



Oxford History of Board Games

By David Parlett

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Oxford History of Board Games By David Parlett

For thousands of years, people have been planning attacks, captures, chases, and conquests--in short, they've been playing board games. Now, in *The Oxford History of Board Games*, David Parlett investigates the myriad board games that have developed through the ages and around the world.

Here are the origins and development of our favorite games, from the Egyptian and Asian ancestors of Chess, Checkers, and Backgammon, to the invention of such modern classics as Monopoly, Clue, and Scrabble. Parlett groups the games in different families--such as those based on races or chases, wars or hunts, capture or blockade--and then provides a fascinating history of each family.

Throughout the book, Parlett pays close--indeed, loving--attention to traditional games, the charming folk entertainments that have grown up through the centuries, and which exhibit endless local variations. Likewise, he devotes enthusiastic coverage to lesser-known and experimental games. Thus the book is no mere catalog of the familiar, but takes the reader into a world a games they have never known before. And not only does he describe the rules and strategies of the games, but Parlett also draws on 20 year's experience as a professional games researcher, critic, and inventor, to offer many perceptive insights into the thinking involved in creating these games. And, finally, Parlett also illuminates the significance of game-playing as a central part of human experience--as vital to a culture as its music, dance, and literature.

Written with great affection and authority, and beautifully illustrated with period art and helpful diagrams that show the finer points of the games, this is a fascinating and accessible guide to a richly rewarding subject.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This book by Parlett (A Dictionary of Card Games, Oxford Univ., 1992) is a superb work that succeeds in defining board games from their ancient inception to the present day. The most basic games were of a race nature (from point A to point B). Board games then evolved by implementing dice, cards, extra pieces, and territories. This exhaustive work is more an informative reference than an easy read, with subjects divided into Race Games, Space Games, Chase Games, Displace Games, and War Games (such as chess). The book gets high marks for historical depth, and includes game varieties from every country. Readers will find one shortcoming, however: a lack of "how-to" strategies for winning play. Instead, there is detailed research on the mechanisms of games. This is a worthy updating of H.J.R. Murray's classic *A History of Board Games Other Than Chess* (1952). Great tidbits or obscure, entertaining facts can be found on any given page. The game mechanisms can also be applied with little ingenuity. Highly recommended. AMarty Soven, Woodside, NY

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Review

The most enjoyable thing about this book is that it describes the rules for hundreds of board games....This book will require you to think in ways you never before thought possible. For the same reason, though, you probably won't be able to put this one down. -- *Steven Robert Allen, Weekly Alibi, July 21, 1999*

About the Author

David Parlett is a games expert of international reputation. A former editor of *Games & Puzzles* magazine, he has written many books on card and word games, and has himself invented many games, including *Hare & Tortoise*, which has been published in ten languages and won many awards, including Germany's prestigious Game of the Year award for 1979.

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