

# Chapter 12

## Miscellanea

[A final chapter on the 8x8 board containing games which do not fit readily into any other class but are too few to merit chapters to themselves. Included are games where the actual rules of play on the board are wholly orthodox, but there is something in the presentation or context which takes the game out of the ordinary.]

### 12.1 Multiple square occupancy

**Bi-Place Chess** (B. de Beler, 1958). A piece can move to a square occupied by a friendly piece (where they can be captured simultaneously). The pieces do not combine but remain independent of each other. Not more than two pieces can occupy a square. The line pieces (Q, R, B) can at all times leap friendly men (and hence check in this manner). An unmoved pawn can leap a friendly man immediately in front of it. (*Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Intéressants*)

**Duperchess** (Jon Spencer, 1972). Any number of men of either colour or both colours may occupy a square. A player moving to a square occupied by two or more of the opponent's men may only capture one but can choose which, or may elect to move to the square without capturing. (*Neue Chess 2*)

**Double Chess [Hill]** (Terrell Hill, 1974). A square may be occupied by two men simultaneously, either of the same colour (double square) or of opposite colour (mixed square). If a double square is entered by a man of the opposite colour, one of the two occupants, at the capturing player's choice, is

removed, thus forming a mixed square. Men on a mixed square are immune to each other. Either man on a mixed square may be captured by a man of the opposite colour, thus forming a double square again. Either man on a double or mixed square may vacate the square at any time. A king can be an occupant of a double or mixed square. All moves are as orthodox. The inventor was inspired by the Ising problem in theoretical physics. (Personal communication)

**Stacking Chess** (origins unclear, cited by Jed Stone in 1982). Any number of men of the same colour may occupy a square, hence squares between K and R do not have to be vacant in order to castle. A capture takes all the men on a square. (Stone, also *World Game Review 10*)

**Gregarious Chess** (Bruce Trone, 1986). Any number of men of either colour may occupy a square. A man entering a square occupied by two or more enemy men may choose which to capture. A man may not move if in a square occupied by more enemy than friendly men. (*World Game Review 10*)

### 12.2 Merging of squares into regions

**Merger Chess** (Philip Cohen, 1975). Squares can be merged into orthogonally connected regions called realms. A realm may contain at most five squares. Only one man may occupy a realm. If a man other than a pawn is moved to any square within a realm occupied by an enemy man, that man is captured (a pawn can capture only by moving to the square actually occupied). When a capture is made, the square

or realm in which it occurs must be merged with an adjacent empty square or realm unless every potential merger would cause self-check or create a realm of more than five squares. The second area must be adjacent to at least one square of the first, but need not be adjacent to the capture square. Two realms may not be merged if a realm-square merger is possible. A piece may secede from a realm at

any time, taking its square with it and perhaps dividing the rest of the previous realm into two or more separate parts. Normally,

secession counts as a move; exceptionally, a king may secede and then move in the same turn. (Inventor's rules pamphlet)

### 12.3 Men changing sides other than by capture

**Rotation Chess [Turnabout]**, also known as **Alternating, Turnabout, or Turnaround Chess** (origins unknown but played by C. D. Locock and T. R. Dawson in 1913). After every 10th move of Black the board is turned round, and the previous 'Black' makes the next move and continues with the White men (*Fairy Chess Review*, August 1948). Another version of the game has the board turned round after every 15 moves. Described as 'highly diverting' and said to have had many devotees in the north of England (*Chess*, July 1943). A modern variant requires Black to roll a die after each of his moves. If a 6 turns up, the board is turned round.

**Traitor Chess** (Roberto Salvadori, 1984). On the 10th move of a game, or any time thereafter, each player has the right to exchange a piece or pawn (but not the king) of his own colour with an opponent's man of the same rank. The men change places. This is known as the 'unmasking', and the man swapped is a 'traitor' who cannot subsequently change sides again. The traitor is exposed after the opponent has played and before moving. Unmasking, which must not give check to one's own king but may give check to the opponent's, does not count as a move. Each player has the right to only one unmasking in a game. (*Eterosacco* 27)

### 12.4 Men automatically added or removed during play

**Twinkle Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1977). A pawn is added to or taken from the board after each move, at the discretion of the player. The pawn may be of either colour. Pawns can only be entered on vacant squares and then not on the 1st and 8th ranks. No more than eight pawns of the same colour on the board at any one time (i.e., only the normal set is used). Check must be met immediately. A violent game. In **Blizzard Chess** (Betza, 1977) only addition is allowed, and it is compulsory. In **Buzzard Chess** (Betza, 1977) only subtraction is allowed, and again it is compulsory; if there is only one pawn left and its removal will expose the turn player to check, that player loses. (*Nostalgia* 214/6/8)

(i.e., incest is not tolerated). The power of the piece is unchanged, but when it moves away it gives birth to the man whose home square it is. Birth control is not practised and the population is limited only by lebensraum. Problem theme probably untested as a game. (Extract from Fairy Chess Correspondence Circle circular)

**Pregnant Chess**, also known as **Promethean Chess** (Chris Tylor, 1980). A man moving to the home square of another man (meaning a piece or pawn, not, understandably, a male) of either colour becomes pregnant. The exceptions are a king or a man of its own kind

**Too Many Bishops** (quoted by C. Pickover, 1992). Before each move a player acquires an extra bishop which is placed by the opponent on any vacant square. The game ends with checkmate, when a player is unable to add a bishop, or when a player cannot move (because of a convocation of bishops). (*Mazes for the Mind*)

**Trapdoor Chess [Betza]** (Ralph Betza, 1996). A man that stays on a square for five turns falls through a trapdoor and is lost (if the K, the game is lost). Does not apply to unmoved men. (*Eterosacco* 75)

## 12.5 Passing or retracting a move

**Zugzwang-Free Chess** (origins unknown). No obligation to move on turn unless in check. (Gik, *Schach und Mathematik*)

**Liars' Chess [Betza]** (Betza, 1978). At any time when you make a move, you may claim that a previous move was a 'lie' and that you actually played so-and-so. However, you may change only one move per turn, and all subsequent moves must remain legal. Two further restrictions are offered as options: false moves are restricted to a given percentage of the total, and you cannot claim a false move until a certain number of subsequent moves have been played. (*Nost-algia* 217, *Eteroscacco* 49) [This was developed from a sarcastic joke game called Watergate Chess, which was inspired by events that are now over thirty years old and which David had decided to drop from the new edition. I think he was right to do so.]

**The Royal Game of Amber** (Mark Bassett, 1981). The inventor claims that nobody wants to change the rules of chess - except one: that you cannot take back a move. Knights are

Princes and have the power of retracting their last move (or moves, if in unbroken sequence) and requiring the opponent to do likewise. (Inventor's rules pamphlet)

**Parallel Timestream Chess** (Chris Tylor, 1981). An adaptation of the science fiction concept of a parallel universe. Before every move, the player must switch the position to a parallel time-stream by changing an earlier move of the game. Any later move which then becomes illegal or impossible is replaced by a parallel move in which the man geometrically closest to the starting square of the original man is moved to the square geometrically closest to its finishing square (castling being a king move, promotion being to the type of piece last moved). If two or more men or squares are equidistant, the parallel move is (a) from the rank furthest back to the rank furthest forward, and (b) from the file nearest the edge to the file nearest the centre. Best played by correspondence. In one recorded game, White blundered on move 7 allowing Black to mate on move 6! (*The Games and Puzzles Journal* 3)

## 12.6 Simultaneous movement

**Synchronistic Chess** (V. R. Parton, 1971). A variant designed, part tongue-in-cheek, to achieve absolute equality. On each turn, both players write down their moves and then declare them to each other, the board position being adjusted accordingly. There are three anomalous situations to be resolved:

(1) Both moves are to the same square. White captures Black if the disputed square is in Black's half of the board, and vice versa.

(2) Reciprocal capture. Both pieces are removed from the board.

(3) Illusory capture (a capture is recorded but the square is now vacant because the piece has moved away). If the capturing piece is superior in rank to the piece that moved away (K>Q>R>B>N>P), the latter is captured on the square from which it moved. If the capturing piece is equal to or inferior in rank, there is no capture and both moves stand.

Since both kings can be mated simultaneously, Synchronistic Chess can claim

to be more equal than others. (*Chesshyre Cat Playeth Looking Glass Chessys*)

**Diplochess** (Edi Birsan, 1973). An attempt to link the popular proprietary game Diplomacy with chess (for other attempts, see Scacchomacy below and the four-player game Diplomatic Chess). Players write down their orders for each move, revealing them simultaneously when moves and captures are resolved. Orders are for all men, and as in Diplomacy can be to move, to hold, or to support. Points are assigned to men according to the relative values normally assigned to them (Q=9, R=5, B=N=3, P=1), the king being assigned 0. An interesting feature is that the move of a high value piece cuts off the moves of lower value men which try to cross its path. The object is to dislodge the opponent's K and leave it without a retreat (in effect, checkmate). (*Bushwacker*, November 1974, quoting *Arena*, 'about July 1973')

**Scacchomacy**, also known as **Fish's Delight** (Dave Kadlec, 1974). Another attempt to combine chess with the concept of simultaneous movement found in Diplomacy. Orthochess moves, but the basic rules of movement and annihilation (capture) are those of the 1971 Diplomacy rule book. Supply centres are those occupied by the 16 pieces initially together with neutral centres at d4/d5/e4/e5. (*Spectrum* 7)

**Synchronous Chess** (Vitaly Korolev, 1991). Players move simultaneously, writing their own moves on their respective score sheets, revealing them to each other and then writing in the opponent's moves with amendments to one or both moves as necessary. A king must move to escape check but because of simultaneous movement can remain in check for several moves. Checkmate or capture of the king ends the game. A number of ambiguities can arise:

(1) Both men are moved to the same vacant square. Both are captured, even if both are pawns, but if a P and a K meet the P is captured but not the K.

(2) A 'capture' is made but the intended victim has removed. The move stands, even if it is a pawn capture or promotion.

(3) Mutual capture. The men change places, even if one or both are pawns.

(4) A Q or R on a file 'captures' a facing pawn which simultaneously advances. This is treated as case (2), neither being captured.

A capture on a square occupied by a friendly man, anticipating its capture, is allowed. If the attacker moves otherwise the self-capture stands. The game received a winner's diploma in the 'Games for Peace' convention, Leningrad 1991. (Originator's pamphlet)

**Turbo Chess** (Rob Cullender, 1988). Turns are simultaneous, each player writing a

'movement order'. More than one man may be moved in a turn (hence turbo, speeding up the game) but no man may make more than one move a turn. Each man is credited with a nominal value (n.v.): K(15), Q(8), R(5), B(3), N(3), P(1). However, if a second pawn is moved in a turn its n.v. is 4, a third 9, a fourth 16, and so on. If a pawn or a piece is moved more than one square, its n.v. is multiplied accordingly. A knight's move is prescribed as 3 squares hence the n.v. allocation for a knight move is 9 points. Castling either side costs 40 points. Both players have an allocation of 50 points per turn of which 30 must be used; the balance can be 'banked' but the current balance must never exceed 100 points. To complicate matters, players must allocate to each man moved an actual value (a.v.) that cannot be less than the n.v. This a.v. is multiplied by the number of squares moved to give a points expenditure. The moves made by both players in a turn are executed in a.v. order, the highest first (ties in a.v. are broken in order of n.v.). The points allocated to a move that is reduced or negated as a result of an opponent's move taking precedence are lost. For example, if rival knights attack each other and both players elect to capture, the player who has allocated the higher a.v. will succeed since his move will be executed first. There is one further rule: if a pawn that has been programmed to move has an available capture then the capture is made automatically (if the pawn has two possible captures, the man with the higher n.v. is taken) unless the player has indicated otherwise on the movement order. There is no checking and the aim of the game is to capture the opponent's king. The game has been played successfully by correspondence. (Article 'Turbo Chess' comprising pages 10-11 of an unidentified magazine, together with a manuscript game score annotated in some detail)

## 12.7 Exploitation of coordinate squares

**Coordinate Chess (Co-Chess)** (Ralph Betza, 1973) The paterfamilias of a numerous clan, Co-Chess, inspired by the Co-ordinator piece in Abbott's game 'Ultima', is not itself a game but a system. According to one highly unreliable source, there are potentially at least 300,000 Co-Chess variants, as yet fortunately

confined to a well-tested handful. The principle is that like-pieces of the same colour form a co-pair, of which initially each player has four, as Q and K are assumed to be a co-pair. Pawns do not form co-pairs. When one piece of a co-pair moves to a square that is not on the same rank or file as the other, two co-

squares are created which together form a rectangle with the squares on which the co-pair stand (so if a player has a rook at a1 and moves his second rook to h2, co-squares are created at a2 and h1). Men on co-squares are subject to co-effects which are defined by the game being played. Co-effects are usually permanent, but co-squares are only effective on the move that created them. If one piece of a co-pair is captured, the remaining piece loses any power to create co-squares unless a pawn is promoted to a like piece. Promotion is a pawn move and does not cause co-effects. Castling is both a king and rook move, so both K and R can form co-squares with Q and R respectively. Since co-effects are mandatory, a move cannot be made in which these would result in an illegal position. Conversely, a move that would normally be illegal is legal if the co-effects of the move remove the illegal element. For example, castling through check would be legal if the co-effects neutralized the enemy piece commanding the square over which the king moved. (*Nost-algia* 229)

**Biflux Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1974). When a piece creates co-squares, each piece of the co-pair acquires the powers of an enemy pawn or piece, including a king, on the co-squares. A player when moving a combined piece must declare its role if a co-pair is possible. Combined pieces that include a king have royal powers; if a player has more than one king, he loses if any of them is mated. A combined piece that includes a pawn promotes only if it moves from the penultimate rank as a pawn. Some interesting end-games arise with unusual piece combinations. (*Nost-algia* 177)

**Co-Capture Chess**, also known as **Eradication Chess** (originator unclear). Enemy men on co-squares are captured. A king caught on a co-square is mated. Philip Cohen has suggested that orthochess captures are banned with the exception of pawn captures, otherwise a player could hide behind a phalanx of pawns. (*Nost-algia* 189/263)

**Co-Relay Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1973). The co-effect of co-squares is to convey the power of the co-pair to friendly men occupying them. (*Nost-algia* 169)

**Conversion Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1973). The co-effect of co-squares is to convert enemy men to friendly men of the same rank.

Friendly men on co-squares are unaffected. A threat to convert the king is check; an inescapable threat to convert the king is checkmate. Normal check and checkmate are not precluded (Cohen later proposed orthochess captures, and hence checks also, limited to pawns). It is possible, through conversion or promotion, to have several pieces of the same rank, in which case the move of one of them may simultaneously create a number of co-squares. In Betza's opinion, two tempi ahead are usually sufficient to ensure the win, other things being equal. In **Double Conversion Chess** (Betza, 1973) the occupants of the co-squares change sides; in **Reversion Conversion Chess** (Betza, 1973) any two unpaired pieces of the same colour are joined to form a new co-pair, the player choosing which two to join if there are three. (*Nost-algia* 161 and later)

**Heterocoalescence Chess** (Philip Cohen from an idea by Ralph Betza, 1973). Two pieces of different colours on a pair of co-squares coalesce, forming a 'meld'. No check or mate. Object is to take opponent's king or any meld containing it. (Personal communication)

**Inverter Chess**, also known as **Switch Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1973). If a move creates a set of co-squares, occupants of front and rear squares are interchanged. If a move creates more than one set of co-squares, the player may choose the order in which men are transposed. (*Nost-algia* 231)

**Nuisance Chess** (Philip Cohen, 1979). Every time co-squares are formed, Nuisances are placed on any that are vacant. A nuisance is a neutral, immobile man that acts as a block to pawns and line pieces. Kings and knights are unaffected except that a nuisance can prevent castling. Nuisances can be captured by either side. (*Nost-algia* 232)

**Overloader/Restorer (O/R) Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1974). When a piece creates co-squares, any enemy man on either or both co-squares is overloaded, whilst a friendly man on a co-square, if overloaded, is restored to full power. An enemy man that is already overloaded or a friendly man that is not overloaded are unaffected. An overloaded man retains its basic move but loses all additional powers. Thus it cannot capture, check, castle, act as a co-pair, or, if a pawn, promote or

move two squares. It stays overloaded unless and until restored. A pawn restored on the 8th rank promotes immediately. Castling into a check that is cancelled by the co-effect is legal. Once most co-pairs have gone, overloaded pieces will have little chance of restoration and will become virtually powerless. (*Etereoscacco* 50)

**Suction Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1979). Every time co-squares are formed, the player can move a man (but not a king and presumably not the co-pair) of either colour from anywhere on the board to either of the co-squares. A pawn sucked to the 8th rank is at once promoted to a piece of the owner's choice. Cohen prefers what he calls **Autosuction Chess** which limits the co-effect to one's own men. (*Nost-algia* 238)

**Transportation Chess (Transchess)** (Ralph Betza, 1973). The darling of the family. The co-effect of co-squares is to require the player to move the occupant(s) to any vacant square(s). Removal is compulsory, but a pair of men on co-squares can be interchanged. There are two restrictions: the king cannot be transported and pawns cannot be placed on the 8th rank. Pawns can be moved to the 1st rank, and a man that is transported back to its original square without moving regains its privileges (R can castle, pawn-2). A pawn moving from the 1st to 2nd

## 12.8 Changes to the rules during play

**Metamorphosis** (Ralph Betza, 1973). The rules in force change according to a predetermined pattern. (*Nost-algia* 209)

**List Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1977). A list is prepared of variants whose rules are known to both players. White chooses and announces the variant for his first move, Black ditto. These variants are crossed off the list, and cannot be used again until all variants have been used once. White now plays his first

## 12.9 Other external influences on the play

**Alcoholic Chess**, also known as **Spirited Chess** (origins lost in the mists of time). Alcohol has at times been introduced to add a new dimension to chess. Pieces have been replaced by glasses or bottles of intoxicants,

rank acquires the P-2 option. An 'illegal' move is allowed (e.g. exposing the king to check) if the subsequent transportation removes the illegality. Transportations do not trigger further transportations because they are not moves: co-squares are only formed by the move of one of a co-pair. Games tend to be both short and violent. The essence of Transchess is to keep co-pairs as long as possible since broken marriages spell disaster. Ideal for correspondence play, the game offers an exciting but as yet little-explored problem theme. (*Etereoscacco* 50)

Transportation Chess has developed variants of its own (variants of a variant of a variant). In **Polyactive Transportation** (1979), new co-squares are created as a result of transportation, and the process is continued until no co-squares remain. 'Ridiculous' in the view of Philip Cohen (*Nost-algia* 233). In **Put-Back Transchess** (Betza, 1974), it is played with Put-Back rules (a captured man is immediately replaced somewhere on the board, no restriction on the replacement squares of pawns and bishops) (*Nost-algia* 170). [David's index sheet gives Philip Cohen as the originator of Polyactive Transportation, which rests oddly with his authorship of the subsequent quotation, but people do occasionally refer to their brainchildren in this way. I haven't seen the source.]

move and chooses and announces the variant for his second, and so on. (*Nost-algia* 168/209)

**Crazy Lightning Chess** (originator unknown). At irregular intervals the umpire breaks into play by announcing a change of rules such as 'all bishops now move as knights'. Reported to have been a perennial favourite at British Championships. (*British Chess Magazine*, February 1990)

the usual rule being that a player must promptly drink the contents of any man he captures. In one game in Budapest in the early 1890s, a chessboard was marked out on a billiard table, the kings being replaced by

bottles of champagne, the queens by claret, the bishops by burgundy, the rooks by port, the knights by madeira and the pawns by wine. The players had to drink the contents of any man they moved. The game was drawn by mutual confusion. A few years later (1898) a game was played on the same(?) table in which the kings were bottles of champagne, the queens liebfraumilch, the other pieces tokay and the pawns red wine. Both players finished under the table in an interesting position. Lasker is said to have won a game of Alcoholic Chess by wisely sacrificing his queen (which contained a quarter-litre of cognac) in the early stages. During the Star Chess finals in London (1979), two young ladies played a demonstration game in which the pieces of each side were represented respectively by goblets of white and red wine. A draw was agreed when both sides were reduced to two pawns, the players walking away with poise whereas several kibitzers were either unstable, incoherent, or both. A Scottish firm once marketed hollow chessmen for whisky, whilst in the U.S. Old Crow ceramic chessmen were filled with bourbon. (Gizycki page 90, *The Complete Chess Addict* pages 209-10, *Games and Puzzles* 75, *Nostalgia* 332)

[An extra dimension was added in an experiment performed by Alex Kraaijeveld, in which he had not only to drink the contents of the men captured but to identify them (all were single malt whiskies secretly chosen from his own shelves, one brand being put in the pawns, one in the knights, and so on). His opponent was a computer, which was handicapped by having its playing level reduced from the keyboard every time it made a capture (nobody wanted to waste good whisky on a computer). He duly won the game and identified four of the six whiskies including that in the mated king, which wasn't bad if not quite of the level which Dorothy Sayers would have claimed for Peter Wimsey (*Variant Chess* 48, reporting an item in issue 44 of *Whisky Magazine*).]

**Athletic Chess** (Alan Turing, c.1948). Turing, the computer pioneer and codebreaker, played chess with his friend the economist David

Champernowne, in which the turn player had to move before the other had run round a large garden. They found that fast running, aimed at reducing the opponent's thinking time, was counter-productive since it impaired clear thought tended to prevent good thinking, so the problem was to choose the right balance. An indoor version was to run round the house after moving; if you got back before your opponent had moved, you moved again. The two devised one of the first chess-playing programmes in 1948 (it won only one game, against Champernowne's wife, who was a beginner). (Champernowne obituary in *The Times*, 25 August 2000)

[The 'programme' will of course have been merely a set of written instructions to be followed by a human robot. No computer available in 1948 was capable of playing even a remotely sensible game of chess within a reasonable time.]

**Earthquake Chess [Gutzwiller]** (James A. Gutzwiller, 1970). Before each player moves, the opponent violently kicks the table. Pieces off the board are out of the game, others are adjusted to nearest squares. **Bowling Chess** (Gutzwiller and David Moeser, 1970) is much the same except that the board is put at the end of a bowling alley and the players have one bowl (with a baseball) in turn, bowling being repeated after every five moves. Incredibly, the game was once popular at the University of Cincinnati, where a 45-move game ending in a draw was published. (*Nostalgia* 280/281, *Neue Chess* 7)

[In the book from which I learned chess when young, one of the ways of losing a game was given as 'wilfully upsetting the board and men'. This always seemed to me to be a most excellent rule, and I was deeply disappointed when I found that it was not in fact part of the official Laws of Chess.]

**Dartboard Chess** (Mick Dickman and David Moeser, 1975). A paper chessboard is attached to a dartboard. Each player in turn throws a dart and must move a man if possible to the square pierced. If impossible for any reason, he continues to throw until a legal move can be played. (*Neue Chess* 9)

**12.10 Puzzles centred around chess games**

**Crossword Chess [Lepper]** (Philip Lepper, 1930s). Tournament in which clues given to the players in advance determine destination of prizes. Played at the Bedford club ('a great success'). 1st prize clue: A Welsh author seems to indicate this. Answer: Night must fall (so the first player to shed a knight won first prize). 3rd prize: Something frequently done by medieval war-lords. Answer: Check king with castle. (Unprovenanced note presumably deriving from personal communication)

**Guess Chess** (S. R. Hossell, 1950). An entertainment for a club night. An unfamiliar master game is chosen, and the names of the players are revealed. Participants compete in pairs. One of the pair receives the score of the first ten moves and his opponent attempts to guess them, receiving points for correct guesses; they then change roles. (Letter to *Chess*, September 1950) [Given the technology now available, the idea might be revived along the lines of the knock-out solving competitions that have become a popular feature at meetings of problemists. Participants compete in pairs, with buzzers. A position from a game is put up on a screen, with the event and the players' names, and the competitors have to say what the next move was. First to buzz gives his answer, one point

if correct, one point to the opponent if wrong, first to three points (or whatever) goes through to the next round. 'Resigns' is of course a valid answer, particularly in positions where a mate in one was overlooked.]

**Crossword Chess [Papp]** (A. Papp, 1967). The 'player' is given a game score from which certain moves have been removed and placed in random order at the end, and he has to reconstruct the game. (*Le Courier des Echecs*, January 1967)

[I have never seen this, and I was surprised that David did not include two ideas which seem to be much more widely practised: the **Proof Game**, where the position after White or Black's move  $n$  is given and the game has to be reconstructed, and the more general **Retrograde Analysis**, where a position is given and some question about the preceding play has to be answered (for example, where a certain missing man was captured). Typically, a square such as g1 is empty and the victim spends a lot of time trying to work out where that knight could have been taken, and of course it wasn't like that at all; it was the other knight that was captured, and the knight from g1 is now standing innocently at b1. Such challenges often appeal to players who take no interest in more conventional problems.]

**12.11 Unorthodoxy in context or presentation**

[The first edition counted as 'variants' blindfold chess, lightning chess, living chess, quickplay, and simultaneous displays, but it seems to me that these are really rather too 'orthodox' for inclusion here; certain forms of quickplay are indeed now regulated by the FIDE Laws of Chess. The changes that follow are rather more radical.]

**Handicap Chess** has a long history. We saw the giving of material odds in chapter 9, but some odds are imposed in other ways: by a time handicap (the stronger player has less time on the clock), mating conditions (mate must be given by a specified man or on a specified square), 'odds of the draw' (a draw is a loss for the stronger player), and so on. Bland, in his *Persian Chess*, refers to the exacting system employed by the Arabs and Persians. Amongst more recent ideas that failed to arouse enthusiasm were that the

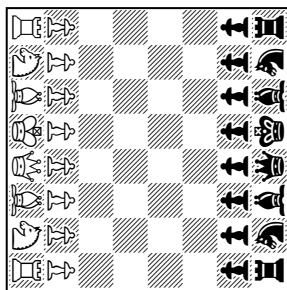
stronger player should play the first 10, 15 or 20 moves blindfold which 'would avoid artificial positions, develop the powers of the stronger player, and encourage the weaker player to explore the more novel openings' (W. W. Tatum, *Chess*, October 1949) and permitting the weaker player to retract two sequences of three moves in the course of the game (J. A. Negus, *Chess*, March 1950). In recent years, a wide variety of systems have been employed, mostly for use in tournaments and often based on players' gradings.



**Le Jeu des Camps, or La Petite Guerre** (L. B. Guyton-Morveau, 1793 - 'the second year of the French Republic, one and indivisible'). An attempt, in the wake of the revolution, to republicanize chess. The king is renamed the Flag (check is 'the flag!' and checkmate 'victoire!'), the queen the Adjutant, rooks are Cannons, the bishops Dragoons, whilst the knights are demoted to Horsemen. The pawns are Fusiliers who, happily, do not change their sex on promotion. The name 'chess' was not acceptable because of its royalist connotations. (Photocopies of *Les Camps, ou La Petite Guerre* and of *Histoire de la Convention Nationale*, pp 282 and 435-8)

**Phantom Chess [Montreal]**, also known as **Ghost Chess** (origins unknown). The board is empty board, the array is imagined, the men are placed on the board only when they are first moved. Played in a consultation game in Montreal in 1894 (Gossip and Fleming against Babson and Pollock), and a match to be played at the Norfolk and Norwich C.C. was advertised in 1903. (Mrs F. F. Rowland, *Pollock Memories*, 1899, also *Morning Post*, 9 November 1903)

**Bystander Chess** (Frank Maus, 1927). Since it is well known that onlookers see more of the game than the players, Maus suggested a rearrangement of the initial position so that the players should no longer be disadvantaged :



The pawns now advance along the ranks and castling is on the files, but otherwise little is changed. Because the players occupy the superior points of observation midway between the two armies, the bystanders are forced to the inferior positions formerly occupied by the players. (*Chess Amateur*, September 1927)

**Bughouse Chess [Hulf]** (L. A. Hulf, 1943). Men are taken from the box at random and are arrayed on the 1st/2nd/7th/8th ranks irrespective of colour. They then assume the roles of the squares they stand on (so if e1 receives a black pawn, both players have to remember that this particular pawn in fact represents the white king). A test both of memory and of sobriety. (Letter to *Chess*, July 1943)

**Vanishing Chess** (Russell Chauvenet, 1944). When a man is moved it is taken off the board. Thereafter both players try to remember the identity of the 'ghost' which, for play purposes, is still on the board. Ghosts move or capture like ordinary men (the player lifts air from one square and moves it to another). (Letter to *Chess*, January 1944)

**Beach Chess** (Karl O. Hill and Rudy V. Saul, 1952). A large chessboard is marked out on the sand, and seaweed is used to colour the dark squares. The men are flags in contrasting colours mounted on poles, each carrying a piece symbol. The game is orthochess, the inventors remarking that it gives the players 'healthy exercise and fresh air'. They omit to mention the problems that could arise if the wind drops. (Personal communication forwarded by Ken Whyld)

**Rainbow Chess** (Pal Suvada, 1960s). Orthochess but with the pieces distinguished by colour (kings red, queens purple, and so on) on the theory that the eye detects colour more quickly than shape and hence that more time is made available for creative thinking. Patented in the US 'some thirty years ago' and used in five well supported events in Hungary 'during the past year' (article in *Variant Chess* 23, 1997). [Text editorial]

**Semi-Circle Chess** (Proprietary game, James-Games Inc, 1973). Board distorted to form a semi-circle, rules otherwise normal. Philip Cohen's comment is 'Highly unrecommended ... adds nothing to the game but confusion'. (*Nost-algia* 164/7/8)

**The Game of Asha**. Asha (the 'universal law of the Zoroastrians') is chess in philosophical garb. The white forces are those of Ahura

Mazda (life and light) and the black those of Ahriman (death and darkness). The pieces and pawns represent natural forces, good and bad, and each is denoted by a mystical symbol. Thus the white pieces (a1-h1) are respectively Power, Love, Wisdom, Preserver, Creator, Eternal Life, Work, Peace; pawns (a2-h2) Sun, Water, Air, Food Man, Earth, Health, Joy. Black pieces (h8-a8) Violence, Idleness, Death, Destroyer, Spoiler, Ignorance, Hatred, Weakness; pawns (h7-a7) Sadness, Disease, Barrenness, Inferior Man, Impure Food, Impure Air, Impure Water, Darkness. In *The Essene Book of Asha* (1976), from which the above is derived, the author, E. B. Szekely, gives the game Count Tolstoy v. Fritz Kuhler (a win for the forces of Light) in Asha notation.

**Casino Chess** (V. D. Pandit, 1978). Players toss a coin four times, the winner of each toss choosing in turn: (1) orientation of board; (2) colour (W or B); (3) placement of K/Q on d1/e1 (loser places K/Q on same files); (4) who starts. First expounded in the bulletin of the Correspondence Chess Association of India.

**Chess II [Ungame]** (Proprietary game, The Ungame Co, 1978). Orthochess made a little more difficult by distorting the board design. The 'squares' are termed Battle Stations and the game is described as flowing rather than static. (Proprietor's publicity material)

**Romulan Chess** (Wilde Lake High School Chess Club, early 1980s). A game for two players and a referee, who needs his own board. At the start, the players' board is empty, and each player's men are 'cloaked' and held in an 'in play' area to his left. They are however notionally present in their normal starting positions on the board. To move, White chooses a move (say e2-e4), takes a pawn from his 'in play' area, 'de-cloaks' it, and puts it down on e4. Black does likewise, and so on. However, instead of a normal move, a player may decide to 'cloak' a man on the board and return it to his 'in play' area (this doesn't alter its position on the board, so a player cannot use this artifice to escape from check). A cloaked man can be captured, the player claiming the man from his opponent's

'in play' area and putting it in a 'captured men' area of his own. The referee copies everything on his own board and advises the players when they are doing something illegal (such as leaving his king in check, failing to realise that he has captured something, or taking the wrong piece from his opponent's 'in play' area, but he is not allowed to elaborate or to comment further. The inspiration was apparently 'being too lazy to set up the board for a practice match'. (Chess Variant Pages) [Text editorial]

**Fuss-Schach** (origins unknown). Board and clock on the floor, players seated, play with feet. [Description annotated 'Collected at Nurnberg 1989 - game common in Germany but perhaps regional?']

**Mainframe** (Proprietary game, M&D Design Studio; T. Drury, 1989). Superficially three-dimensional chessboard formed by blocks of varying heights locked into a frame (flat option offered). Rules of play unchanged. (Manufacturer's publicity material)

**Rhinoceros Beetle Chess** (Thomas Harris, 1991). A variant only in the sense of time control is described by Thomas Harris in his modern classic, *The Silence of the Lambs*: 'Two men sat at a laboratory table playing chess. If they noticed the enormous rhinoceros beetle slowly making its way across the board, weaving among the chessmen, they gave no sign ... Then the beetle crossed the edge of the board. "Time, Roden," the lean one said instantly. The pudgy one moved his bishop and immediately turned the beetle around and started it trudging back the other way. "If the beetle just cuts across the corner, is time up then?" Starling asked. "Of course time's up then," the pudgy one said loudly without looking up. "Of course it's up then. How do you play? Do you make him cross the whole board? Who do you play against, a sloth?"'

**Siege Chess [Hair]** (Thomas Hair, 1999). The inventor has proposed new, coloured boards (details available from the U.K. Patent Office) on the argument that men and moves have been modified over the centuries but the board has remained unchanged. (*Variant Chess* 35)

**Old Man's Chess** (origins unknown, 1970s, possibly Czech). The players are deemed to be shaky geriatrics. Either the player picks up the wrong man from an adjacent square or he puts the man down on a square adjacent to that intended (but not both). Thus White might open for example Ne3 or Bf3. Games are short and White has a large advantage (at least a score of mating threats are possible with White's first move), which has led to the suggestion that the system comes into operation only after the first capture. (Personal communication, Peter Rice to Philip Cohen)

[If we are going to allow ourselves nonsenses like these, perhaps I may be permitted to

mention **Loose-Headed Knight Chess**, where a player is allowed to exploit a piece which used to be readily available in all properly conducted chess clubs. This piece allows its owner to ignore a pin, because he can move the head as normal and leave the base behind to block the pin line. Later, if neither half has been captured, he may jump the head back to the base (or to the base of his other knight, if that also has been left alone) and reunite them. For a joke problem in which promotion to such a piece is used to win an apparently lost game, see Burt Hochberg's book *Chess Braintwisters*, subsequently reissued as *Outrageous Chess Problems*, or my own little vanity-book *More Flights of Chess Fancy*.]