

Games



Games

3 Men's Morris

3 Men's Morris — 3 Men's Morris is a simple game played by 2 players using a board with 9 'points' on which counters can be placed. Each player has 3 counters, and the aim of the game is for a player to make a straight line of 3 in any direction on the board, while the other player tries to stop them. Today we play this game with pencil and paper and call it 'noughts and crosses'.

People played the game using a variety of boards and counters. The boards could be as simple as a piece of sacking with charcoal marks for the very poorest people, tooled leather for travelling, carved wood, or even wood with tooled and gilded leather for the very rich. The counters could be pebbles, or wooden counters, simple cast metal tokens, or more elaborate castings such as seals, or pieces made to look like animals or people, and these would have been kept in small leather drawstring bags.



How do we know about 3 Men's Morris?

Descriptions and illustrations in medieval manuscripts, and objects found during archaeological digs.



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Games

Put'n'Take game

Put'n'Take game — 2–4 players can play put'n'take, which is a game of chance and/or gambling game. To play the game, players need a 'pot' or container to put the tokens or coins in, a number of tokens or coins for each player, and a teetotum. The teetotum is a dice with four faces marked 1, 2, 3, 4, mounted onto a spindle. To start the game, each player puts one token into the pot. Players then take turns to spin the teetotum, which it lands with one side of the dice uppermost. If the 1 is uppermost, the player puts one token into the pot, if the 2 is uppermost, the player does nothing. If the 3 is uppermost, the player takes one token from the pot. If the 4 is uppermost, the player wins the whole pot. Once the pot has been won, the game starts again.



How do we know about Put'n'Take?

Descriptions and illustrations in medieval manuscripts, and objects found during archaeological digs.

Games

Dice and Cup

Dice and Cup — many different dice games were played in medieval times. The dice could be made from bone, ivory, wood, lead or occasionally semi precious stone (such as jet) with drilled, carved or inlaid spots. Sometimes the spots had carved or punched rings around them.

The cups were often the container the dice were carried in when not being played with and could be made from a range of materials including leather, horn, and wood. In richer households, the cup might be a more ornate pewter cup. If no cup was available, the dice could be shaken between clasped cupped hands.

Roman dice and modern dice have the spots arranged so that opposing faces always add up to seven (six is opposite 1, five is opposite two, four is opposite three). Between the C13th and C15th dice often had the spots in different arrangements.

A simple medieval dice game for two or more players is Fall Down Dead — you need 5 dice and a way of keeping the score (you could add up your score using a counting cloth). Throw the dice. A two or a five score nothing but any dice showing a two or five is removed from the game. The spots on the remaining dice are added together and recorded. Continue throwing the dice, adding together the scores from each throw — until you eventually have no dice left to throw because they have all been removed as they have been a five or two. (You could of course be really unlucky and throw all twos and fives on your first throw of the dice!). When there are no dice left, the player 'falls down dead' from the game and the next player begins to play. At the end of the game, the player with the highest score wins.



How do we know about Dice and Cups?

Descriptions and illustrations in medieval manuscripts such as the Romance of Alexander, and objects found during archaeological digs.

Games

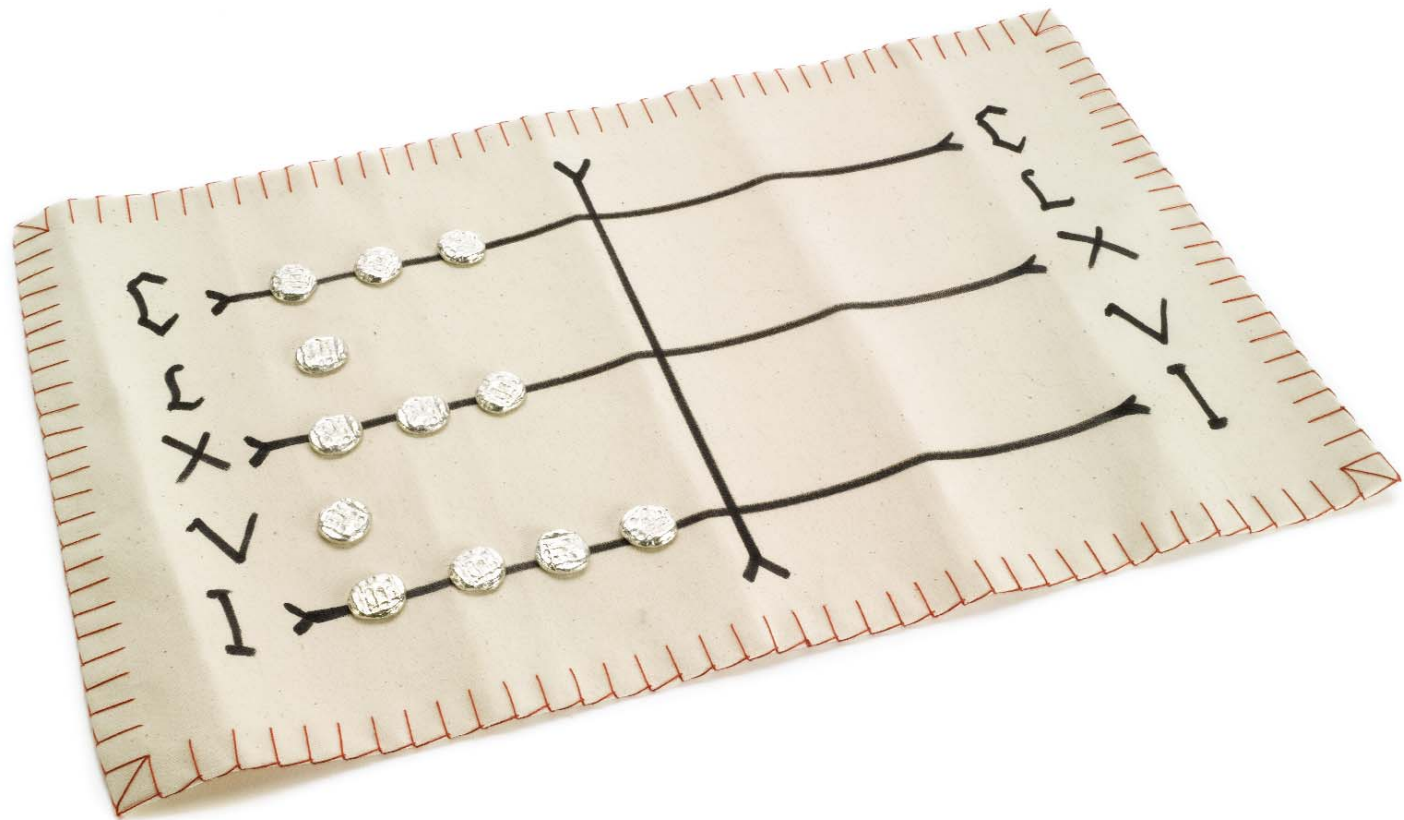
Counting Cloth and Jettons

Counting Cloth & Jettons — this counting cloth is a medieval 'calculator'. Medieval people such as merchants and administrators used counting boards or cloths (cloths would be useful when travelling) and jettons (counters) to add, subtract, divide and multiply numbers.

Roman numerals are used, so I=1, V=5, X=10, L=50, C=100. Counters were placed on the line for I, X, and C, and between lines for V, and L.

Addition

Use the board to add 23 & 58 (XXIII & LVIII). Lay out the jettons for XXIII on the left hand side of the cloth, and for LVIII on the right hand side of the cloth. Now slide the jettons along the lines until they are all on one side of the line down the middle of the cloth. Now simplify the number by replacing five of the jettons on the I line by one jetton in the V space, and two jettons in the V space with one jetton on the X line, giving you a final answer of LXXXI.



How do we know about Counting Cloths and Jettons?

Descriptions and illustrations in medieval manuscripts such as the Romance of Alexander, and objects found during archaeological digs. These jettons have been made by casting from original medieval jettons.