

scribed number of moves, otherwise a draw is declared. The number of moves depends upon the composition of the stronger player's pieces, and is given in Table 1.

14. If the stronger player has some composition of pieces not listed, then no limit on the number of moves applies.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Readers interested in finding out more about the game of Mak-ruk can look in the following books:

Bell, R. C. *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, vol. 2, pp. 31-33. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.

Bell, R. C. *Discovering Old Board Games*, p. 26. Aylesbury: Shire Publications Ltd., 1980.

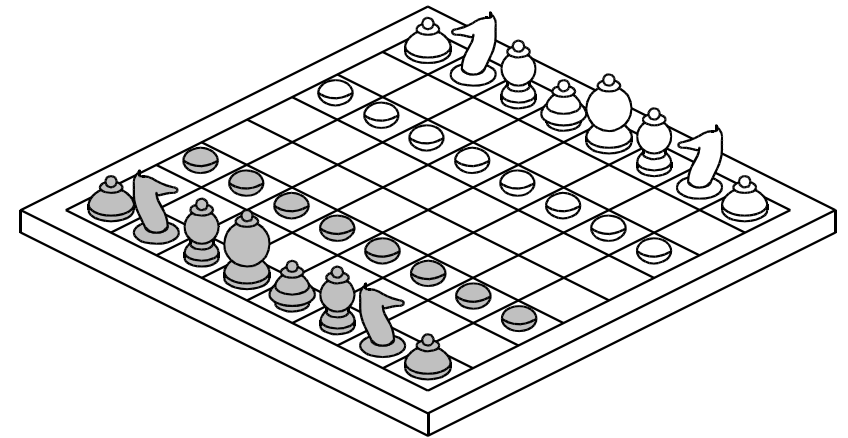
Murray, H. J. R. *A History of Chess*, pp. 113-117. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913.

Parlett, D. *The Oxford History of Board Games*, p. 295. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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# MAK-RUK

by Damian Walker



| <b>Pieces Left</b>                 | <b>Moves</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Two boats                          | 4            |
| One boat                           | 13           |
| Two noblemen                       | 18           |
| One nobleman                       | 41           |
| Two horses                         | 29           |
| One horse                          | 63           |
| One minister                       | draw         |
| Minister and two cowries           | 83           |
| Minister, nobleman,<br>horse, boat | 10           |

Table 1: number of moves allowed for checkmate against a lone lord.

## INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

*Mak-ruk* is also known as *Thai Chess*, or in old books, *Siamese Chess*. Little is known of the history of this game, but it is supposed that it entered Thailand some time in the first millennium A.D. It is a close relative of the original Indian version of chess, with some developments to speed up the game.

The game is still played today in Thailand, alongside the more di-

verse Chinese version of chess, and in some areas of Burma this is the usual form of chess.

Knowledge of this game was introduced to Europe in the nineteenth century. Unlike the Western game, the board is not chequered, and there are no marks on the board other than the basic grid. It is, however, played with the same basic set of pieces as chess.

## HOW TO PLAY

*Mak-ruk* is played by two players on a board of eight rows of eight squares, each having a set of sixteen pieces. The pieces are the *lord*, the *minister*, two *noblemen*, two *horses*, two *boats*, and eight *cowries*.

of his pieces according to that piece's particular mode of movement:

(i). the lord can move to an adjacent square in any of the eight directions;

(ii). or on his first move of the game, the lord can move as a horse: see rule 3(vi);

(iii). the minister can move to an adjacent square in any of the four diagonal directions;

(iv). or on his first move of the game the minister can move two squares directly

### Beginning the Game

1. The game begins with the pieces set out as in Illustration 1.

2. The player controlling the white pieces begins the game.

### Moving the Pieces

3. A player in his turn moves one

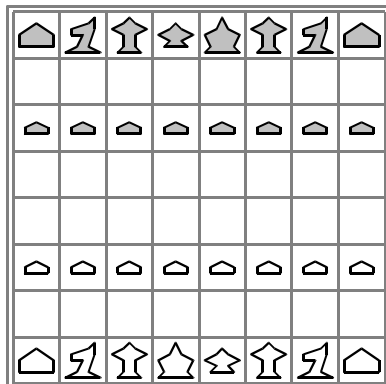


Illustration 1: mak-ruk pieces set out ready for play. From the bottom left the pieces are the boat, horse, nobleman, lord and minister, with cowries out in front.

forwards;

(v). the noblemen can move to an adjacent square in any of the four diagonal directions, or to the adjacent square straight forward;

(vi). the horse moves one square in a vertical or horizontal direction, and one further square diagonally away from his current position, jumping over any piece that might be in the way;

(vii). the boat moves as many squares as is convenient in a straight line horizontally or vertically, though it cannot jump over pieces in the way;

(viii). the cowrie moves one square directly forward.

4. When a cowrie reaches the sixth row, it is turned upside down and moves from then on like a minister.

5. There is no limit to the number of such promoted ministers in play at one time.

### Capturing Enemies

6. A cowrie may capture an enemy piece by moving one square diagonally forwards to land on that enemy.

7. Other

pieces capture enemies by landing on the enemy in the course of their usual move.

8. Captured pieces are removed from the board and take no further part in play.

9. A lord may not be captured, but may be threatened with capture.

10. If a lord is threatened with capture, termed *check*, his player must immediately remove the threat by moving the lord out of danger, capturing the piece that threatens him, or otherwise interposing a piece to protect the lord.

### Ending the Game

11. The game is ended when a player's lord is threatened with capture such that threat cannot be evaded. This is *checkmate*, and the player whose lord is thus threatened loses the game.

12. The game is also ended when a player cannot move any piece without exposing his lord to the threat of capture. This is *stalemate*, and is a draw.

13. When one player's army is reduced to just his lord, his opponent must win the game within a pre-

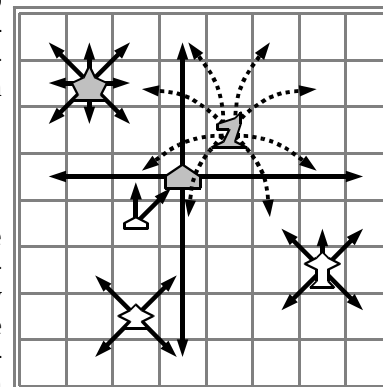


Illustration 2: the moves of the mak-ruk pieces. Note that the cowrie moves differently when capturing.