

ACTIVITY 1.2

PLAYING MEDIEVAL BOARD GAMES

Note: Activities provided courtesy of Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service, United Kingdom. Learn more at <http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/>.

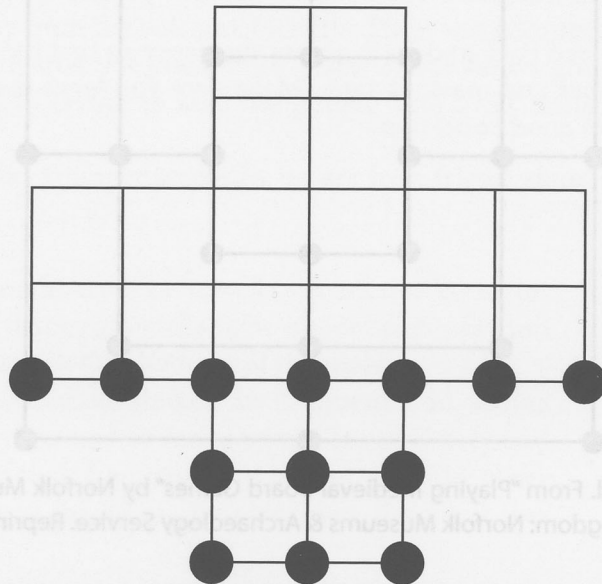
Nine-Man's Morris

_____ is one of two medieval board games (the other being Fox and Geese) that were carved by prisoners when Norwich Castle Museum was a prison. They are both now on display in the Castle Keep (central tower). Prisoners probably used small pieces of stone or the seeds from pieces of fruit for counters.

Use the layouts in the images provided to create your own medieval board games. Don't forget to make the counters as well! Perhaps you could use painted pebbles or even dried fruit seeds, the way actual medieval players did.

Fox and Geese

Although Fox and Geese became very popular in medieval Europe, it's now believed that the game originated in Iceland because it was first mentioned there in about 1300, before it appeared in Europe.



Layout of Fox and Geese.

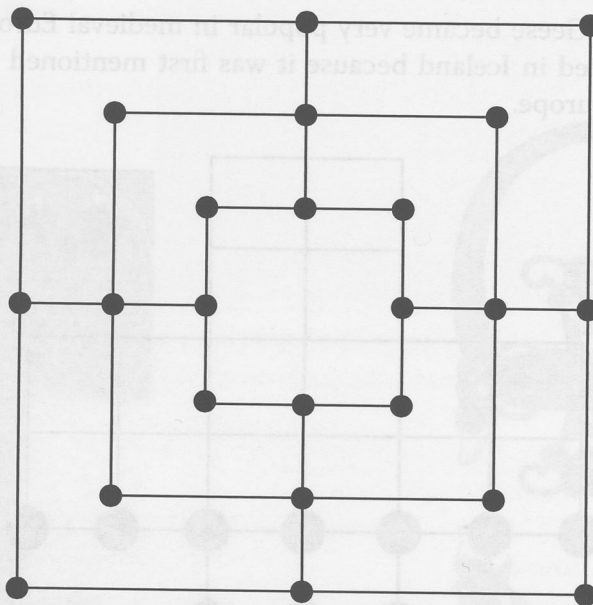
Activity 1.2: Playing Medieval Board Games, continued

The Rules of the Game

- » Fox and Geese is played between two people. One player has one counter (the fox), and the other player has 13 counters (the geese).
- » Arrange the geese as shown in the Fox and Geese layout. The fox can go on any vacant spot.
- » The fox and geese can move along a line in any direction but can only move to the next free place.
- » The fox can take a goose by jumping over a goose onto a vacant point (just like in draughts or checkers). Two or more geese can be removed in a series of short leaps (again like draughts or checkers).
- » The geese cannot jump over the fox.
- » The player moving the geese will win if he or she can prevent the fox from moving.
- » The player moving the fox wins when he or she reduces the number of geese by so much that it is impossible to stop the fox from moving.

Nine-Man's Morris

There is evidence that this game was played in ancient Egypt over 3,000 years ago. However, it became a popular game in Europe by 1400. It had many names, depending on which country it came from. In Germany it was called "Mill" and in England it was called either "Merels" or "Nine-Man's Morris."



Nine-Man's Morris board.

The Rules of the Game

- » Nine-Man's Morris is played between two people. One player has nine counters in one color and the other player has nine counters in another color. Players take turns to place their counters on the dots on the board.
- » Each time a player forms a "mill" or row of three pieces along a line, he or she removes one of his or her opponent's pieces from the board, but not one that is in a mill.
- » When all of the pieces have been put on the board, the players take turns to move a piece along a line to the next empty spot. The goal is to make a mill so that you can take away your opponent's piece.
- » You have won when your enemy has only two pieces left or they cannot move.

Fires erupted from different points all over Mount Vesuvius, and the towering flames gave off a light whose brightness and clarity contrasted with the shadows of the night.

Buildings were being shaken by frequent and strong tremors, and they seemed to move to and fro as if they had been shifted from their foundations. Outdoors, on the other hand, people feared the falling pumice, even though it was light and porous.

People tied cushions on their heads with pieces of sheet; this was their protection against falling debris.