of Francis Willughby (1635–1672). A Seventeenth-century Treatise on Sports, Games and Pastimes*, Aldershot 2003, p. 174f.

[22] Jan Pluis, *Kinderspelen op tegels*, Assen 1979, p. 131–133.

ones that made their way into the archaeological and epigraphic literature are kept in the Alba Iulia Museum in Gyulafehérvár[23], in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn[24], in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, in the Museu d'Arqueologia e Catalunya in Barcelona, while five are reported in the Museum Wiesbaden[25], another one was mentioned in the collections of the Großherzogliches Museum Darmstadt (today Hessisches Landesmuseum)[26], and two are kept in the Städtisches Museum Göttingen.[27] Several other museums and private collections preserve more of these dice.[28] In some cases, they were reported to come from archaeological or historical sites. The one in Gyulafehérvár, the only one cast from bronze, is said to come from the Roman necropolis of Alba Iulia (Romania). A certain Mr. Mylius has allegedly found the one in Darmstadt in the garden of the castle of Friedberg in 1859. One of the dice in Wiesbaden was said to have been excavated from a grave mount at Mainz together with a gold coin of the emperor Constantius![29]

Considered to be from ancient Roman times, these dice attracted the interest of philologists. Trying to solve the riddle of the combinations of letters, they came up with the following proposals:

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[23] László Borhy, Berichtigung zu CIL II, suppl. 6246, 8: Ein weiterer "seltsamer Spielwürfel" aus Barcelona, *Faventia 25.2*, 2003, p.173-177.

[24] F. van Vleuten, Römische Würfel und würfelähnliche Spiele, *Bonner Jahrbücher 57*, 1867, p. 192-193.

[25] A. von Cohausen, Würfel, *Annalen des Nassauischen Vereins für Alterthumskunde 15*, 1879, p. 393-394 ; Karl Klein, Jakob Becker, Inscriptiones ducatus nassoviensis latinae I. Inscriptiones latinae in terris nassoviensibus repertae, *Annalen des Nassauischen Vereins für Alterthumskunde* 4, 1855, p. 565, 566.

[26] Rudolf Adamy, *Die archäologischen Sammlungen des Grossherzoglichen Hessischen Museums Darmstadt : Verzeichnis ihrer Bestände auf Grund der Neuordnung*, Darmstadt 1897, p. 136. The object got lost during WWII.

[27] Sven Schütte, Spielen und Spielzeug ind er Stadt des späten Mittelalters. Aus dem Alltag der mittelalterlichen Stadt, Bremen 1982, p. 208 Abb. 5,20 ; Helen Hofbauer, Ein polyhedrisches Spielgerät aus Göttingen, Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte 56, 1987, 417-421.

[28] See for example a die in Cologne (Museum für Angewandte Kunst): Ulrike Näther, Würfel mit 26 Flächen, in: *Volles Risiko! Glücksspiel von der Antike bis heute, Cat. of the exhibition in the Landesmuseum Karlsruhe*, Karlsruhe 2008, p. 49 n. 6/7; Christiane Zangs, Hans Holländer (ed.), *Mit Glück und Verstand*, Aachen 1994, p. 128-129 cat. B21. See also two more in Göttingen: Helen Hofbauer, Ein polyhedrisches Spielgerät aus Göttingen, *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte 56*, 1987, 417-421.

[29] Karl-Viktor Decker, Ein merkwürdiger Spielwürfel aus Mainz, Mainzer Zeitschrift 71/72, 1976/77, p. 244.

NH   nihil habeas or simply nihil
ND   nihil dabis
TA   tibi adfer
LS   50 (L) solve
SZ   (turned into ZS) zona salve
NG   nihil geris or read NC without explanation.

Several publications from the middle of the 19th century on rejected the theory of these dice being Roman and gave the correct identification. Nonetheless, one of these dice made its way into the Corpus of Latin Inscriptions C.I.L. (II suppl. n. 6246,8 in Barcelona) and suggestions as to the significance of the letter combinations continued to be made, for example by Almagro in 1952![30] Later in the 20th century, Rudolf Noll again explained what these dice were[31], but still Marco Fittà in his book about ancient toys and games from 1997 presented this type of die as Roman.[32]

So once again the correct identification of these dice. They are made from serpentine stone, extracted in eastern Germany in the region of Zöblitz. There, this type of stone was used to produce a range of household articles, among which also the dice with the letter combinations.[33] These dice served for a German drinking game and were sold together with the rules of a game, which sometimes bore the French title "Jeu de Marocco".[34] According to F. A. von Scholl, who purchased such a set in Carlsbad in 1868, these rules were the following (translated from German):

> "There are two games that can be played with this die. One writes the 12 numbers that the die contains, on the table. Whoever wants to take part in the game, will place a fixed wager on whatever

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[30] M. Almagro, *Las inscripciones ampuritanas griegas, ibéricas y latinas. Monografias Ampuritanas, II.* Barcelona 1952, p. 176-177, n. 129.

[31] Rudolf Noll, Seltsame Spielwürfel, Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonner Jahrbücher 174, 1974, p. 567-570.

[32] Marco Fittà, *Spiele und Spielzeug der Antike*, Stuttgart 1998, p. 113-114 fig. 192, 193; see the review in: Antike Welt 5, 2000, p. 561-563.

[33] Eva Maria Hoyer, *Sächsischer Serpentin. Ein Stein und seine Verwendung*, Leipzig 1995, p. 274 n. 32.

[34] F.A. von Scholl, Sind die in den Annalen des Vereins für Nassauische Alterthumskunde 4. Bandes 2. Heft (1852) S. 565 und 566 abgebildeten Würfel römischen Ursprungs?, *Correspondenzblatt des Gesammtvereins der deutschen Geschichts- und Alterthumsvereine 18.5*, 1870, p. 35.

number they may choose. The one who rolls the die, will win the amount that has been placed on the given number. If, however, somebody rolls a number that has already been played (i.e. emptied), he has to place another wager as a fine. The players will also place a determined amount on the letters, which will be collected in a plate, and which will be played in the following way:

NG Nimm ganz (take all)
NH Nimm halb (take half)
ND Nimm deins (take your bet)
LS   Lass stehen (neither win nor lose)
SZ   Setze zu (place another bet)
TA   Tritt ab (stand down until a new game starts, but it is also allowed to re-enter the game)".

It can easily be seen that we deal here with a type of "Put & Take", "Long Lawrence" or "Game of the owl". The same game was also played using six-sided spinning tops bearing the same German combinations of letters.

However, it remains a curious fact that some of these dice are said to have been found in historic and archaeological sites, and even in Romania and Spain!

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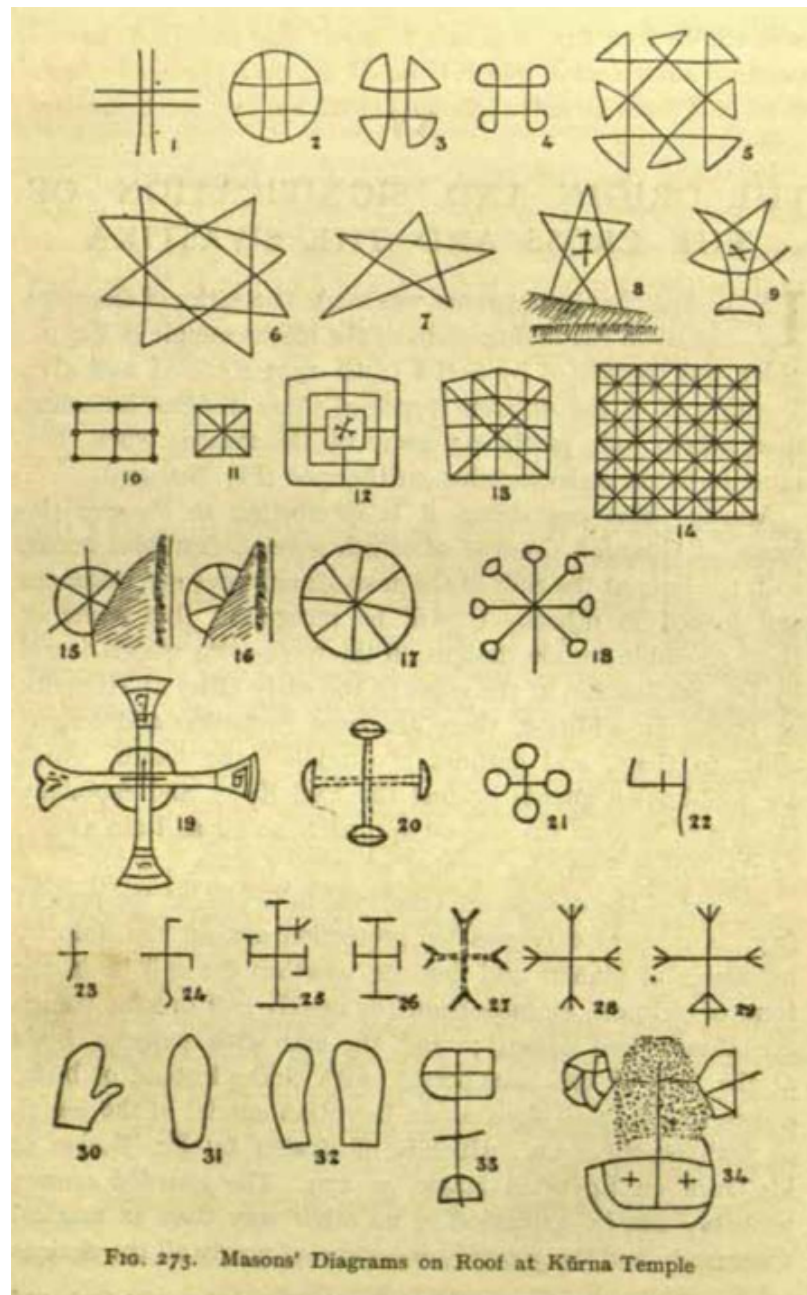Zangs, Christiane and Hans Holländer (ed.) (1994), *Mit Glück und Verstand*, Aachen.

Figure 1: Engravings on the roof of Sethos' temple in El-Qurna after Parker
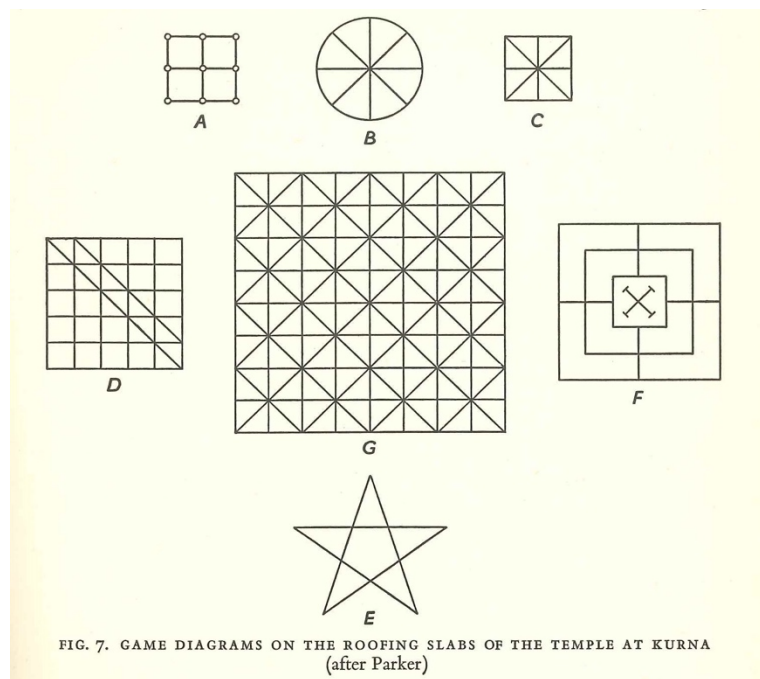(1909, fig. 273)

FIG. 7. GAME DIAGRAMS ON THE ROOFING SLABS OF THE TEMPLE AT KURNA
(after Parker)

Figure 3: Sample of the engravings on the roof of Sethos' temple in El-Qurna by Murray (1952 fig. 7)

Figure 2: Engravings on the roof of Sethos' temple at El-Qurna (photoghraph Benedikt Rothöhler). N.B.: One of the Sîga boards, not mentioned by Parker, covers the fourfold Alquerque, and must therefore be later than Parkers visit in El-Qurna.
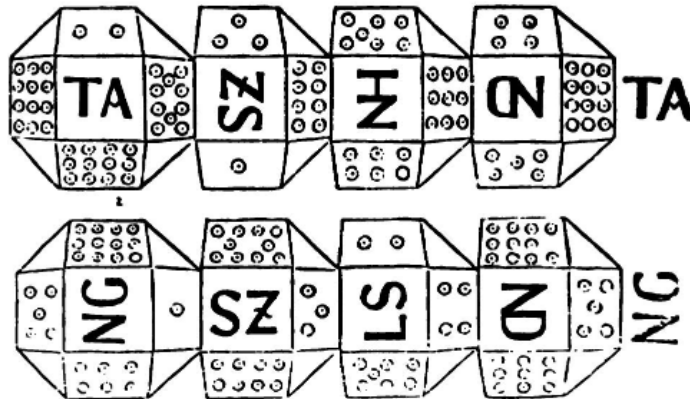
Figure 5: Polyhedral die in the Swiss Museum of Games. Inv. 4782 (photograph Ulrich Schädler)

Figure 4: Drawing of one of the dice in the Museum Wiesbaden (after Nassauische Annalen 4, 1855)

8 (= Eph. IV n. 31). Emporiis; talus ex iaspide, servatus olim apud Caelestinum Pujol y Camps, nunc Barcinone in museo Martorell; in lateribus incisi sunt circuli (⊙) unus ad duodecim

praeterea litterae hae

N G   SZ   TA   TG   NH   ND

Descripsi.   Caelestinus Pujol y Camps misit exemplum.

Figure 6: Entry in CIL II suppl. 6246,8: die in Barcelona