

Tabletop Figures: Hnefatafl

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1. Asset Info

TABLETOP FIGURES: ANCIENT

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Documentation:

USE OF THIS ASSET:

This second pack in the Tabletop Figures is more focused to boardgames just than abstract use of the models. But Anyways, rather than only be useful for boardgames videogames, the units and boards of the game are splendid as decoration in AAA games or can have a lot of additional use, like in abstract battlegrids, collectible objects, and so.

And, needless to say, the ultimate ambientation for Viking or Viking Age oriented games, as minigame or decoration.

Featuring:

-Three sets of 3 figures: (1 “defender” pawn and King, and pawn for the “attacker” faction)

Vikings and Giants (or Heads Set): With Gold, Wood, Red and Blue Marble Textures.

Swedes and Muscovits (or Body Set): With White Wood and Brown Wood Textures.

Good and Evil (or Simple Set): An extra included to match the Alea Evangelii board.

-Eight Boards

Three models: Wood simple board, Round Stone board, and Parchment.

- Hnefatafl wood board
- Ard RI Round stone board
- Ard Ri (wide version) wood board
- Tablut parchment-board
- Alea Evangelii parchment-board



- Brandubh wood board
- Tawlbwrdd wood board
- Chess (add as an extra)

FOLDERS:

In FILES folder you can find the original models and textures. There is a prefab for every object so you don't need to touch them.

In PREFABS folder you can find all pieces of the Asset.

PLEASE! If you like it and find it useful, Rate the asset ;)

<http://u3d.as/yEw>

If you have any problem or question please mail to:

7yearsentertainment@gmail.com

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Blog:

<http://7yearsentertainment.blogspot.com.es/>

Personal 3d Art Gallery:

<http://alarconte.deviantart.com/gallery/>

And don't forget to see the products in sale of 7Ye in Unity Store!

<https://www.assetstore.unity3d.com/en/#!/search/page=1/sortby=popularity/query=publisher:10351>

2. History of the Tafl Games

Tafl games are a family of ancient Germanic and Celtic strategy board games played on a checkered or latticed gameboard with two armies of uneven numbers, representing variants of an early Scandinavian board game called **tafl** or **hnefatafl** in contemporary literature.

Although the size of the board and the number of pieces varied, all games involved a distinctive 2:1 ratio of pieces, with the lesser side having a king-piece that started in the centre. No complete, unambiguous description of the rules of a tafl game exists, but the king's objective was to escape to (variously) the board's periphery or corners, while the greater force's objective was to capture him. The attacking force has the natural advantage at the start of each game, likely indicating an important cultural aspect by mimicking the success of Viking raids. Another cultural indication of the king is that importance of the Viking chiefs' presence in battle. Although the kings of Europe later claimed divine rule and sat upon the throne rather than bodies in the battlefield, it was essential for a Viking chief to be considered an equal in war. The importance of war is also reflected in Hnefatafl because it is a war strategy game, which can indicate an important reason why the gaming boards have been found with males of all ages. In Balnakeil, a male skeleton between the ages of 8 and 13 was found with weapons and a Hnefatafl board game. Vikings tended to take boys onto the battlefield with them, which explains why young boys also played these war-strategic board games.

There is also some controversy over whether some tafl games (i.e. *Hnefatafl* and *Tawlbwrdd*) may have employed dice. Tafl spread everywhere the Vikings traveled, including Iceland, Britain, Ireland, and Lapland. Versions of Tafl, comprising Hnefatafl, Alea Evangelii, Tawlbwrdd (Wales), Brandubh, Ard Rí, and Tablut, were played across much of Northern Europe from earlier than 400 B.C. until it was supplanted by chess in the 12th Century.

The term *tafl* (Old Norse: "table", "board"; pronounced [tavl]) is the original name of the game. However, *Hnefatafl* became the preferred term for the game in Scandinavia by the end of the Viking Age, to distinguish it from other board games, such as *Skáktafl* (chess), *Kvatrutafl* (Tables) and *Halatafl* (Fox games), as these became known. The specific name *Hnefatafl* possibly arose as meaning "board game of the fist", from *hnefi* ("fist") + *tafl*, where "fist" referred to the central king-piece. The precise etymology is disputed, but *hnefi* certainly referred to the king-piece,^[4] and several sources refer to *Hnefatafl* as "King's table". In Anglo-Saxon England, the term *tæfl* also referred to many board games. It is not known if the Anglo-Saxons had a specific name for the game or if they generically referred to it as "tæfl" in the way that modern people might refer to "cards".

3. Rules of the Tafl games

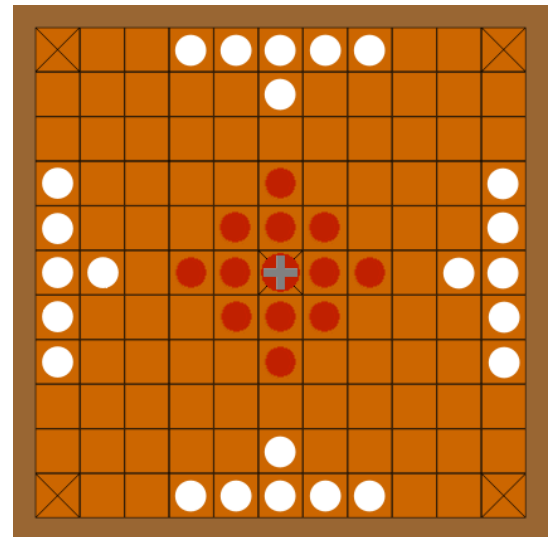
General Rules

No complete, unambiguous description of the rules of a tafl game exists. The best description we have from history is that given by Linnaeus of the game **Tablut** in the 1732 diary of his travels, *Lachesis Lapponica*. The following rules are based on the 1811 translation of *Lachesis Lapponica* into English by James Edward Smith. The game is played on a 9×9 board. Initial setup is as shown in the diagram.

- The king starts on the central square or castle, called the *konakis*, which no other piece may ever occupy.
- The eight defenders, called *Swedes*, start on the eight squares adjoining the *konakis*, in the form of a cross.
- The sixteen attackers, called *Muscovites*, start in groups of four at the centre of each edge of the board. (*In Linnaeus' notes, these squares were embroidered to signify them as the domain of the Muscovites.*)
- All remaining squares (neutral zone) may be occupied by any piece during the game.
- Any piece may move any number of vacant spaces in any straight line [$\leftarrow \uparrow \rightarrow \downarrow$], but not diagonally. (*Compare to the rook in Chess.*)
- No piece may ever pass over another piece in its path.
- If the king should ever have an unimpeded path (through the neutral zone) to the edge of the board, unless he is immediately blocked by a *Muscovite*, he may escape and the game is over. (*This rule suggests that the king may not escape through the domain of the Muscovites.*)
- If the king should ever have a path of escape, he must call out "*raichi*"; if two paths of escape, then his escape is imminent and he must call out "*tuichu*". (*Compare these to "check" and "checkmate" in Chess.*)
- Any piece, save for the king, may be captured and removed from the board if it becomes surrounded on two opposite sides by enemies. (*This is known as custodial capture.*)
- If the king is surrounded on all four sides by enemies, he is taken prisoner. If he is surrounded on three sides, he may escape by the fourth.
- If the king is on a square adjoining the *konakis* and is surrounded on three sides by his enemies and the fourth by the *konakis*, he is captured. (*This rule suggests that once the king has left the konakis, he can never return.*)
- If the king is captured, the *Swedes* are conquered and the *Muscovites* victorious.

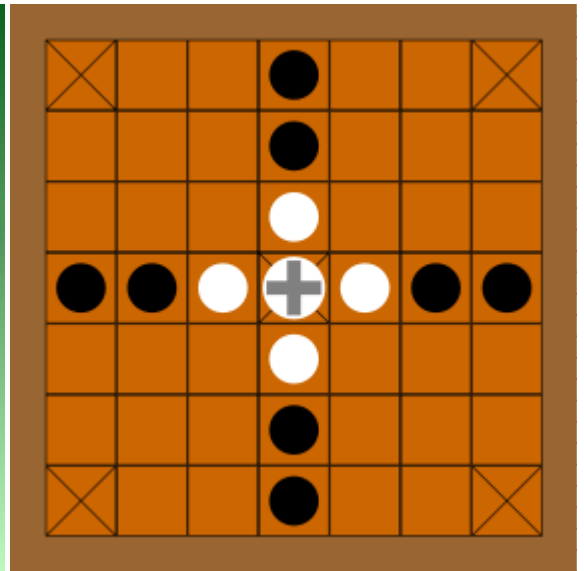
Several problems of gameplay are left woefully ambiguous or completely untouched in Linnaeus' notes, and some translations are problematic. There are also several other variations played by modern reconstructionists.

VARIANTS: HISTORY, POSITION, SPECIFIC RULES



Hnefatafl

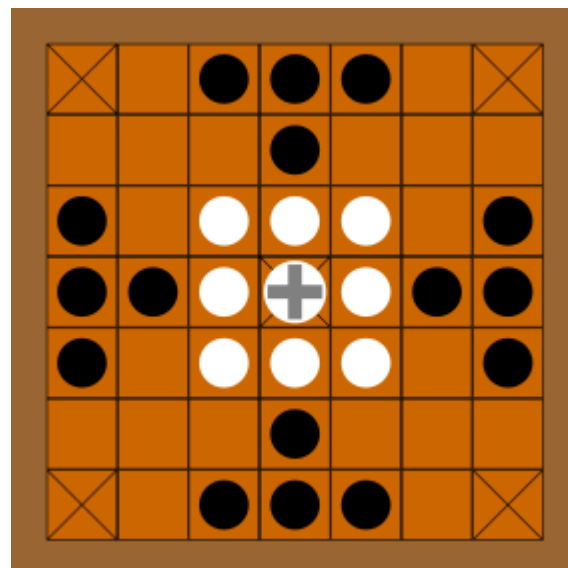
Hnefatafl was a popular game in medieval Scandinavia and was mentioned in several of the Norse Sagas. Some of these saga references have contributed to controversy over the possible use of dice in playing hnefatafl. The rules of the game were never explicitly recorded, and only playing pieces and fragmentary boards are extant, so it is not known for sure how the game was played. If dice were in fact used, nothing has been recorded about how they were employed. Archaeological and literary sources indicate Hnefatafl may have been played on a 13×13 or an 11×11 board. It became a popular game in Northern Europe during the Viking era (end of the 8th Century to 1000 C.E), a turbulent time full of conflicts. When chess became a popular game during the Middle Ages, the rules of Hnefatafl were forgotten over time. Hnefatafl was particularly popular in Nordic countries and followed the Viking civilization to other parts of Europe, primarily to the British Isles and the Viking country of "Gardaríke". The game developed differently at different locations. Archaeologists have found editions in places such as Ireland and Ukraine. Hnefatafl literally translates to "fist table," from the Old Icelandic (equivalently in modern Icelandic) *hnef*, 'fist', and *tafl*, 'table'. The study of medieval manuscripts and examination of pieces and boards has allowed researchers to figure out how the game was probably played. It was last recorded to have been played in Wales during 1587 and Lapland in 1723.



The texture included in this asset for Brandubh is for play in the intersections of the board. Being the King in the center intersection and Defenders and attackers elongating from the center cross to the borders of the board.

Brandub

Brandub (Irish: *bran dubh*) was the Irish form of tafl. We know from two poems that it was played with five men against eight, and that one of the five was a "Branán", or chief. A number of 7×7 boards have been found, the most famous being the elaborate wooden board found at Ballinderry in 1932, featuring holes for pegged pieces, possibly to allow for portability of the game. The name *brandub* means "black raven".



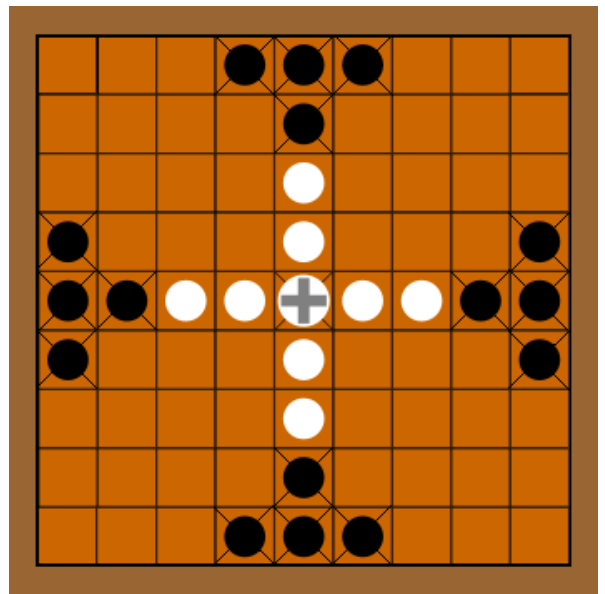
Ard Rí

Ard Rí (Gaelic: *High King*) was a Scottish tafl variant played on a 7×7 board with a king and eight defenders against sixteen attackers. This is the least documented of the known tafl variants.

There is no real proof that this game variant historically existed, and maybe a modern creation.

This is the most crowded of pieces version of the game. There is another variant, supplied with this asset, with a more wide board.

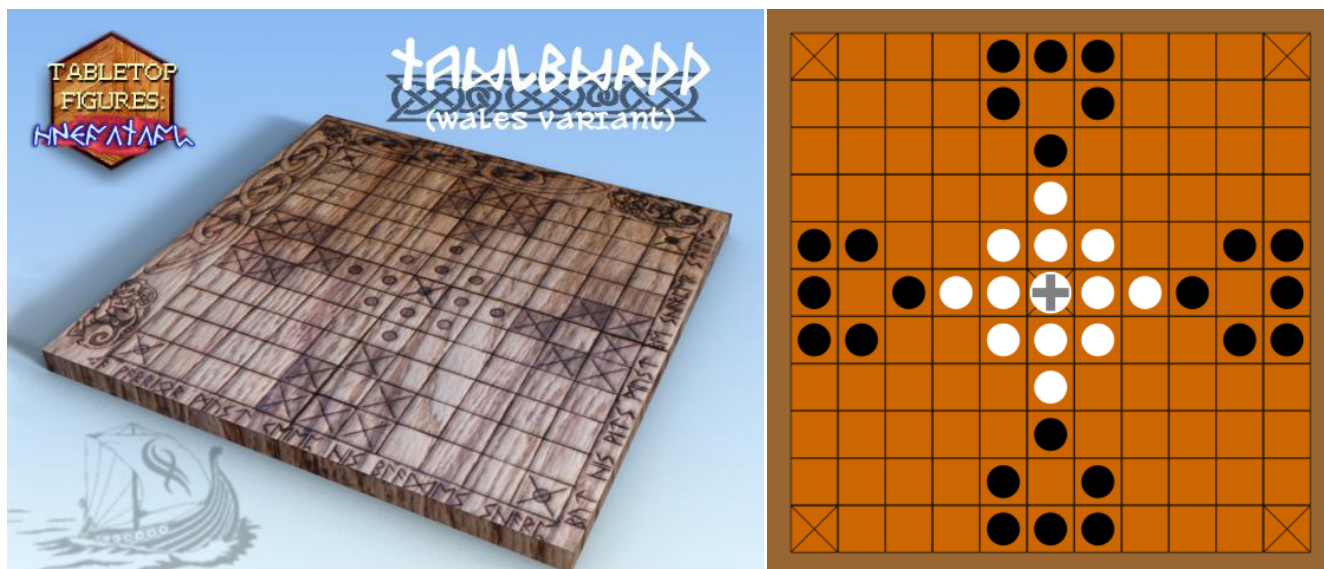




Tablut

This variant from Sápmi, is the best documented version. Carl Linnaeus recorded the rules and a drawing of the board in his journal during his 1732 expedition to Lapland. His description, in Latin, was incomplete, as he did not speak the Sami language of his hosts and described the game only from observing the players. The game was played on a 9×9 mat of embroidered reindeer hide. In his diary, *Lachesis Lapponica*, Linnaeus referred to the light (defending) pieces as "Swedes" and the dark (attacking) pieces as "Muscovites". What may have been the same game was still being played in the late 19th century, as described in P.A. Lindholm's *Hos Lappbönder* (1884).

Tablut is the most known variant of Tafl game along with Hnefatafl.

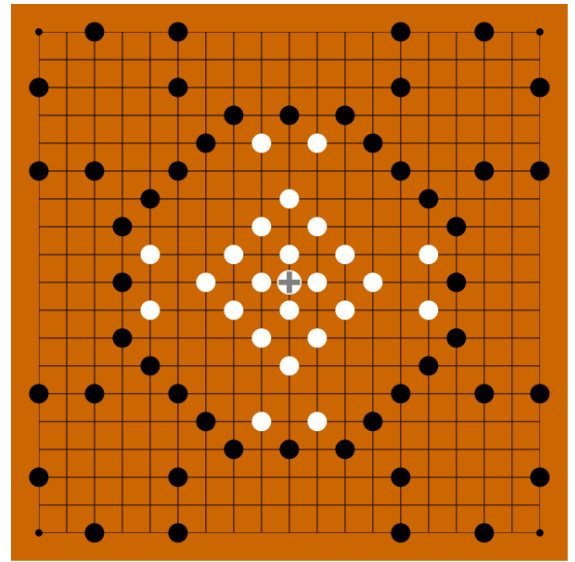


Tawlbwrdd

This variant was played in Wales. It is described as being played with 8 pieces on the king's side and 16 on the attacker's side. Robert ap Ifan documented it with a drawing in a manuscript dated 1587. His version was played on an 11×11 board with 12 pieces on the king's side and 24 pieces on the opponent's side. His passage states:

The above tawlbwrdd should be played with a king in the centre and twelve men in the places next to him, and twenty-four men seek to capture him. These are placed, six in the centre of each side of the board and in the six central positions. And two move the men in the game, and if one [piece] belonging to the king comes between the attackers, he is dead and is thrown out of the game, and the same if one of the attackers comes between two of the king's men in the same manner. And if the king himself comes between two of the attackers, and if you say 'Watch your king' before he moves to that space, and he is unable to escape, you capture him. If the other says 'I am your liegeman' and goes between two, there is no harm. If the king can go along the [illegible] line, that side wins the game.

Note: Some players identify Tawlbwrdd with a Sea-oriented version of tafl game, with ships instead of troops.



Alea evangelii

Alea evangelii, which means "game of the gospels", was described, with a drawing, in the 12th-century Corpus Christi College, Oxford manuscript 122, from Anglo-Saxon England. It was played on the intersections of a board of 18×18 cells. The manuscript describes the layout of the board as a religious allegory, but it is clear that this was a game based on Hnefatafl.

Scholars agree on the fact that the Christian allegory presented in MS 122 is a "moralization" of a pre-existing game: i.e. a Christian meaning has been superimposed on a game which originally was not related with religion. This is made clear by a short passage at the beginning of the manuscript, which suggests that the original game represented a siege:

"If any one would know this game fully, before all the lessons of this teaching he must thoroughly know these seven: to wit, dukes and counts, defenders and attackers, city and citadel, and nine steps twice over".

Murray^[2] identified the diagram in MS 122 with a tafl board. He corrected the diagram in order to make it radially symmetric. The fact that the number of pieces (excluding the central "king") is a multiple of twelve is consistent with other documented games of the family: Tawlbwrdd (36 pieces) and Tablut (24 pieces). Since, in those games, the attacking side has twice as many pieces as the defending side, it is commonly assumed that in *Alea Evangelii* there are 48 attacking pieces and 24 defending pieces. Actually, the manuscript mentions the existence of attackers and defenders, but the two sides are not differentiated on the diagram, which only presents the details of how the pieces are assigned to the four evangelists according to the Christian allegory which is the main subject of the text. In other tafl games the goal of the attacker is to capture the king and the goal of the defender is to make the king escape from the board, it has been assumed that this is the case also with the game on which the *Alea Evangelii* moralization was based.

Games of the tafl family only have two kinds of pieces: a king that occupies the center of the board in the initial layout and a number of ordinary pieces divided between attackers and defenders with a 2:1

ratio. The "dukes and count" that appear in Alea Evangelii do not seem to fit this simple scheme. Mac White notes that CCC MS 122 "mentions dukes and knights, presumably pieces, which is rather puzzling". According to Bayless, "there is no precedent for such an elaborate distinction of pieces in other games played in Anglo-Saxon England, and the archaeological record shows no evidence of such pieces. It is tempting to suggest that on his travels, perhaps in Rome, Israel may have heard of the new game just beginning to circulate in Europe, chess, with its comites, milites, and other pieces, and borrowed the idea of different ranks from that game".

While all other scholars have assumed that the game is played on a 19x19 board, Barbet-Massin's opinion is that the external lines of the board do not make part of the playing area, so that the actual size of the board is 17x17.



Final Note:

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