



XXIIIrd Board Game Studies Colloquium, Paris

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

—
**THE EVOLUTIONS
OF BOARD GAMES**

Virtual event

**13-16
APRIL
2021**



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the XXIIIrd Board Game Studies colloquium

The Board Game Studies colloquium is a 4-day online conference that will take place on 13-16 April 2021. It is organized by the laboratory EXPERICE (Université Sorbonne Paris Nord), Game in Lab and the LabEx ICCA.

The annual BGS colloquium is an interdisciplinary forum for scholars and practitioners from many fields and disciplines. This convergence allows game studies to be approached from multiple points of view: the research findings and knowledge disseminated in past colloquia have embraced archaeological evidence, cross-cultural connections, mathematical, psychological and social implications of past and present gaming practices.

In 1990 Irving Finkel, curator and archaeologist for The British Museum, hosted a symposium on the Studies of Board Games.

This encouraged the regular gathering of minds, mainly thanks to Alex De Voogt, starting in 1995, first on a biennial basis, and since 2001, every year. Today this meeting is known as the Board Game Studies Colloquium.

2021 will see its 23rd edition, 11 years after it was first held in Paris and following the cancellation of the 2020 edition. Over the years, it has been hosted at various venues throughout the world. It is the only recurring event devoted solely to the study of non-digital games. The Colloquium gathers a wide range of multidisciplinary scholars, curators, inventors, collectors and enthusiasts from all around. They present and discuss new research in the growing field of game studies.

The focus has traditionally been on historical board, card, and dice games. The scope has widened in the past years, reflecting the impact from the current explosion in non-digital gaming.



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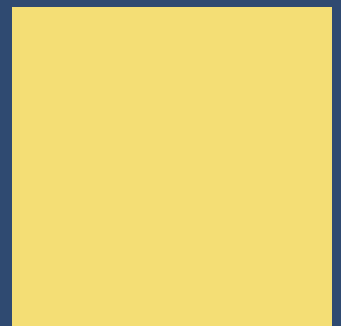
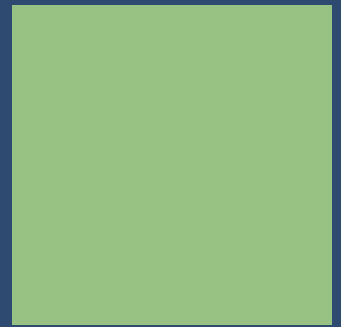
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Ulrich Schädler,
Swiss Museum of Games, Switzerland

Alex De Voogt,
Drew University, United States

PROGRAMME



13 TUESDAY PROGRAM

9:00 Presentation of this special BGS Colloquium; general rules of the online organisation
9:15 ['live']

■ MODERATOR : VINCENT BERRY

9:15 [Melissa J. Rogerson & Ryan M. Kelly,](#)
9:50 [The Patina of Boardgames \[prerecorded video\]](#)

9:50 [Samuel Vansyngel,](#)
10:25 [The Magic Esport Strategy: Practices and Criticisms from Competitive Players \['live'\]](#)

10:25 **Break**
10:40

■ MODERATOR : THIERRY DEPAULIS

10:40 [Ulrich Schädler,](#)
11:15 [Catacomb Games: reused game boards or funeral inscriptions? \['live'\]](#)

11:15 [Walter Crist & Matthew Stephenson,](#)
11:50 [Compiling Evidence to Reconstruct Historical Games \[prerecorded video\]](#)

11:50 [Benjamin Hanussek,](#)
12:25 [Revisiting the Mehen board game and its unresolved disappearance \['live'\]](#)

12:25–14:00 Lunch Break

■ MODERATOR : ALEX DE VOOGT

14:00 [Amit S. Deshmukh,](#)
14:35 [Where did the games go? – Inquiry of board games in medieval Marathi literature in India \['live'\]](#)

14:35 [Jacob Schmidt-Madsen,](#)
15:10 [Chaupar Before the Mughals \['live'\]](#)

15:10 [Tiago Hirth,](#)
15:45 [Mozambican games: An initial overview, and contemporary picture of board games in Maputo \['live'\]](#)

15:45 **Break**
16:00

■ MODERATOR : MICHAËL HUCHETTE

16:00 [Vincent Berry,](#)
16:35 [The passion of play: sociology of the \(French\) "boardgamers" \['live'\]](#)

16:35 [Jean-Emmanuel Barbier,](#)
17:10 [Learning the rules: Evolution of rules circulation in modern boardgames player community \[prerecorded video\]](#)

17:10 [Alfonso Atala Layún & Alberto Castañón Herrera,](#)
17:45 [1124 Gomoku games in Mexico: An experimental study of the effect of strategic games in a society \['live'\]](#)

MORNING

AFTERNOON

14 WEDNESDAY

PROGRAM

MORNING

■ MODERATOR : EDDIE DUGGAN

- 9:00 [*Adrian Seville,*](#)
9:35 [The material form of the Game of the Goose \['live'\]](#)
- 9:35 [*Gavin Davies,*](#)
10:10 [Nonhuman pedagogies, 19th-century British race games, and the phylogeny of zoomorphic board games \['live?'\]](#)
- 10:10 [*Jonas Richter,*](#)
10:45 [German Names for Merels \['live'\]](#)
- 10:45 **Break**
11:35

■ MODERATOR : LISA ROUGETET

- 11:35 [*Marco Tibaldini,*](#)
12:10 [Board games and cognition: a step forward in the educational use of board games \[prerecorded video\]](#)
- 12:10 [*Robert Houghton,*](#)
12:45 [Evolving the Argument: Rule Modification for History Teaching and Research \['live'\]](#)

Free time!

15 THURSDAY PROGRAM

MORNING

■ MODERATOR : JORGE NUNO SILVA

10:00 [Mattia Thibault,](#)

10:35 [Imagine a playful city. Board game-based expert interviews \['live'\]](#)

10:35 [Michele R. King,](#)

11:10 [House Rules: The Evolution of Gameplay and the Art of Negotiation \['live'\]](#)

11:10 [Ville Kankainen & Nina V. Nygren,](#)

11:45 [Framing nature conservation, conflicts and collaboration in the design of a serious board game \[prerecorded video\]](#)

THAT'S ALL!

11:45-14:30
Lunch Break

AFTERNOON

■ MODERATOR : ULRICH SCHÄDLER

14:30 [Alex de Voogt,](#)

15:05 [Cultural evolution, cultural transmission and the role of board games \['live'\]](#)

15:05 [Cameron Browne & Steven Kelk,](#)

15:40 [Everything's a Ludeme \['live'\]](#)

15:40 [Thierry Depaulis,](#)

16:15 [A Timeline of Mind Games, with some correlations. II: Board Games and 'Axial Age' \['live'\]](#)

THAT'S ALL!

16 FRIDAY PROGRAM



MORNING

■ MODERATOR : JEAN-EMMANUEL BARBIER

- 10:00 [Antonin Mérieux & ALF,](#)
10:35 [The development of facilitation practices about board games play in France 1969-2019 \['live'\]](#)
- 10:35 [Michaël Huchette,](#)
11:10 [Why and how do some teachers create board games for their students? \['live'\]](#)

- 11:10 [Yannick Deplaedt,](#)
11:45 [The Japanese market, shifting from amateurship to professionalization \[prerecorded video\]](#)

11:45-13:30
Lunch Break

AFTERNOON

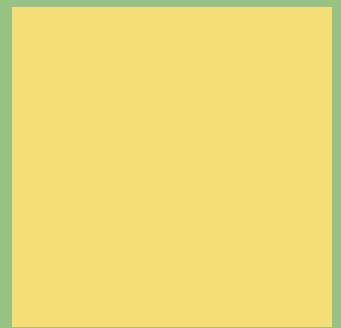
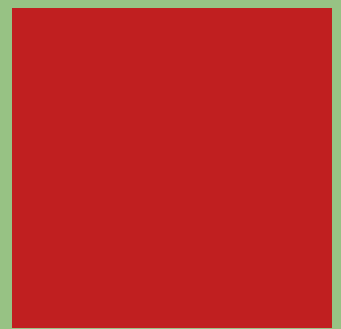
■ MODERATOR : TRISTAN CAZENAVE

- 13:30 [David King,](#)
14:05 [Mechanically identical, aesthetically different: Thinking about game feel in table-top games \['live'\]](#)
- 14:05 [Georgi Markov & Tatiana](#)
14:40 [Benova-Markova,](#)
[Hybridization as an approach to board game design: some examples \['live'\]](#)
- 14:40 [Eric Piette, Lisa Rougetet et al.,](#)
15:15 [A Ludii analysis of the French Military Game \['live'\]](#)
- 15:15 **Break**
15:30

■ MODERATOR : VINCIANE ZABBAN

- 15:30 [Jonathan Lessard,](#)
16:05 [Game Design Lessons from Chess History \['live'\]](#)
- 16:05 [Virginie Tacq,](#)
16:40 [Women as boardgame designers \[prerecorded video\]](#)
- 16:40 [Liuwe Westra,](#)
17:15 [Presentation of 2022 24th BGS Colloquium in Leeuwarden \[prerecorded video\]](#)

ABSTRACTS



The Patina of Boardgames

Melissa J. ROGERSON¹ and Ryan M. KELLY²

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Many board game hobbyists go to great lengths to protect their boardgames against wear and tear, investing heavily in solutions that minimise signs of use. For example, they may restrict the consumption of food and drink at the game table, use plastic sleeves to protect cards from incidental marking (Rogerson, Gibbs, & Smith, 2016, p. 3961), select furniture to minimise the risk of spills (Rogerson et al., 2016, p. 3962), or avoid taking games to events which represent a threat to the sanctity of the playing pieces.

However, these behaviours stand in stark contrast to hobbyists' perception that the purpose of a game is not to languish, unloved, on a shelf, but is rather to be played on a table, by people (Rogerson, Gibbs, & Smith, 2017). There is an inherent tension between the desire to play a game and the desire to protect its components from wear and tear, keeping them in a pristine state.

This paper proposes a new understanding of wear and tear not as damage to a game but as a form of 'patina' or material history (Odom, Pierce, Stolterman, & Bleviss, 2009) that reveals the way in which the game has been played over time and the rich meanings that are embodied by noticeable signs of use. This represents a transformation from valuing objects for their novelty to valuing them for their durability and the meaningful attachment that they invite (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Rosner, 2012). Seen from this perspective, domestic objects "improve rather than deteriorate with age" as wear and tear cultivates "an ongoing narrative and sense of mystique" (Odom & Pierce, 2009, p. 3794). Thus, a well-played game is not 'damaged' but is rather enriched through these visible signs of use, which may include frayed edges, marks and scratches, minor box damage and other signs of wear that result from the handling of game pieces. More deliberate actions – such as adding promotional pieces or cards, inviting an author's signature on the box, inscribing it with the name of the owners, writing on a score sheet, or collecting the names of those who have played a game – further contribute to realising the game not as a sterile artefact but as one with a rich history that enhances, rather than detracts from, its perceived value (Kelly & Gooch, 2012).

This paper arises from the authors' own experiences as players, as well as our observations at gaming events and in gaming media. Rather than surveying players – whose opinions are well documented on hobbyist sites as well as in academic literature – we instead engage with theoretical perspectives on use, disuse and materiality in order to begin developing an understanding of the meaning and value of patina in boardgaming.

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The Magic Esport Strategy: Practices and Criticisms from Competitive Players

Samuel VANSYNGEL¹

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Wizard of the Coast which produce the Trading Card Game Magic: The Gathering, announced in 2018 a new engagement in electronic sport with the launch of Magic Arena, the software reproducing the TCG on computers and online. This new esport strategy from WotC participates in a larger digital and transmedia (Jenkins, 2006) marketing strategy. But what is exactly new in this product? Does it change competitive MTG players' lifestyle? Following the principals of the institutional ethnography (Smith, 2005), this communication aims to put forward the players' reception and the criticism about the new strategy of the firm. I conducted participative observations of 25 competitive rendez-vous in local games stores, from beginner to expert tournaments: playing with competitive players that was a condition to have an access to the place where they fight (Wendling, 2002; Bernard, 2005). I also realized 6 semi-directive interviews with 2 professional players, 2 experts and 2 casual gamers.

The first things to describe is how competitive players talk about their practice of tabletop and online TCG. In local game store, players seem to make no differences between the video game and the tabletop game. However, the majority of tabletop players I discussed with say they already "put a lot of money in the tabletop game" and so do not want "to reproduce that with the video game". In fact, players spend money not only to buy cards (that can cost 1 to 100 euros a card), but also to buy some cosmetics card sleeves and tournaments' tickets. On the contrary, professional players can engage their money and time in both types of the game. For professional players, the online game allows to repeat and train the strategy they will use in tournaments. Also playing in both games (tabletop and online) increase the opportunities to be qualified to major championships and their success.

The second things to observe is how Magic reorganized its competitive system. By creating a Magic Professional League, WotC produces a competitive scene where players (pro) are competing non only for prizes and recognition, but also for a job because the number of places in the MPL is limited to 24. Any player who is performing in a high level may take a place in Rivals League, then in MPL. MPL members are facing a model of competitive management. As an interviewed professional players said "there are a lot of player who are in depression and stress all over the year". They judge this competitive system fully recognize the performance and not the consistency of the players' work.

Finally, the Magic esport strategy seem to have little impact on players' practices in local game stores, but bring an institutional segregation between players: from amateurs, to "rivals" and "professionals". In consequence, the firm transforms the competitive lifestyle of professional players who have to fight for their job.

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Catacomb Games: reused game boards or funeral inscriptions?

Ulrich SCHÄDLER¹

*Director Swiss Museum of Games
ERC Advanced Grant "Locus Ludi",
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Numerous marble slabs inscribed in the shape of a game board for XII scripta/Alea are attested in Christian catacombs in Rome. Often deliberately cut or fragmented, they were used as funeral slabs.

The general opinion is that these game boards have found a secondary use in the funeral context. For example, in his *La Roma sotterranea Cristiana*, Giovanni Battista de Rossi repeatedly used the formula of a *tavola lusoria, tagliata, segata, or adoperata* "per chiudere un loculo", thus indicating that these boards were cut in order to close a burial niche. Max Ihm, who first produced a catalogue of those game boards, wrote: "In den christlichen Begräbnisstätten Roms sind Bruchstücke von Spieltafeln häufig zum Verschluss der loculi benutzt worden". Antonio Ferrua was convinced "che si tratti semplicemente di tavolieri posseduti e usati da antichi cristiani, e poi in mancanza di meglio adoperati a chiudere le bocche dei loro sepolcri nelle catacombe, come una lastra marmorea qualsiasi". Nicholas Purcell shares this opinion and speaks of a "catacomb reuse phenomenon".

In a short article published in *Archéothéma* in 2013, I had raised some doubts about this interpretation. However, most recently, Raffaella Giuliani repeated the hypothesis of such a presumed reuse, saying that these game boards "must have belonged to the owners of the graves during their lifetime, game boards that were kept in the houses, in all the houses, and which turned out to be extremely useful, in size, shape and material, when the owner passed on to a better life and his beloved found themselves in the need to provide a grave".

Therefore, it seems to be necessary to corroborate my hypothesis that at least a certain number, if not most of these "game" boards, were never used before as game boards in the home of the living. Several arguments, as for example practical and ergonomic reasons, the use of sepulchral formulars in the inscriptions as well as decidedly Christian symbols point in another direction. It is more likely to suggest instead, that these boards were produced intentionally as funeral slabs in the shape of XII scripta/Alea boards for allegoric reasons.

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The Digital Ludeme Project Games Database: Compiling Evidence to Reconstruct Historical Games

Walter CRIST¹ and Matthew STEPHENSON²

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The main goal of the Digital Ludeme Project (DLP) is to examine how games are related to one another and to offer reconstructions of the games of the past based on quantitative measures. In the past, reconstructions of ancient and historical games have been based on the subjective application of historical and archaeological sources. In this paper, we demonstrate our methods for compiling historical and archaeological data on games of the past that will allow for quantitative analysis of the evidence that exists, and to propose historically relevant reconstructions. Furthermore, we will offer a preliminary example of how this will work using the game of senet as an example.

The DLP uses a Ludeme Library, a collection of the “game memes” that, when combined into complementary configurations, make up the pieces and rules of the games. These ludemes are associated with games in the Games Database, which will consist of 1000 of the most influential, and representative unique games in human history. Each game in this database is supported by at least one piece of “evidence.” A piece of evidence is considered to be any kind of information that can provide information about the rules of a game, or the places and times in which it was played. These sources come from many types: artifacts, contemporary or historical rules texts, literary allusions, artistic depictions, and ethnographic descriptions. Every piece of evidence used in the project is referenced to a scholarly source, ensuring that every rule, place, and date attributed to a game can be corroborated. This open access database is the first of its kind relating to games, and we anticipate it being a useful tool for scholars of games and history.

Compiling this evidence will allow us to propose reconstructions for games, when used in conjunction with Artificial Intelligence. This database will help us to model the spread of games through time, allowing new methods of analysis not previously applied to games data. Where there are gaps in the historical evidence, we will select ludemes from neighboring cultures, or from the same region but in different time periods, and use AI to evaluate the playability of these reconstructions. In conjunction with historical analysis, this data will allow us to offer more plausible reconstructions than those proposed in the past. These reconstructions may be used in conjunction with other historical data to further discuss the kinds of interactions that lead to the spread of games, and under what circumstances the rules of games changed.

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Transformations into Obscurity: Revisiting the Mehen Board Game and its Unresolved Disappearance in the late 3rd Millennium BC

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The late 4th and early 3rd millennium BC saw the rise in popularity of the mehen board game in Ancient Egypt. Its circular shaped game board with its characteristic coiled serpent as spatial game design appeared in a number of royal burial contexts, as also in inscriptions and wall paintings. Anyhow, a visible decline of *mehen*'s popularity can be observed in the mid 3rd millennium BC, leading ultimately to the total disappearance from the material culture of the Egyptians in the late 3rd millennium. Even though the original rules of the game are obscured, academic scholarship had been not missing out on discussing the game for about a century. But the game's religious and cultural meaning to the Egyptians is still the focal point of most discussions concerning the game, yet it is its disappearance from the archaeological record and apparently from the cultural memory of the Egyptians themselves that stays understudied. How can a game which seems to have been strongly embedded in a cultural memory disappear? And what does the disappearance tell us about the cultural and social entanglements of the game? It is therefore the aim of the paper to offer a comprehensive study on neither a game's emergence, nor its popular existence but rather its unresolved disappearance in order to generate novel conclusions in the academic discourse of *mehen*.

In order to do so, a brief recapitulation on the state of research concerning the *mehen* board game will be given to sketch the latest conclusions revolving around it. Further, two investigative sections will follow of which the first will interrogate the *senet*-theory, which is based on the idea that the *mehen* board game disappeared as it fell in favour for another contemporary board game, namely *senet*. The other section will then apply another theory, which is Jan Assmann's concept of "cultural memory". The theory of "cultural memory" establishes an understanding of how ideas, practices and customs are solidified in the collective memory of a culture and may offer an answer on how these may also disappear. The last section will then conclude the inquiry and offer future prospects concerning the study of lost board games as also its interpretational pitfalls. Nevertheless, synthesising the proposed theories with the archaeological and Egyptological data available, may offer new insights not just to the *mehen* board game but also to new methods of studying ancient board games.

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Where did the games go? – Inquiry of board games in medieval Marathi literature in India

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India has a very prominent traditional board game culture which is evident through numerous game boards & game pieces that are surviving which display its association with the rich culture of crafts. Apart from these sets, there are ample examples of game board graffiti present in various public spaces, temples being one of the most prominent of them. Many scholars, just to name a few, Finkel, Bhattacharya, and Soni (2011); Vasantha (2003); Fritz & Gibson (2007); Rogersdotter (2015), Langendonck (2015), have documented &/or commented on these appearances of game boards in spaces. Most of these documentations are from the region of Karnataka, Tamilnadu & Andhra Pradesh. There are game board surveys from the states of Punjab (Gupta, 1926), Gujarat (Soni & Bagchi, 2011), Marwad (Samanta, 2011), Haryana (Sinha & Bishwas, 2011). But, for some reasons, there is very little work on board games in the state of Maharashtra. Though, the literary documentation of sedentary games of Maharashtra is found in a book by 'A. B. Deodhar' named *Marathi Khelanche Pustak*, published in 1834 and 1896 (?), 1905; it does not touch upon the presence of these games in public spaces.

Overview of traditional board games throws light on their presence in many spaces such as Buddhist caves, temples, and forts in Maharashtra. Saripat (chausar), pat songtya (asta chima) existed in the Marathi household till the earlier generation. But it rarely show its appearance as game board graffiti in spaces in the post Yadav period (14th century). During the same time, the game board graffiti shows its existence in states of Karnataka, Rajasthan till the 17th century. So what happened to the board game culture in Maharashtra? Where did the games go? Did it acquire a different form? The paper tries to inquire the presence / absence of game board graffiti in the 16th, 17th & 18th century Marathi architecture.

The methodology followed for study is documentation of architectural spaces of the period to confirm the presence of game board graffiti's on floors. An array of spaces from Buddhist caves to medieval temples, from forts to palaces is examined. In addition to adopting documentation methodology as explained by Rogersdotter (2015) to just noticing the game boards & their frequencies, their contextual relation with space is also focused on. With respect to Marathi territories, there hasn't been much effort of documentation of these game boards in medieval architectural spaces. Thus the study would be focused on the state of Maharashtra or what is geographically defined by Marathi speaking territory.

The study thus tries to draw a parallel between understanding transitions of spatial entities over the years pointing at parallel transformations of traditional game boards.

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Chaupar Before the Mughals

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Much ink has been spilled, but less sweat poured, over the statement of the Mughal emperor Akbar's court historian Abul Fazl around 1590 that «[f]rom times of old, the people of Hindustan have been fond of this game [i.e. *chaupar*].» Fazl also records that «a mania for chaupar had seized Akbar's court» in 1573, resulting in the Divan, or minister, of the empire being expelled from court after exhibiting all the characteristics of a bad loser. The question, however, remains as to just how old the «times of old» referred to by Fazl actually were. References to chaupar become increasingly scarce before the beginning of the Mughal period in the first half of the 16th century, and no verifiable evidence for the existence of the game prior to the 15th century has as yet been found. The most that has turned up are deliberate misunderstandings and references to backgammon.

The present paper does not attempt to rectify the situation by adding to the pile of unverifiable evidence, but instead suggests a different approach by enquiring into the history of the disparate elements that make up the game. While the idea of a fourarmed board, indicated by the name of chaupar, or four-cloth, can be found in the little known game of phanjika attested in the 12th century, and the throw of five cowries faceup, associated with the variant game of pachisi, or twenty-five, can be found in the game of panchika attested in the 7th century, the idea of placing the pawns on various squares along the track before the beginning of the game can be found in the game of backgammon which seems to have preceded chaupar as the so-called national game of India. It therefore seems plausible that chaupar developed as a result of combining existing game elements into a new whole which took such a hold of the popular imagination that it came to be associated with a host of myths, legends, and scripture going back to the very beginnings of Hindu culture in India.

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Mozambican Games: an initial overview, and contemporary picture of board games In Maputo

Tiago HIRTH¹

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In this talk I propose to share some boardgames played modernly in Mozambique as well as give some insight on the board-game culture and society in Maputo. The games are played among various ethnicities like the Thonga or Makhuwas who play Tchadji / N'txuva (a mancala game played on an 4xn board), or the Makondes N'chuiu (a general designation for mancala family games with multiple variants), Muravarava (Twelve Men Morris, whose name likely derived from the Tchuba tribe mancala game moruba), Guerrilha (a checkers variant), trunfos (a 24 card trick-taking game) and will be presented, both in rulesets as well as in gathered materials. This includes images (video and still) of play, insight gained from multiple informal interviews, observation of play, major source references, and research in local archives.

This investigation was based on anthropological methodology advice given by Alex de Voogt, during BGSC XXII, and further aided, and added to by, Abdul Carimo and António Prista.

This presentation results from my month and a half long visit of Maputo, Mozambique, at the end of 2019, and the resulting observation and inquiry performed during my stay.

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The passion of play: sociology of the (French) “boardgamers”

Vincent BERRY¹

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According to a set of indicators, board games are in France a dynamic cultural sector. This sector has been growing steadily over the last fifteen years (around 400 million euros in turnover for the French sector in 2018), and this development is reflected in an increasing number of games published : in 1996 there were nearly 200 new games on the market, more than 300 in 2006, and nearly 500 in 2014. More than 900 new games were published in 2017 (Berry, 2017). Though the practices and the offer are increasing, we are also witnessing the emergence of a public of players who are particularly passionate about modern board games, and are present at conventions, read boardgame magazines, are members of dedicated forums: the “ludistes”, or “boardgamers”, terms that are sometimes used by the players themselves.

Based on a statistical survey devoted to the study of board game practices, we are interested here in this fringe of enthusiasts. The aim is not only to characterize them sociologically in terms of age, gender and socio-professional category, but also to highlight the way in which the 1980s marked a generational break that resulted in the emergence of a public of «fans» but also a greater educational and cultural value accorded to board games. To do this, we rely on a French sociological survey “Cultures et pratiques ludiques en France: le cas des jeux de société”.

Designed by an interdisciplinary group of researchers and supported by the ELIPSS team, the survey was distributed in 2017 to a randomly selected panel of respondents (n=2582). Divided into four parts, it examined the distribution of board game practices within the French population and the modalities of game activities (partners, frequency, locations, etc.). It also measured the respondents’ “play culture”, understood as their knowledge of the world of board games: from “Snakes and Ladders” to “Magic”, including wargames and role-playing games.

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Learning the rules: Evolution of rules circulation in modern boardgames player community

Jean-Emmanuel BARBIER¹

*EHESS, Paris - Unité de recherche en sciences et techniques du jeu
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When asked about what makes a game a game, the main element pointed to by both the players and the academics are the rules (Brougère 1979, Huizinga 1938 among many others). Even if it's not enough by itself, a game's ruleset is generally perceived as what defines the game or at least the aspect that allows one game to be distinguished from another. At the same time, modern board games are numerous, complex and imply a large variety of mechanisms. And without surprise, core players emphasize this aspect (Barbier 2018).

Based on an ethnographic work among three gaming evening community, with additional aspect of the larger online French-speaking gamer Hobbyist community (Woods), this presentation will focus on the preferred and accessible tools and practices among the player to learn the rules of modern board games and the pleasures, norms and sanction or concerns they connect to it.

At the center of the question lies the will to try and experiment new games which are one of the most central aspects and reason of participation to these gaming evenings. As such it is also a mark of distinction to be familiar with several games' rules. To be able to understand, think, compare and explain these games, and sometimes being able to create house-rules that enhance the experience, is highly valued among the community. But even the most well-versed players only master a limited amount of them (compared to the sheer volume of new edited games per year).

Thus, strategy and social norms around transmitting and learning game rules are an essential part of the player participation to the group, both on an individual or group level. The community at large also produces diverse forms of reification (Wenger 1998) around the same subject, like guidelines on how to explain rules or humorous picture and comics about mishaps or bad/sanctioned habits. New form of communication and industry are not excluded. More specifically, the usage of YouTube Videos, and Digitized versions of games are becoming perceived as more efficient by some player.

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1124 Gomoku games in Mexico: An experimental study of the effect of strategic games in a society

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It is quite interesting to consider how classic board games can evolve into instruments of experimental research in social sciences. Gomoku is an abstract strategy game for two players. It is fairly well documented that strategic board games are powerful tools to develop and measure individual strategic thinking. There is empirical research around the possible effects of strategic games in social interactions, but there is limited research thru experimental or instrumental procedures.

Gomoku was adapted into a paper version with eight printed boards, a positional puzzle and instructions for three to six players. This adaptation was called *Dinamitas*. The objective of the research was to evaluate the reliability and validity of its use as an instrument to measure strategic interactions within groups. The sample was formed by 1252 teenagers (between 13-19 years old) who formed 298 test groups. All groups received standardized rules and played during 25 minutes. The strategic interactions of each group were mainly measured with the mean number of turns to finish each board (X_{Tp}). Secondary measurements were the mean number of lines with four connected marks per board (X_L) and the mean number of occupied center squares (X_C). Complementary measures were the total number of played turns (T_T), finished boards (X_B), tied games (X_E) and the number of correct answers to a positional puzzle (X_A).

The experimental design considered three phases. In the first phase 159 groups played in a casual environment with low control of external variables. The second phase occurred with a selection of 7 groups who play board games on frequent bases, but never played *Dinamitas* before. In the third phase 132 groups played under a controlled environment. Independent variables for the three phases were age, sex and socioeconomic background. Behavioral variables of extra information and incentives were also applied during the third phase. The main measurement (X_{Tp}) showed significant differences (p value = 0) between the three phases (9.59, 13.44 & 12.27 turns to finish). Nevertheless no significant differences were recorded within each phase in relation to age, sex, socioeconomic background, nor the exposure to extra information or incentives. Reliability test of Cronbach's alpha was low for the first phase ($\alpha = 0.3$), but acceptable ($\alpha = 0.7$) for the second and third phases. There is evidence to suggest strategic interactions of groups can be recorded with the *Dinamitas* game. Further cross cultural research is required to fully validate instrument.

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The Evolutions of Board Games - Manufacturing, industry, distribution, retail

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This paper discusses the factors determining the material form of Games of the Goose and allied games up to the beginning of the 20th century.

The earliest games show considerable variety of form: manuscript on paper, painted wood, inlay work, and incised stone are examples. However, the vast majority of surviving games are printed. The key observation underlying this paper is that printed games are only a side-line in any commercial operation, typically constituting under one per cent of the titles offered. Comparisons of the games output with the contemporaneous output of other items from a given establishment have been made, using the Giochidelloca website as the main source for information on games and standard bibliographic sources for information on other output. The comparisons, briefly summarised below, show that the commercial need to follow in-house practices has recognisable consequences for the production of games.

For example, games printed in France before the rise of lithography show great differences between the output of provincial presses using woodblock and that of the Paris print houses using copper engraving. One difference is that of paper size, where these games tended to be fitted to sizes in common use in the establishment concerned, these in turn being suited to the available printing presses. However, Goose and allied games often require text to appear with the image and different printing techniques demand that this challenge is met in different ways. Similar considerations apply to games from the Netherlands. By contrast, in England copper engraving was paramount for games in the era before lithography, with only occasional use of woodblocks to reduce cost. Cost was a particularly strong driver at the bottom end of the market, when using pedlars as distributors (colportage) necessitated a compact format.

Colouring processes, too, were influenced by in-house practices. For example, the French provincial houses used colouring by *pochoir* for playing cards, and this was used for games too. In contrast, the earliest English producers were map sellers, where accurate hand colouring by brush was usual. The presentation and packaging of the game sheet was likewise influenced by in-house practice, so that the English establishments offered games dissected and mounted on linen, folded into a slip case, as for travelling maps. This was much less common in French practice.

With the advent of lithography, printing constraints were relaxed, images and text being easy to combine, and by the end of the 19th century chromolithography provided affordable colour. The earlier constraints were no longer influencing the form of printed games.

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Playing Game: Nonhuman pedagogies, nineteenth-century British race games, and the phylogeny of zoomorphic board games

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There is a long-intertwined history of the nonhuman animal and the board games we humans play. Competitions of various sorts in ancient and indigenous cultures involve animal imagery, the original meaning of which is today obscured or lost entirely. Their board games are often zoomorphic, and, while often played for entertainment and financial gain, on occasion they are imbued with profound cosmic or cyclical significance. Zoomorphic games re-emerged in the 19th century, particularly in Georgian England, where images of the nonhuman animal overlaid by game structures intertwined to provide common sense constructions about playing the game and reading the animal. Consider the didactic games of London children's publishers John Harris (1756-1846) and Wm. Darton, Jr. (1781-1854). Their 'amusing and instructive' race games (contained within the shapes of swans, elephants, ostriches, and dolphins) provided no clear explanation of the relation between content and form; it was presumably enough to present these particular nonhuman animals as vectors for juvenile instruction because of a priori assumptions about their perceived sagacity.

Thus, examining Harris and Darton's race games further, this paper takes a closer look at how early 19th-century attitudes, prejudices, and sympathies to nonhuman animals filtered through this transparent mesh of rules, chance, and gaming ephemera. The research aims at presenting new perspectives on the evolution of board games during the nineteenth century in Britain by highlighting its traces of two intertwined practices: the appropriation of zoomorphic forms for race games and the concomitant making of them into pedagogical tools. It also presents one example – *The Noble Game of the Elephant and Castle* – where the conference's evolutionary theme coalesces with that of pre-Darwinian theories of catastrophism; namely, the incorporation of Adam's mammoth as an enumerated space on the zoomorphic board.

The Swan of Elegance; The Noble Game of the Swan; The Majestic Game of the Asiatic Ostrich; The Royal Game of the Dolphin – the common-sense inscription of different characters of gameplay and virtues to nonhuman bodies suggested by these titles is what this paper attempts to challenge; mainly by asking: What are the interrelationships between the nonhuman and game? In what ways is the ascription of a game and its particular rules to the nonhuman animal reflective of contemporary views surrounding said nonhuman animal's behaviour, or the symbolic value it is purported to hold among humans? In short, what distinguishes a board game as animal?

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German Names for Merels

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This onomasiological presentation is concerned with the naming practices for merels, in particular the German terms and their history. Merels (also called Nine Men's Morris) is a family of traditional board games with ancient roots. It encompasses games played on a smaller board with three pieces per player, or on a larger board with nine pieces per player, as well as other variants. In each case the objective is to align three pieces of one's own colour.

Several European languages know more than a single name for the game, whether in historic succession or synchronous use. Across languages the terms often appear to be either cognates or loanwords. Calvo & Schädler (*Das Buch der Spiele*, 2009, p. 301f.) point out two naming traditions: On the one hand the Latin words *marrus/merellus* are the root for names of the game in Western Europe, particularly in Romanic languages (e.g. French *marelle/mérelle*; Catalan *marro*; English *merels* and similar variants, cf. Murray 1952: 38). On the other hand many languages employ terms meaning or stemming from words for "mill" (e.g. German *Mühle*; Dutch *molenspel*, Danish *mølle*; Icelandic *mylna*; Swedish *Kvarnspel*; Czech *mlyn*; Russian *melnitsa/melnichny*; Hungarian *malom*; Finnish *mylly*). This naming tradition is younger than the former, and has partly replaced the terms based on *merellus* (e.g. French *jeu du moulin*; Spanish *juego del molino*). Parlett assumes that the German *Mühle* is the origin of this naming tradition.

This presentation looks closely at the German names for merels games, starting with a doubtful Middle High German candidate (*mîle*) and continuing with *Neunstein* and its variants (nowadays mainly in use in Switzerland) and *Mühle* (the common name in the Germany). Based on philological evidence (partly pulled from lexicographical data) I will outline the evolution of German terms for merels. The motivation behind the name *Mühle*, specifically, has not been sufficiently explained so far. Potential reasons why the concept of a "mill" could have been adopted to refer to this game will be discussed.

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Board games and cognition: a step forward in the educational use of board games

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Since ancient times, board games have been frequently used in educational perspective. They have been considered, explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously, instruments to convey cultural, social, philosophical or mystical values. The *Ludus Latruncolorum* became a tool of romanization at the northern frontier of the empire (Pace, 2015), while in the Bronze Age Cyprus Senet and Mehen carved into limestones were used by the inland people to gather and celebrate their social relations, on the other side, the 20 square game excavated on a coastal site, could be a tool of social interaction among the Cypriots elites and the traders from the Syrian cities (Crist, 2017). The astragals could be considered also a fortune teller and amulets (Bianchi, 2015). Finally, the Weiqi was considered, in China, a way to elevate the spirit (Fairbairn, 2008).

Currently, the use of games and board games for extra gaming purpose is called gamification and consist in the exploitation of certain aspects of the gaming activity that could simplify some kind of emotional or intellectual interaction (Deterling, 2011).

Since 2010, also the italian association of history teachers is trying to gamify some teaching and learning practices (Tibaldini, 2015). History courses, in Italy, are indeed affected by many bias and issues generated by a wide misconception of the aims of history teaching (Mattozzi, 2011).

A teaching program based on the mnemonic learning of dates, names and locations, is generally applied from primary to high school, making history one of the most difficult discipline to deal with (Ciari, 1978). The part of the gamification project previously implemented has been discussed at the XIX BGS Colloquium. Three years after, the project produced more materials thanks to an interaction between historical epistemology and cognitive psychology, modifying also our perspective about the gamification process. This new gamification approach, focus on the abstractive escalation of cognitive procedures that ground a complex skill, like the ones required by history learning, and produced a series of gaming activities which has been tested in primary school, university courses and teacher's trainings.

The level we reached in this kind of educational gamification seems to be unprecedented, and with my eventual speech at the BGS 2020 I would like to present a detailed analysis of one of this gaming activity, explain its complex cognitive background and its pedagogical architecture. The presentation would be supported by the quantitative and qualitative data emerged from the testing activity.

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Evolving the Argument: Rule Modification for History Teaching and Research

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Board games are useful teaching tools in the history classroom. They can be used to introduce periods, events, and themes. They can present historical figures and regions to be explored through interaction. Their rules can be used to demonstrate historical arguments, which may be parsed and interrogated through play.

These qualities make board games valuable for pre-university level teaching, but are insufficient to justify their use within most university classrooms or within academic historical research. To conduct historical study at this level, students and academics must be able to criticise varied historical arguments and ultimately they must be able to construct their own arguments and counter-arguments.

In this paper, I argue that board games may be used to accomplish this advanced level of historical study through user modification. By evolving the rules, mechanics, and objectives of a historical game players may change the historical arguments it represents. In doing so, they participate in a ludic form of historical debate. They engage with the historiography represented by the game and use it to formulate their own arguments. I argue that this represents a valid form of historical study and is a worthwhile approach for high level teaching and even academic research.

This paper presents a practical demonstration of this approach through an ongoing project at the University of Winchester. This project uses the creation, play and modification of a custom-made table-top game as a tool for historical debate around the Investiture Contest in eleventh century Italy. Students play the basic game, consider the limits of the games' mechanics (and hence its arguments), before developing their own user modifications based on their research and understanding of the period: effectively presenting their own arguments about the period in ludic form.

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Imagine a playful city: Board game-based expert interviews

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This presentation gives account of a series of expert interviews on the topic of playful cities conducted in 2019 with the material aid of the boardgame *Imagine*. It is not unusual that games find their way in the university. If the ludification of culture (Raessens 2006) has reinforced the importance of play in education (giving rise, for example, to game-based learning and to the gamification of education), it has also introduced games to scientific research both to communicate it (e.g. the project “Ma recherche en 180 briques” from Paris 13) and to develop it (the most famous case is *Fold it*).

In this research, a set of expert interviews have been conducted using a boardgame in order to gather perspectives on how a playful city might look like. In particular, the game *Imagine* (2015) by Shingo Fujita, Shotaro Nakashima and Hiromi Oikawa was utilized. This game features 61 transparent cards, that can be placed next to one another or superimposed by the players to represent “almost everything in the world”. The original game requires players to draw a card that indicates an object or a situation, and then use the transparent cards to make the other players guess it. In the expert interviews, instead, the game was “hijacked” by asking the participants to use the cards to represent a playful city, and then asking them to explain their creation.

In this way, the creativity and range of expression of the interviewees is limited by some *semiotic constraints* – the limited number of transparent cards and the things that are represented on them. Constraints, in facts, are highly productive and foster creativity in design (Gross 1985) as well as in art (cf. Haugth Tromp 2017). The use of *Imagine* cards, therefore, encourages the interviewees to set aside their assumptions and re-elaborate their perspectives.

The interviews have produced nine images of playful cities that differ greatly from one another. These images, then, have been approached through a protocol of semiotic analysis inspired by Semprini’s study of the representations of the Metro of Paris by its users (1990). In particular, the analysis focused on the spatial organization represented (the creation of scenes, stories or environments, the use of cards to create 3D or multi-layered elements), on the uses of the images of the cards (single or combined, iconic or symbolic) and on comparative analyses of the elements represented.

The analysis was able to highlight several isotopies in the interviewees idea of a playful city (for example, the importance of bikes, featured in almost all representations, or the presence of animals in the urban spaces) as well as a few unique but highly relevant perspectives (as the impact of terrorism on urban play, or the importance to account for uninvolved citizens).

In conclusion, this study gathers some relevant insights on urban playfulness and, more importantly shows the potential of using board games or board game elements in expert interviews.

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House Rules: The Evolution of Gameplay and the Art of Negotiation

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According to Salen and Zimmerman (2003), the constitutive, operational, and implicit “rules of play” influence and govern the methodological approaches of its users. When one or more supposition is questioned, players may experience an impasse in gameplay unless the contrivances of negotiation are employed. As tabletop players interact and engage, they begin to evolve practices and strategies to accommodate for unique and idiosyncratic milieux.

This paper examines navigating the world of gameplay through the evolution of practices, players, and strategies. With an historical and sociological lens, I analyze the leverage of the board game designer and published instructional booklet (manual) against the culture, tradition, language, and gender of the players. Whether players come together for weekly gatherings or welcome new participants, game play is not limited to the actual occurrence. In fact, stages of operation ensue before, during, and after the board has been placed on the table. Through qualitative observational research, I note the power of descriptive and emotive language, the art of negotiation and pictorial images to illustrate mechanics of game play as well as detail how technology and social media also influence outcomes of contemporary play.

Ultimately, the findings gleaned from this research create a space to foster conversations about the art of negotiation and the power of persuasion. Although board games offer a shared historical framework for players, gamers’ frames of reference filter the interpretation of rules of play and “house rules” evolve into a functionally accepted practice.

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Framing nature conservation, conflicts and collaboration in the design of a serious board game

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Games can become engaging devices (Marres 2009), drawing publics into discussion on and assessment of, different issues, proposed policies or potential policy outcomes. Biodiversity offsetting (BDO) is a relatively new nature conservation policy tool for reconciling nature conservation with other land uses. Biodiversity offsetting means that local losses in biodiversity are offset by producing or conserving same or similar biodiversity values (habitats for protected species). We have wanted to intervene in the public discussion on emerging governance of biodiversity offsetting in Finland by designing a board game (“Kompensaatiopeli”) on biodiversity offsetting and playing it with representatives of central stakeholders who will soon encounter the issue in their everyday activities as the policy development proceeds in Finland. The aim of the Kompensaatiopeli game is to simulate the complexities around BDO and encourage players discuss them, as well as power inequalities, nature conservation and land use planning together.

Simulating complex phenomena always means simplification and choosing what to include and exclude, and how to frame the simulated issue(s). Unlike often in game design - and design in general - (Kultima & Sandovar 2016), we discussed explicitly about our value propositions, how we wanted to frame BDO in our game and how this affected the design choices made during the process. Biodiversity offsetting can be seen and framed in diverse ways, eg. as a competition for land resources, offer and demand like in another BDO game described by Bull & Strange (2017), or a neutral, technical tool to solve land use disputes, or as a neoliberal encroachment to the realm of our relationship with nonhuman nature (Apostopoulou & Adams 2017). Our aim was to frame biodiversity offsetting in the game as a complex, uncertain and disputed policy tool and practice, embedded in the societal relationships and power structures of land use planning, development and nature conservation. We used several different solutions to achieve this.

The design process was iterative as is typical in game development (e.g. Fullerton 2014, 15-21). Throughout the process, we discussed the message and values we wanted the game to convey amongst ourselves but also with stakeholders in game test session. These were modelled after participatory design methodology (Spinuzzi 2005), to engage our stakeholders in the design process. Participatory design allowed us to use the game design process itself as a way of discussing the key issues of biodiversity offsetting and to learn from both the topic matter, and game design. We collected user experiences throughout the design process and this allowed us to implement the changes fast into the playable prototypes. We played with team members already on the early phases of the development which was crucial for the project, as this allowed utilizing their expertise on the subject matter for keeping the scientific content as accurate as possible (Illingworth & Wake 2019). We also introduced stakeholders into the game design process by playtesting with them, and used their experiences, reactions and expertise to further develop the game.

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Cultural evolution, cultural transmission and the role of board games

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While the history of board games has benefited from the methods developed in archaeology, history, linguistics and the social sciences, it is only recently that the potential of board games to add insight into broader historical questions has been explored. Both quantitative and qualitative studies of board games have shown how game boards, pieces, and dice assist in the interpretation of archaeological sites, historical populations and contact across time and space (e.g., Hall 2016, Schädler 2007, de Voogt et al. 2013).

In this presentation, the potential of board game studies for several social science disciplines is outlined with a focus on cultural transmission theory. The latter is a highly interdisciplinary theoretical approach that has principles of cultural evolution at its basis. Starting with an overview of studies on cultural transmission that included game boards as well as dice (e.g., Eerkens & de Voogt 2018) and continuing with some ongoing projects in this field, the presentation shows the potential of this kind of research with the current material available in board game studies.

The potential of board games for advancing the theory of cultural transmission is at least partially impeded by a long-standing focus on descriptive historical studies of board games. Following up descriptive studies with theory-driven analyses is a leap that requires more than ambition and interest. It is suggested that collaborations between theory-oriented and descriptive specialists, especially in the case of large available datasets, are crucial to make this happen.

The presentation concludes with several examples where the potential for collaboration is particularly salient. It highlights the required amount of detail of descriptions that is necessary to allow for quantitative analyses and recommends next steps.

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The Genetics of Games

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This paper addresses the topic of “Evolutions of Board Games” in a very literal sense; we explore whether the historical record may contain sufficient evolutionary signal to allow the creation of meaningful “family trees” representing the development of the various families of games throughout recorded history.

For almost every concept found in biological genetics – genotype, phenotype, inheritance, dominance, horizontal/vertical gene transfer, etc– we can find plausible analogies in the development of games, but this does not mean that the same fundamental mechanisms of transmission apply. We look at how these analogies should be interpreted in this context, how we might adapt the principles in a meaningful way to shed new light on the evolution of games.

Phylogenetic techniques have been successfully applied to a range of cultural domains such as mapping the dispersal of human language. Potential benefits of these approaches include the facility to perform *ancestral state reconstructions* – e.g. identifying ludemeplexes likely to have occurred in ancestral games based on their geographical, historical and cultural context – and the detection of possible missing links, in the form of games that would explain some gap in the evolutionary record but for which no evidence exists.

Unfortunately, phylogenetic analyses of games have not provided much insight into the situation to date. Special care must be taken to avoid false analogies between anthropological and biological models, especially when confusion between the genotype and phenotype of the artefacts being modelled produces classifications based on superficial traits rather than meaningful underlying structures.

Games do not contain the traces of genetic heritage that biological organisms do. They are typically optimised with superfluous elements stripped out, making their heritage hard to trace. We propose new distance metrics including *ludemic distance* and *functional game distance*, in lieu of an actual genetic distance between individuals and explore how far these distances are suitable for use with distance-based methods for phylogenetic reconstructions. We compare this with character-based phylogenetic methods (such as maximum parsimony and maximum likelihood) that compare historical entities on a trait by- trait basis.

Many phylogenetic analyses rely on vertical gene transfer and an assumption of time constancy, neither of which can be assumed in the development and dispersal of games; the “borrowing” of ideas from other sources is prevalent. Methods for the construction of highly complex reticulate evolutionary histories are emerging in biology, but their application in the cultural domain is not yet mature. We investigate alternative methods such as Horizontal Influence Maps (HIMs) for deriving partial insights into these histories.

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A Timeline of Mind Games, with some correlations, II: Board Games and ‘Axial Age’

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In a sequel of my presentation of last year in Bologna, I will come back more in detail on the appearance of board games of pure strategy around c.500 BCE. That two regions of the world – Greece and China – are the only known places where such games appear before the turn of the Common Era is an interesting fact, particularly if we draw a parallel with the historical contexts. Indeed, Greece and China were driven in a very similar situation at more or less the same time: warring small states and cities, development of trading, introduction of metallic coinage, and moreover an unheard of wave of ‘critical thinking’ springing from a bunch of philosophical schools, some of which led by prominent figures like Pythagoras, Socrates, Confucius, Laozi, and many others). This is also the time when Athens ‘invents’ the model of the city (and democracy), in Greek polis, in a striking parallel with the new game of the same name.

Actually this period, spanning from 600 to 200 BCE has for long been singled out by historians of philosophy and religions, being called “Axial Age” (*Achsenzeit*) by the German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) in his book *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (1949 – English trans. *The origin and goal of history*, 1953). For Jaspers the “Axial Age” could be extended to other regions of the world, like Persia, India, and Second Temple Israel. The theory has become the subject of many books and conferences, with of course diverging views, but there is consensus on three countries that offer the same evolution with little derivation in time and facts: Greece, India and China. They are what B.A. Scharfstein (1998) has called the “three philosophical civilizations”. I therefore contend that there was a particular historical context that may explain why board games of pure strategy, like go (*weiqi*) and *polis*, appear there, but also that India could have developed such board games at the same time. Unfortunately we know very little about board games in ancient India (i.e. before 200 BCE), but *aṣṭāpada* and *daśapada* should be reconsidered in the light of this theory.

My evolutionary system also shows that there is a strong correlation between the appearance of early board games and that of the ‘state’. This indeed can be demonstrated anywhere. And we can draw two (provisional) conclusions: 1) a board game is more likely to appear in a ‘civilization’; 2) a ‘state society’, once ascertained, must have board games. I know of no counter-examples.

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The development of facilitation practices about board games play in France 1969-2019

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The present work relies on the documentary archives of the ALF, which includes:

- publications and studies about play and games;
- publications of the ALF annual summer schools and 2008 international toy libraries congress;
- statistical survey results about French toy libraries;
- assessments of the formations delivered to toy librarians.

Results and discussion

The analysis of the material above allows to distinguish three major steps in the evolution of facilitation practises.

First, a time of separation between adult and child games practises, where the facilitation mostly consisted in giving access to well known contents.

Secondly, the rise of a new paradigm in the early 1990s with the spread of the practise of contemporary board games and the boom of the editorial production. The challenge was then to inform about this new hobby and increase its practise.

Finally (and as the process above is still going on to reach new populations), the most recent objective seems to be a social recognition of the cultural dimension of board games as object and of play practises. However, at the same time, we are confronted to the increase of an utilitaristic vision of board games. This can lead to conflictual kind of practises and speeches, and we can assume this is linked with the increases of approaches of games as formal systems over games as playful contents.

Conclusion

The evolutions of the past 50 years can be summarized as follow:

- an evolution of the audience of the facilitation practises, from children to adults,
- an evolution of the facilitation practises themselves, from material to cultural accessibility,
- an evolution of the facilitation practises objectives, with a conflict between preservation of play and use of board games as tools.

We can still notice a constant in the defence of the positive effects on the player and the society induced by the practise of play and games.

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Why and how do some teachers create board games for their students?

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The use of board games for educational purposes is not so widespread in French schools, but has met with renewed interest in institutional discourse in recent years, under the guise of educational innovation. In this context, some teachers begin to create games for their students, from elementary school to higher education. The objective of our presentation is to provide a framework for analysis and description of the actual activities for the design of such educational materials, looking like recreational entertainment materials such as board games, card games and escape games. What motivates these teachers to engage in the design of such new games? What ways of thinking are at work in the design process, in what time frames? What contextual elements are involved in this process?

From the study of a few cases of teachers who retrospectively explained the genesis of the game they designed, our theoretical proposals will build on previous scientific work carried out in educational sciences.

We will wonder how recent research in science and technical didactics, aimed at characterizing the ordinary work of secondary school teachers when they develop their course material supports (Maitre et al., 2018, Huchette et al., 2018), can shed light on this process of game design. This development, qualified as “artisanal”, strongly engages the subjectivity of the teacher – the idea that he has of his role and his discipline, mobilizes social relationships that go beyond the professional environment and fits into a certain picture of the global economy of his work.

We will also use concepts and typologies recently developed in the field of game-based learning research to describe the effective practices of innovative teachers mobilizing various pedagogical strategies based on the use of games in the classroom (Kangas et al., 2017, Nousiainen et al., 2018).

We will finally question how the game creation processes thus described contribute in the professional development of teachers-game designers.

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The Japanese market, shifting from amateurship to professionalization

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The board game market in Japan is mainly seen through a fantastical lens of Orientalism rather than that of an understanding of its real development and distinctive cultural features. With a large population and a public with very volatile tastes, where surprising fashions are made and unmade at the speed of light, the national board game industry seems to be struggling within Japan. Western publishers as well as Asian countries with an increasing interest in this industry (Taiwan, or South Korea to name a few), followed by local publishers are trying to widen the audience for board games, without any real success. In particular, what are the current developments happening within Japan? Surprisingly, although there is a huge commercial potential in an economic downturn and diminishing prospects, have become the reality.

After eight years working as a coordinator between French publishers and Japanese designers and publishers, we can firmly assure that the Tokyo Game Market, a public event often perceived with curiosity and enthusiasm by board gamers and foreign publishers, remains today the best event to observe the evolution of the public and the world of Japanese publishing. Designers, naturally assimilated as publishers of their own games, are generally amateurs, self-financed, driven by objectives where sales figures, percentage of copyright and publishing contracts are aspirational and little known concepts, giving way to only the fulfillment of their passion. The Japanese gaming world is undergoing transformations that outside observers find difficult to interpret, and it is essential to intervene today, looking at it through the lens of economic sociology to help decipher what this potentially large market envisions for tomorrow. The major changes currently underway in the Japanese board game industry are mainly oriented around the professionalization of publishing and authorship.

After more than 10 years of experiencing success through the sourcing of Western publishers, via Japanese organizations helping designers in Essen or Gencon (notably Japon Brand, but also sourcing specialists), small publishing companies are starting to develop ambitions that recall the changes that the European markets experienced. The objective of this presentation, will be to show what changes have taken place in recent years, by what means these have been implemented, how amateur designers began to realize that making a living out of their passion was an achievable goal, and how the entire market is about to move from a primarily amateur system to a more established market which tends towards globalization.

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Mechanical identical, aesthetically different: thinking about game feel in table-top games

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Perhaps there's more ways to making an engaging game than only presenting the player with Sid Meier's "a series of interesting decisions" (2012). Rather than only focussing on the attributes of skill and choice we could look at how the player experiences a game moment to moment. Consider the kinaesthetic pleasure of moving pieces and how illusions of choice can potentially be an effective tool in creating an experience for a game. This notion of 'game feel' is not new, it is already being explored in digital games, looking specifically at the way a game responds to a player's input (Swink, 2008). However, there is still opportunity to further explore the concept within table-top gaming.

To understand a players experience we will utilise the MDA (Mechanics, Dynamics Aesthetic) approach (Hunicke et al, 2004). Hunicke et al, discuss how the players of a game and the designer of that game experience it with different perspectives. Designers create rules, which are enacted, allowing the player to experience the game. Players experience the game through the system, which is created from the rules determined by the designer. However, the designer should also try to consider the perspective of the player in order to help create their game.

Therefore, any mechanical change made in the game will have an effect on the aesthetic experience for the player. However, there is a subset of mechanical changes that only change the experience for the player and don't affect the system of the game itself. For example, we could change the material of components, present choices in different ways or create an easier way for players to add up points without changing the system. In order to explore the effects of these changes a game where the mechanical adaptations only affect the players' aesthetic experience and do not at all adjust the system of the game will be utilised.

By using a simple two-player game where the randomly selected highest card wins, providing the player with no meaningful choices, we will examine the possibility of 'game feel' for tabletop game design. This paper will look at material choice, rituals and actions, illusions of choice and simplification of design in order to explore and examine the notions of game feel in tabletop games. This will show the importance of mechanics that have a purely aesthetic effect on the player.

In the end, whatever one considers is required to make playing a game engaging, designing a game is certainly a series of interesting decisions.

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Hybridization as an approach to board game design: some examples

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Hybridization is one of the means of speciation known in the natural world, and might be a useful tool in the development of new board games and variants, as hopefully demonstrated by the following examples: 1. Turkish Great Chesquerque, based on George R. Deckle Sr.'s Chesquerque and the reconstructed and reformed rules of Turkish Great Chess as presented by Markov & Härtel (in press).

The original Chesquerque – itself a hybrid game to some extent – is played on a 9x9 grid, a board consisting of four Alquerque boards combined (or, effectively, a Zamma board). Turkish Great Chesquerque uses the setup of Turkish Great Chess on a 13x13 grid (nine Alquerque boards combined). The latter can be used for an enhanced Zamma variant.

2. A series of games based on David Reynold's Lincoln, or Modern, Circular Chess: 2.1. Circular Janus Chess, moving Werner Schöndorf's game to a circular board of 80 spaces; 2.2. Circular Modern Courier Chess, based on Paul Byway's 96-squares game; 2.3. Circular Decimal Moldovan Chess, based on a game invented by F. Skripchenko; 2.4. Circular Verney's Duodecimal Chess on a board of 144 spaces. Draughts variants for the circular boards of 64, 80, 100 and 144 spaces are introduced. 3. Imperial Fortress Chess, a four-handed game based on the reformed rules for Turkish Great Chess by Markov & Härtel (in press) and Russian Four-Handed Fortress Chess. 4. CheZ99, designed by the authors in 2012, using ideas from different traditional variants, and a four-handed version of the former.

A brief discussion of hybrid vigour and outbreeding depression is provided, with musings on “authored” vs. “traditional” variants.

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A Ludii analysis of the French Military Game

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The French Military Game (*Jeu militaire*) was described and analyzed for the first time by Édouard Lucas (1842-1891), in an article published in 1887 in the journal *La Nature*. According to him, the Military Game was in vogue in the military circles at that time, since the game was designed by Louis Dyen, a retired sub-lieutenant, during his spare time. The officers' journal (*Bulletin de la réunion des officiers*) of August 1886 claimed that the game gives a clear idea of the strategic maneuvers used by three cavalry brigades to cut the communication of a member of the army.

The game is played on a board composed of 12 isosceles triangles, which form 11 stations and 22 lines connecting the stations. Three white towers and one black army corps are placed on the board in an initial specific position. White wins if they manage to encircle Black; otherwise, if after a number of moves – determined in advance – White has not blocked the army, Black wins. White can move one tower at a time of one step forward, or diagonally forward or sideways, while Black can move one step in any direction.

In this work we are using the Ludii system (<http://ludii.games>), a General Game System with the ability to analyse the strategic potential of games. Ludii currently includes more than 200 games, including several variants of the French Military Game.

In his analysis, Lucas stated that White can always win in at most 12 moves. Ludii confirms this statement, demonstrating that White can force a win with this sequence of moves (using the indices in the picture): Move(4-5), Move(3-4), Move(5-10), Move(8-5), Move(10-6), Move(4-8), Move(6-2), Move(0-1), Move(2-7), Move(5-10), Move(7-6), Move(1-5), Move(6-2), Move(8-4), Move(2-6), Move(4-0), Move(6-2), Move(0-1), Move(2-7), Move(5-2), Move(7-6), Move(1-5), Move(6-7), Move(5-6).

Consequently, this automatic analysis of the French Military Game done by Ludii, can be used to prove certain mathematical properties of games. In the future, we plan to do similar types of analysis for many other traditional games in the context of the Digital Ludeme Project (<http://ludeme.eu>).

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Game Design Lessons from Chess History: Importance of the “Meta” in the Formal Evolution of Games

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Commonplace game design wisdom stipulates that games are bettered through an iterative process (manuals such as Salen and Zimmerman 2003, Fullerton 2008 and Schell 2008) abundantly emphasize this). In this perspective, it would be reasonable to assume that classic games that have undergone hundreds of years of evolution have reached particularly high standards of elegance and balance (such as is argued by Elias et al. 2012). Analyzing their evolution should therefore inform us not only on these games themselves but also on the more general game design logics at work in their shaping over time.

In this paper I would like to submit chess to a game design historical analysis. Chess is arguably amongst the most canonical and culturally meaningful games across the world. While it is ubiquitous in game design discourse as an uber example, the process through which it reached its current state is rarely discussed, as if it had been found as is in nature. The rich existing historical scholarship on the game (when compared to most other games) allows us to get a sense of the different steps that led to its standardized rules (Murray 2015 [1913] and Eales 1985 amongst others). For example, we know that one of the most radical changes in this surprisingly stable ~1200 year history is the move towards “queen’s chess” at the turn of the 16th century; but how can this be explained in game design terms? What was wrong with the game that needed to be fixed at that time, and why had it not been done in the 700 previous years of chess playing? These are important questions that can help shed light on innovation in games even as it is done professionally today.

The methodology at work in this project is what I call a “game design history of games” (see Lessard 2013, 2014, 2015 for other case studies) -- that is a re-analysis of primary or secondary sources on the history of games through the lens of the recently developed scholarship on game design. It is inspired by the design history frameworks of Petrovski (1993) and Bijker (1995) that posit the social construction of designed objects and their shifting signification across cultural and historical landscapes. The key posture is to identify historical changes in game rules and question what contemporaries identified as a problem in the game that needed improvement (why this? Why then? Why there? etc.).

In the context of chess, the analysis yields very interesting insights on the pressure of social, cultural and play-style changes on a game’s rules.

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Women as board-game designers

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This communication, based on a master's thesis, will present the results of a study about game design and the place of female authors in this activity. The study is based on both quantitative and qualitative data: interviews of French female board-game designers and statistics about the presence of women in various areas of the creative process.

The female involvement in this activity is extraordinarily low as shown in the following tables: [not reproduced in this abstract]

The researcher will put her results in parallel with the situation in other creative circles and will present some hypotheses about the situation of women in board game design.

The presentation will be an opportunity to present the conclusions of the thesis.

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Presentation of the 2022 24th BGS Colloquium in Leeuwarden

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Mr. Bert Looper, director of Tresoar, Mrs. Martha Kist, account manager of the Mind Sports Collection Centre and Dr. Liuwe Westra, advisor of the Mind Sports Collection Centre Tresoar, welcome all participants of the Board Game Studies Colloquium to Leeuwarden in 2022. The Colloquium will be held in Tresoar, the Frisian Historical and Literary Center. Tresoar is the official scientific library of Frisia, and also the Mind Sports Collection Centre for all of the Netherlands.

The theme of the BGS Colloquium 2022 will be *Ludus in Academia*. This theme refers to Tresoar's past as the University library of Franeker (1585-1811) but also addresses the question, what scientific research tells us about the history, the connections and the essence of games?

A next sub-theme is games as part of academic life all over the world. Many games were developed by students and gained popularity in the social context of a university, leading to further social spread. Games and learning are a classical combination, and we would like to highlight just that.

Finally, games are part of modern society and as such subject of scientific research. Games can mirror group processes and can be used by governments and other influencers of society. Therefore, games are *in Academia* to gain insight in the nature and behaviour of humankind.

As one of the recent European Capitals of Culture (2018), as seat of the eleventh faculty of the University of Groningen and as home of the age-old academic library of Franeker, the city of Leeuwarden will be proud to host the next Board Game Studies Colloquium in 2022!

The 24th BGSC will take place from Tuesday May 17th to Friday May 20th in Leeuwarden.

The program includes an excursion to the former University city of Franeker.

More details and a call for papers will be presented on the Tresoar website, www.tresoar.nl, after summer.

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