

RAMSES

A TACTICAL GAME WITHOUT EQUAL

INTRODUCTION

When Ramses the Great had the monumental temple at Abu-Simbel built, around 1250 B.C., his architects realised an awesome achievement. Indeed, the temple was hewn out of the rock with such precision that a solar miracle occurs twice yearly inside. On 20 February and 20 October, the rays of the rising Nubian sun enter by the front gate all the way to the naos, the holy of holies, 55 metres deep into the mountainside, where the statues of the gods to whom the temple is dedicated are hidden: Ptah, Amun-Ra, Ramses (a god among gods), and Ra-Horakhty. The sun's rays first strike Amun-Ra and Ramses with blinding, almost supernatural light, then Ramses shines alone, progressively joined by Ra-Horakhty. Finally, the light diminishes to a small spot on the lap of Ramses and Ra-Horakhty. The miracle is that Ptah's statue is at no time touched by the sun. Ptah was the god of shadows.

The inscription on the RAMSES game immortalises this 3000-year-old human marvel.

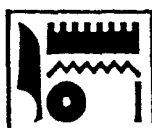
Ramses' titles



Son of Ra



King of Upper and Lower Egypt



God Amun-Ra



God Ra-Horakhty





God Ptah

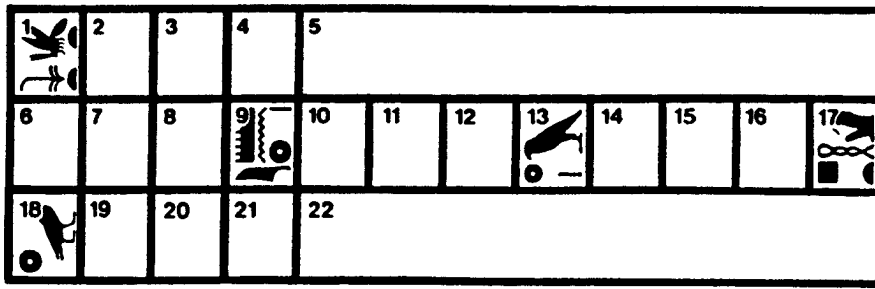
Horst Alexander Renz
Author of the RAMSES game

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Inspired by Ancient Egypt, RAMSES is an elaborate tactical game for two players. Although the rules are extremely simple and quickly learnt, there are an almost infinite variety of possible moves.

The RAMSES game is comprised of

- 1 board divided into 22 squares
- 4 clear pawns  and 4 dark pawns 



Board showing the 5 squares marked with hieroglyphs (1, 9, 13, 17 and 18) and the two oblong squares 5 and 22

OBJECT OF THE GAME

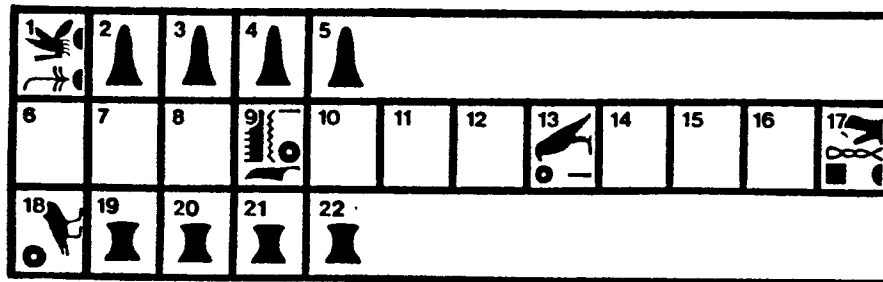
The object of the game is

- To occupy 3 hieroglyph squares with one's own pawns or
- To immobilise the opponent —he loses if he's unable to complete a turn.

SET-UP

To begin the game, place the clear pawns on squares 2, 3, 4 and 5 (beside square 10) and the dark pawns on squares 19, 20, 21 and 22 (beside square 10). One can just as well swap the dark and clear pawns.

Starting position:



Clear pawns on the top row; dark pawns on the lower row, or vice-versa.

The two players decide which set of pawns each will use.

The players then randomly determine who goes first:

One player holds in one closed hand a clear pawn and in the other a dark pawn. The other player points to one hand and thus picks which player will go first.

When playing several games, the players can keep the pawns assigned at the outset, but the beginning player should alternate with each game.

URNS

The player designated by the luck of the draw begins. A turn is always resolved in two moves:

- The player moves one of his own pawns, then
- He moves one of his opponent's pawns.

Each turn must be fully completed. You can move your own pawns off of the hieroglyph squares but you cannot move the opponent's pawns off of them. If you are unable to complete both moves, you lose.

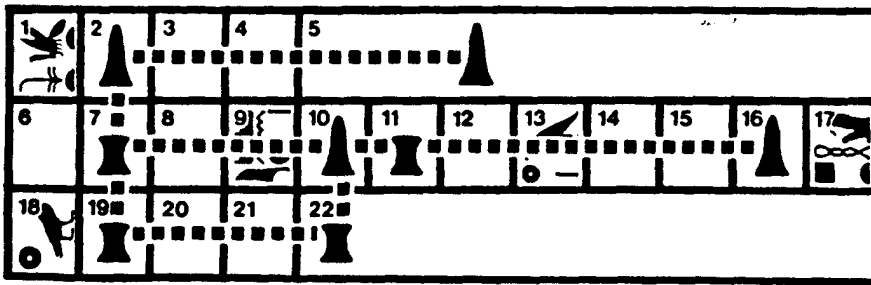
MOVES

The pawn, yours or the opponent's, must be moved by as many squares as there are pawns (clear and dark) on the pawn's starting row or column (counting itself). When they differ, the greater count is used.

A pawn on an oblong square (5 or 22) is considered to be in the column of the middle square (10 to 17) that it is lined up with.

Obviously, an isolated pawn moves just one square. Moves of up to eight squares are possible.

Examples of move distances:

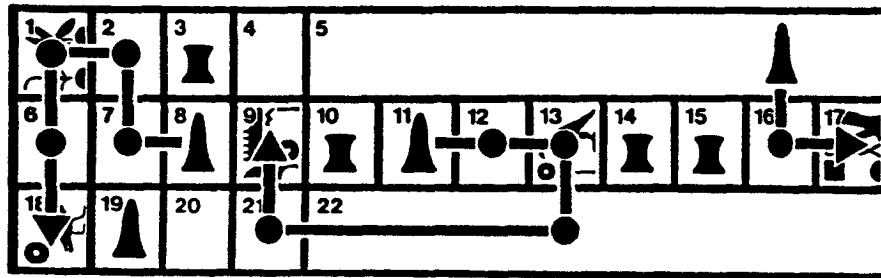


Pawn on square 2: moves 3 squares
 Pawn on square 5: moves 2 squares
 Pawn on square 7: moves 4 squares
 Pawn on square 10: moves 4 squares
 Pawn on square 11: moves 4 squares
 Pawn on square 16: moves 4 squares
 Pawn on square 19: moves 3 squares
 Pawn on square 22: moves 2 squares

HOW TO MOVE

Pawns move in any direction, horizontally or vertically, through unoccupied squares. No pawn may move diagonally, and a pawn may not move through the same square twice during a move.

Examples of moves:



Orthogonal moves, through free squares.

The pawn on square 8 could end up on squares 5, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18 or 22.

By judiciously placing one's own pawns during the first move of a turn, one can often modify the possible opponent pawn moves, as the illustration above shows for the ▲ player.

- By moving his own pawn from square 5 to square 17, he can then move the opponent pawns on squares 10, 14 and 15 six squares
- By moving his own pawn from square 8 to square 18, he can then move the opponent pawns on squares 10, 14 and 15 four squares
- By moving his own pawn from square 11 to square 9, he can then move the opponent pawns on squares 10, 14 and 15 five squares

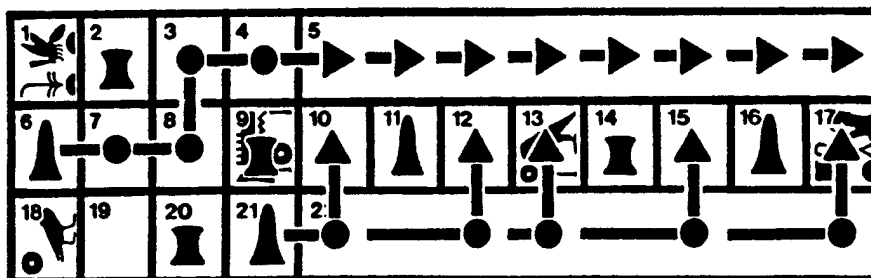
On the first turn, the player who moves first cannot place one of his own pawns on a hieroglyph square.

OBLONG SQUARES

The oblong squares 5 and 22 allow variable moves.

- When a pawn is brought to oblong square 5 or 21, one gets to choose through or onto which of the eight middle squares (10 through 17) the pawn moves next.

Oblong squares:



Variable movement of pawns, by going through or stopping on one of the eight possible squares.

Otherwise, an oblong square is treated as a single square.

Ramses

- When a pawn is on an oblong square, the entire square is occupied, which is to say one cannot move another pawn onto or through that square. The pawn must be placed beside a specific middle square (10 to 17); it is considered to be in that column. A pawn on an oblong square cannot move to “another spot” within that oblong square.
- When a pawn enters an oblong square from one of the squares running from 10 to 17, the pawn must next move onto the square beside the oblong square, 4 or 21.
- When one wants to move a pawn out of an oblong square, it can only go to two squares: the square beside the oblong (4 or 21) or the square beside the pawn (10 to 17).



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