

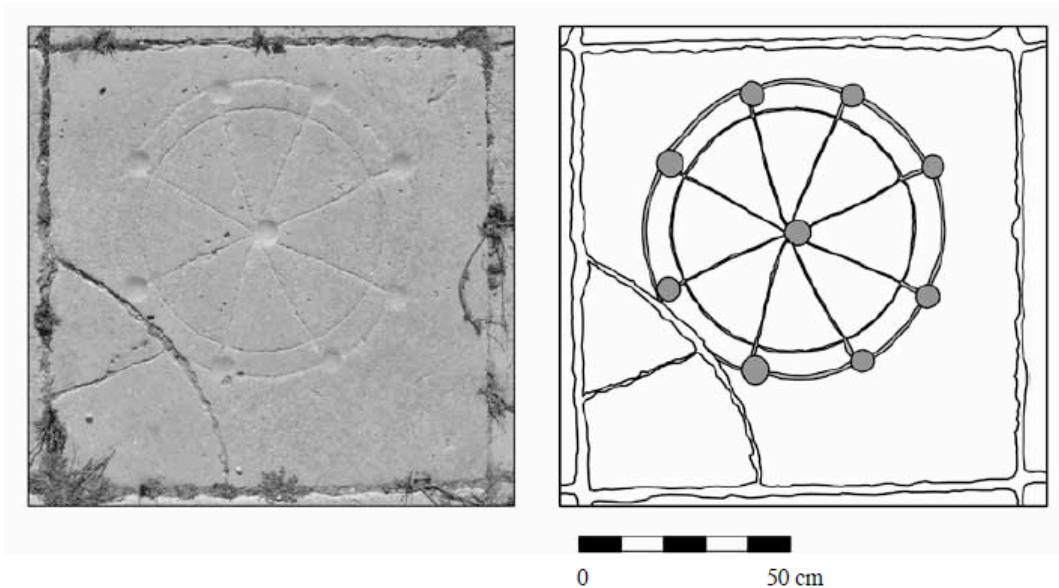
“Circular three men’s morris”

Invented by archaeologists

A game for two players

Equipment: 3 counters (black and white) for each player, 1 game board.

The game board consists of a circle, crossed by 4 intersecting lines (making up a kind of wheel pattern). This gives nine points to place the counters upon.



Game Setup

On the screen, you can see the board from above. At the left, the three white counters are ready for you. The black counters on the right are for your opponent or the computer.

Objective of the game

The objective is to be the first player to get 3 counters in a row that includes the central point.

Game play

1. Players take turns placing one of their counters on an empty point (= the cross sections of the lines) on the board.
2. Once all six counters are placed on the board, players take turns sliding one of their counters along any line to a neighbouring point. Players must move a counter on their turn.
3. Counters cannot pass a point on the way to another point. Counters cannot jump over another counter, and two counters cannot be on the same point.

End of the game

Players continue taking turns until one player gets three counters in a straight line (across the centre point). This player is the winner.

Our proposals for the rules

The rule set is the one proposed by Carl Blümlein in 1918, hitherto generally accepted. However, the existence of a circular “three men’s morris” game is nowhere attested, only the “wheel patterns” are to be found plentiful scratched into the marble floors of ancient Roman towns.

You will find that it is easy to block the adversary on the circle and force him to leave the centre point. In fact, the player who occupies the centre point has a disadvantage. However, if both players avoid this situation, the game does not work and therefore, it is unlikely that circular “three men’s morris” ever existed.

Further reading

- Florian Heimann, The loop within circular three men’s morris, *Board Game Studies Journal Online*, 8, 2014, p. 51-61.
- Claudia-Maria Behling, Der sog. Rundmühle auf der Spur – Zug um Zug zur Neudeutung römischer Radmuster, in: Elisabeth Trinkl (ed.), *Akten des 14. Österreichischen Archäologentages am Institut für Archäologie der Universität Graz vom 19. bis 21. April 2012*, Wien 2014, p. 63-70.
- Ulrich Schädler, Encore sur la « marelle ronde » : 100 ans après Carl Blümlein, in : V. Dasen, T. Haziza (éds.), *Jeux et jouets, Kentron* 34, 2018, p. 87-98.
- Véronique Dasen (éd.), *Ludique. Jouer dans l’Antiquité*, catalogue de l’exposition, Lugdunum, musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin-1er décembre 2019, Gent, 2019.

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