

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

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

11. The defenders win the game when the king

reaches any square on the edge of the board.

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

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## TABLUT

### INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

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

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

From the east, however, hne-

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

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

brought about a great variety of alternative interpretations.

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

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

## HOW TO PLAY

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

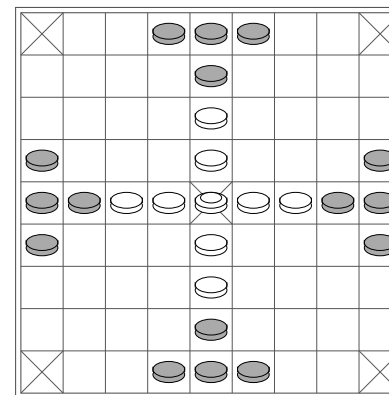


Figure 1: The initial layout for tablut.

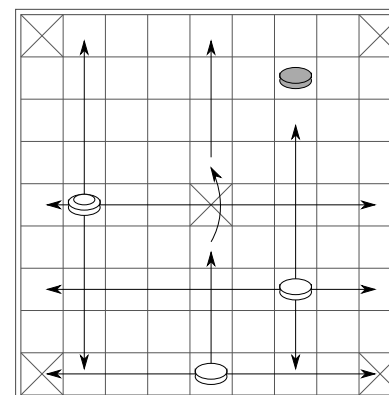


Figure 2: Examples of movement for the king and defenders.