

## CLST GAME SHELF

The GAME SHELF is for you to enjoy! (Please keep the games and its pieces/cards in the CLST suite.). If you want to do a big weekend gaming session, let a faculty member know, so we can give you access to the suite.

**THE (ROYAL) GAME OF UR** (2600 B.C.) is based on an actual board and pieces found in one of the Royal Graves excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley. The actual rules are not known, but are thought to have resembled backgammon. Two rule sets accompany this game. **2 players, ca. 30 min. Complexity: 1.7/5.** <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/1602/royal-game-ur>

**GLADIUS** (2021) is a card-based game in which you play a spectator betting on, and rigging, gladiatorial matches. **2-5 players, ca. 30 min. Complexity: 1.3/5.** <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/285232/gladius>

**ARCHAEOLOGY: THE NEW EXPEDITION** (2016) is a card-based game in which you ‘excavate’, trade, sell, and steal artifacts in an ethically-bereft quest to get rich quick. May resemble ‘archaeology’ in the 1820s, but nothing like actual fieldwork. It’s a game, so hey! **2-5 players, ca. 30 min. Complexity: 1.3/5.** <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/191300/archaeology-new-expedition>

**RISE OF AUGUSTUS** (2013) is a political manipulation game in which you try to outmaneuver opponents strategically and militarily to be chosen consul under the emperor Augustus. **2-6 players, ca. 40 min., Complexity 1.7/5.** <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/137297/rise-augustus>

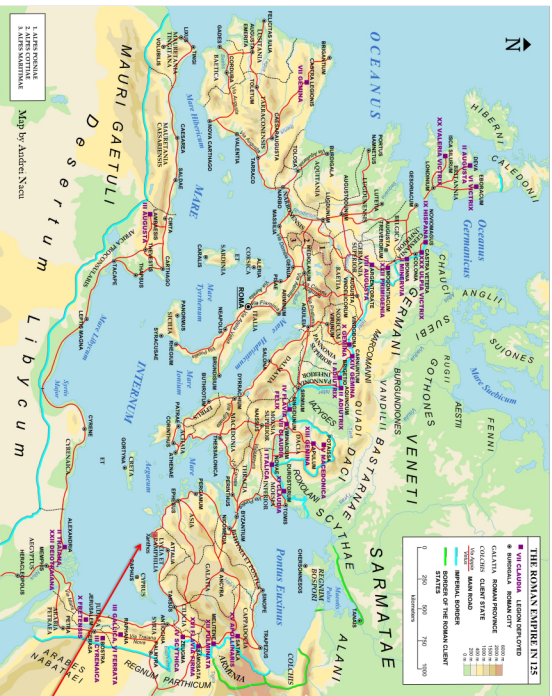
**MINOTAUR** (2023) is a tile- and card-based game. You enter a labyrinth that undergoes constant change, and you have to defeat the mighty monster prowling its corridors before it hunts you down. **1-4 players, ca. 50 min. Complexity: 1.5/5.** <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/352890/minotaur>

**PANDEMIC: FALL OF ROME** (2018). You are a citizen struggling to defend the empire against ‘barbarian hordes’. Through making alliances or raising armies and using brute force, you try to preserve the state. **1-5 players, ca. 60 min., Complexity: 2.4/5.** <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/260428/pandemic-fall-rome>

**CONQUEST OF THE EMPIRE** (2005) is a wide-scale conquest game à la *Risk*, on a huge map of the Mediterranean. The game contains two different rule sets, and is a blast, but it takes many hours (or several evenings) to enjoy. **2-6 players, ca. 4-5 hours. Complexity: 3.1/5.** <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/17710/conquest-empire>

There are also **4 ANCIENT ROMAN GAMES**, each for 2 players, in the leather pouches, which also contain game pieces and dice (if necessary). The back of this sheet has rule sets. The games are:

1. **Round merils.** Duel. Ancient equivalent of tic-tac-toe. (3 pieces each.) Try to get 3-in-a-row by placing (phase 1) and then moving (phase 2) one of your pieces along one of the lines of the board. A winning line must include the central space.
2. **Merils.** Duel. A more complex version of round merils (9 pieces each), in which by forming 3-in-a-row of your pieces, you can remove opponents’ pieces from the board until they are down to 2.
3. **Ludus latrunculorum.** Hunt. (15 pieces each.) Similar to ‘Go’, you place and then move your pieces on a grid to trap opponent’s pieces between two of your own to remove them.
4. **Duodecim scripta.** Race. There are two other sets of instructions for this game, one inside the pouch, and one in the British Museum book of ancient games on the shelf. Related to the Game of Ur as a backgammon-type contest to get your pieces on, around, and off the board as fast as you can.



# Ancient Roman Board Games

In the Roman world (ca. 500 BC to AD 500), it was a common pastime to sit down on a street, or on the steps of a temple, theater, or gymnasium, and play (for fun and/or profit) board games scratched into stone or soil. Evidence for these games is found throughout Europe and the Mediterranean, from Hadrian's Wall in Britain to the southern desert frontier in North Africa, and from Spain to Palestine. These are all two-person games.

Photos of ancient game boards from the Temple of Leto at Xanthos, SW Turkey



## Round Meris, or '3-men's Morris':

- The simplest board game. Pure strategy. A *diel*.
- Each player has 3 tokens.
- Players alternate placing a token at any of the 9 spots on the board where the lines intersect.
- After all tokens are placed, players alternate moving a token to an adjacent spot each turn, trying to form a row of 3 of their own tokens diagonally (holding the central spot is necessary).
- Each player tries to prevent the other from forming a row of 3.
- A player may not 'skip' moving a piece on their turn.
- The first player to form a row of 3 wins.



## Meris, or '9-men's Morris':

- A more complex version of round meris. Pure strategy.
- Each player has 9 tokens.
- Players alternate placing a token at any of the 24 spots on the board where the lines intersect. This is the 'place' phase.
- After all tokens are placed comes the 'move' phase.
- Players alternate moving a token to an adjacent spot each turn, trying to form a row of three of their own tokens along any horizontal or vertical line (but *not* diagonally).
- Each time a player forms a vertical or horizontal line of 3 in the 'move' phase, they may remove one of their opponent's tokens.
- A player may not 'skip' moving a piece on their turn.
- When a player is reduced to 3 tokens, they may 'jump' their token to a free spot.
- The player who reduces their opponent to only 2 tokens wins.



## Ludus latrunculorum, "the game of little mercenaries":

- The most popular board game. Pure strategy. A *hunt*.
- The board is a grid of squares, and can have any number of rows/columns. 8x8 is common.
- The number of tokens for each player also varies; for an 8x8 grid, 15 tokens will do.
- In the 'place' phase, players alternate strategically putting their tokens on free squares, two at a time.
- In the 'move' phase, players move one piece, one square at a time, either horizontally or vertically (not diagonally).
- A player may not 'skip' moving a piece on their turn.
- If, through one of these moves, a player 'traps' an opponent's token between two of their own pieces, the 'trapped' token is removed from the board.
- After a capture, the trapper gets a bonus move.
- A player may themselves move between two opponent's tokens without being captured, but if the opponent moves one trapping piece away and then back to 'trap' it, the token is captured.
- The player who reduces their opponent to just 1 token wins. In case of a stalemate, the player with the most pieces on the board wins.



## Duodecim Scripta, "12 marks":

- A mix of strategy and luck. A *race*.
- Each player has 15 tokens. There are 3 dice.
- The game board has three rows of 12 spaces each.
- The object is to move all of one's tokens onto the board, progress along the course of squares to the end, and then off the board again, before one's opponent does.
- Each player starts at the opposite end of the middle row (marked above by a red or green 'A').
- Each player rolls 3 dice and moves tokens onto their half of the 'A' row according to the value of each die, or their values combined (see below). When a player has moved all their tokens onto the 'A' row, they may begin advancing along the path B-C-D-E, as noted by the arrows above.
- When a player has moved all their tokens onto the D-E row, they may begin to move their tokens off the board, by exact roll to move beyond the end of 'E'. If 2 or more tokens of a player occupy a space (and there is no limit), the other player may not land on that space.
- If a single token occupies a space and another player rolls to move their token there, that single token is removed from the board and must be re-centered at the start of row 'A' before the assumed player can make another move.
- If the values are moved in combination, a token must be able to land on the spaces marked by each constituent die (it must be free or occupied by only one opponent's token), i.e., if one rolls a 3, 5, 6 and wishes to move one token 14 spaces, that token must be able to land safely on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> spaces.
- The game board spaces often consisted of letters that formed clever 36-letter phrases, such as VFNARI.AVARI.LUDEDE.RIDDERE.OCCESST.VYTERE ("the hunt, build, play, laugh; this is (what it means) to live" from Timgad in Algeria), or TABULA.CIRCUS.BIGTUS.RECEDE.LUDEDE.NESGIS ("the board is a racecourse; having lost, withdraw! You don't know how to play," from Rome).

