

teen pieces per player. This is the game of sixteen soldiers.

### Zamma

In the Sahara desert, the board was quadrupled to give the game of zamma, each side having 40 men. Illustration 6 shows a common ver-

sion where some of the lines are omitted from the board. A difference in this game is that men may only move forwards, or diagonally forwards, though they can capture in any direction. When a piece reaches the last row, it is promoted as in draughts, and may then move in any direction.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Readers interested in alquerque and its variants will find more information in the following books.

Bell, R. C. *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, vol. 1, pp. 47-48 & 50-51. New York: Dover Publishing, Inc., 1979.

Murray, H. J. R. *A History of Board-Games Other Than Chess*, pp. 65-71. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Parlett, D. *The Oxford History of Board Games*, pp. 243-246. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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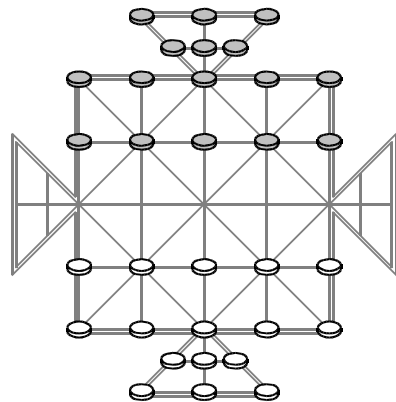


Illustration 5: sixteen soldiers.

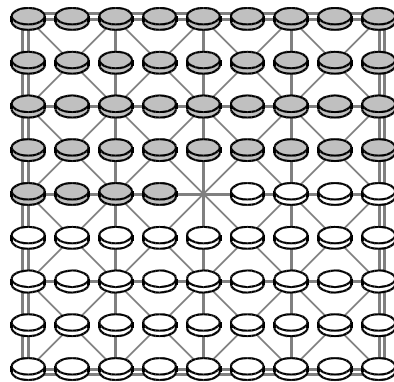
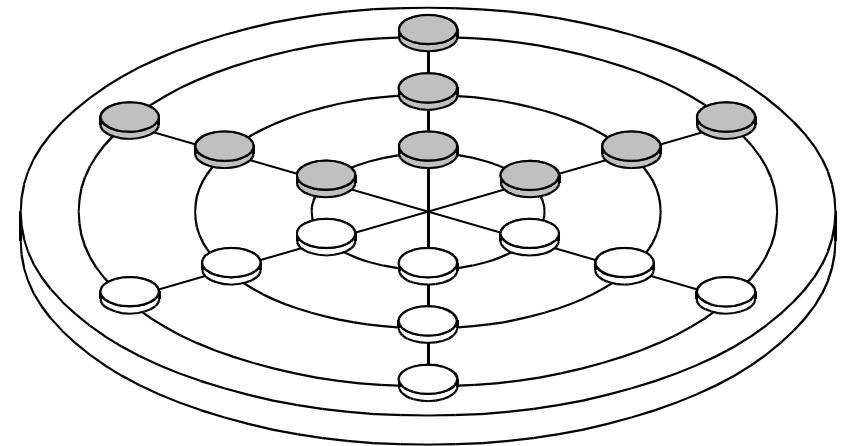


Illustration 6: zamma.

# ALQUERQUE VARIANTS

by Damian Walker



## INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

The game of *alquerque* was popular in southern Europe during medieval times, but might well be much older. Its distinctive board spread throughout the world, and other games were invented to be played on it.

Some people, though, kept the rules and merely changed the board. When the Spanish conquistadors took their culture to the Americas,

the natives adopted the game and played it on the original and modified boards.

Cultural exchanges throughout Africa and Asia resulted in a variety of modifications to the basic game, some expanded and others simplified.

Here are presented the basic rules of the game, with a number of interesting variations.

## HOW TO PLAY

All of the games are played using the same basic set of rules, some with slight variations which will be mentioned at the appropriate points.

### The Basic Rules

1. Alquerque games are played by two people on the intersections, or *points*, of boards marked with a pattern of lines. Pieces are set out in a symmetrical pattern, leaving just one point empty. Players decide at random who will make the

first move.

2. In his turn a player will move a piece one step along a marked line, to an adjacent empty point.

3. A piece captures a neighbouring enemy piece by jumping over it to land on the empty point beyond. If a capture is available, it

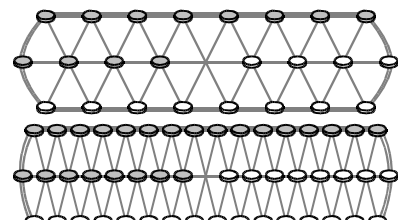


Illustration 1: two common boards for awithlakkannai.

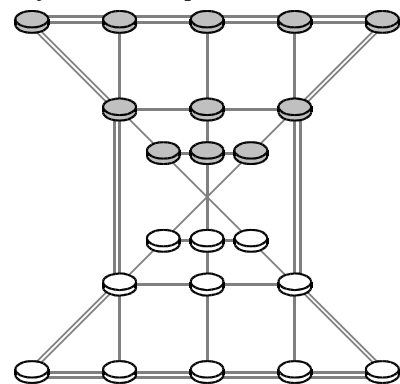


Illustration 2: *egara guti*.

must be made.

4. Having captured an enemy, a piece must make a further jump and capture from its new location if possible. Any number of captures can be chained in this way.

5. The game is won by the player who captures all the opponent's pieces.

### Awithlakkannai

At some time after the Spanish conquest, the game of alquerque was introduced into Mexico. The native tribes took the game and modified into something more to their liking. They played two versions, shown in Illustration 1.

### Egara Guti

This version is played with eleven men per side, on the board shown in Illustration 2. It was observed in the Central Provinces of India in

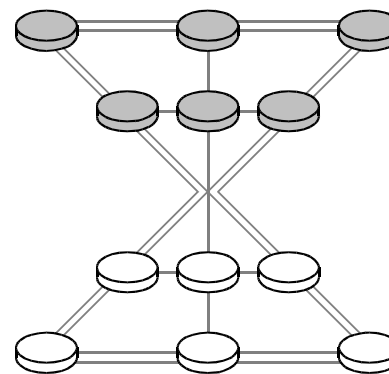


Illustration 3: *felli*.

1924.

### Felli & Lau Kata Kati

Two games were observed far from each other, one in Morocco and the other in Bengal. Both are played on boards shaped like an hour glass, the Moroccan game of *felli* (Illustration 3) by six pieces against six, and in the Bengali game of *lau kata kati* by nine pieces against nine.

### Pretwa

This attractive variant, shown in Illustration 4, was played in Bihar in India. A variant with seven concentric circles was also played.

### Sixteen Soldiers

In Sri Lanka and parts of India, the standard alquerque board was expanded with a triangle on each side, as shown in Illustration 5 with six-

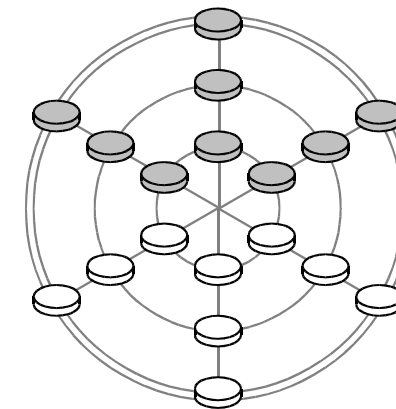


Illustration 4: *pretwa*.