

Roman board games

The Romans had many board games. Sometimes they played on specially made boards and sometimes they carved boards into stones in buildings or streets. Gaming pieces made of bone and pottery were found at Billingsgate Roman House and Baths.

Terni Lapilli or Rota

For two players.

You will need:

- Three counters each (maybe coins, pebbles or buttons)
- A print-out of the board game on the next page – or draw a copy on a spare bit of paper.

Rules

Known as Rota or Terni lapilli, in this game you are trying to get three in a row across the middle of the board.

Take turns to place one piece each on the board on one of the circles.

Once all your pieces are on, take turns in moving one piece one space along one of the lines.

You can move around the circle or into the middle and out again on the next turn.

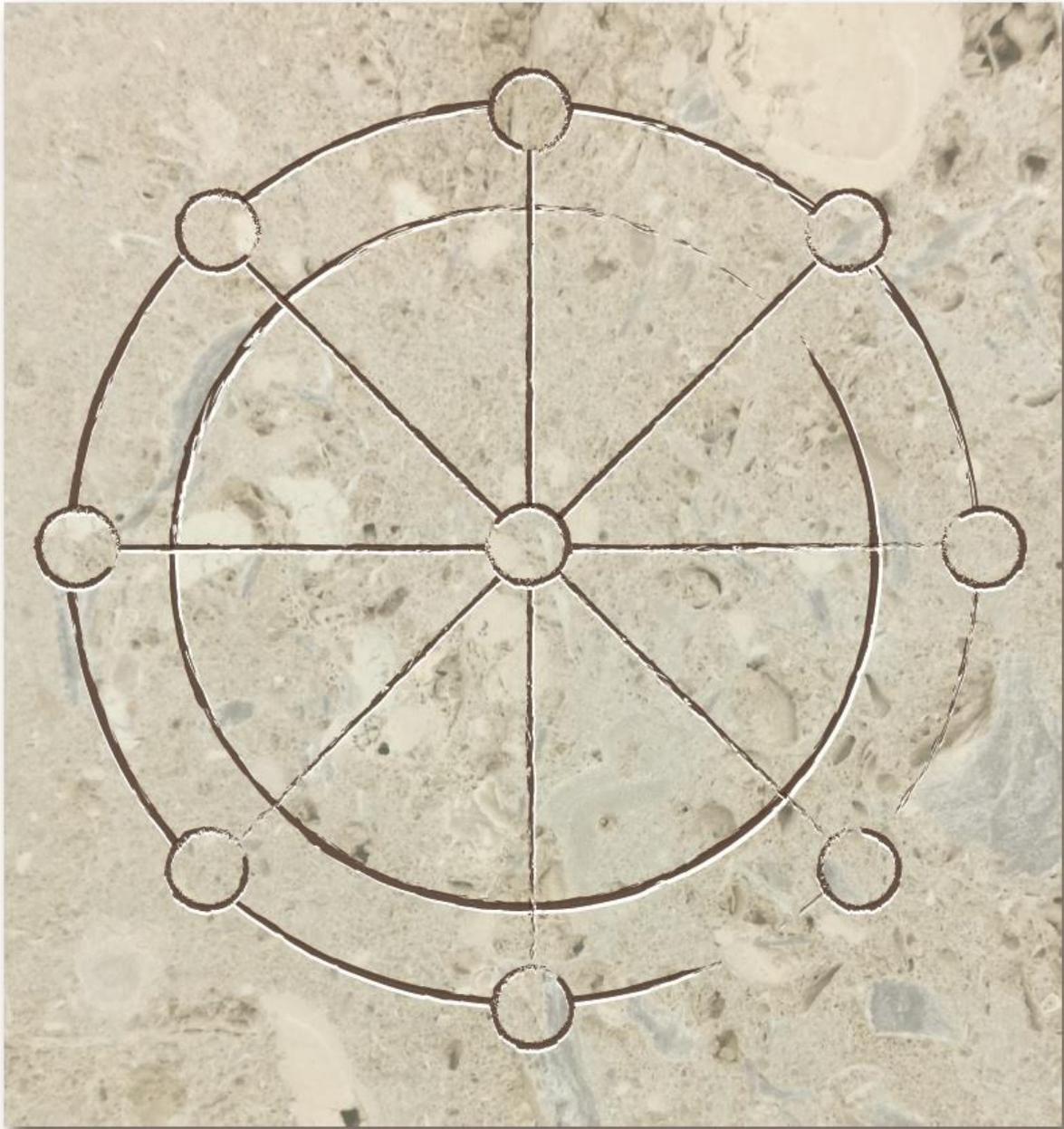
You can't jump over or on top of one of your opponent's pieces.

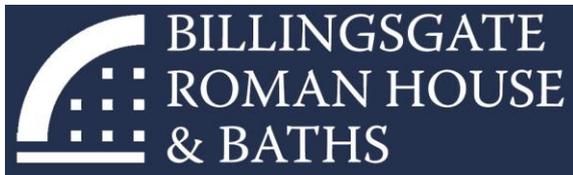
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Rota board game to print

This rota board is based on one from the Old Forum, Leptis Magna, Libya.





Ludus Latruncolorum

For two players.

You will need:

- 16 pieces per player (you could raid an old board game)
- A print-out of the game board on the next page or draw a grid with 8 by 8 squares on a spare bit of paper.

Rules

In this game, you are trying to capture your opponent's pieces by surrounding them on two opposite sides.

Start with the pieces off the board. Take turns to put one piece on the board at a time. They can go in any square. You can't surround anyone at this stage though.

When all your pieces are on, you can start to move them to try to surround your opponent's pieces. You can't move diagonally.

You can jump over your opponents' pieces.

If you trap one of your opponents' pieces between two of yours it can't move. As long as neither of your trapping pieces has been trapped on the next turn, you can then take your opponents' trapped piece off the board and keep it.

You win by capturing all but one of your opponents' pieces.

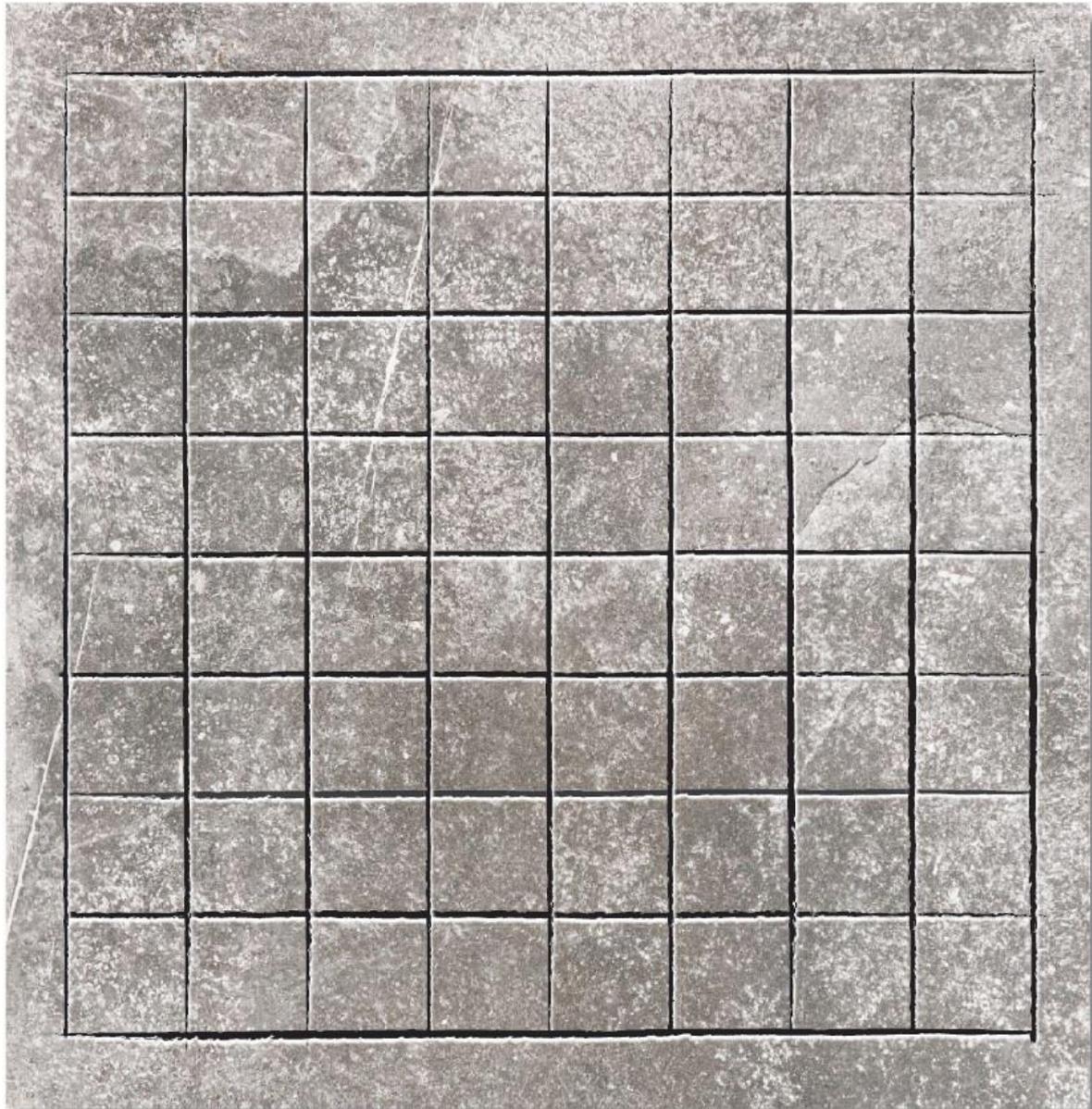
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Ludus Latrunculorum game board for printing

Ludus Latrunculorum boards have been found at Hadrian's Wall, at the Forum in Rome and in Sabrath, Libya among other places.



Duodecim Scripta

This is a bit like backgammon. For two players.

You will need:

- 15 pieces per player (you could cut out pieces of coloured paper)
- Three dice
- A print-out of the game board on the next page or copy the design onto a piece of paper.

Rules

In this game you are trying to be the first to get all your pieces around the board and off at the other end. You start with all your pieces off.

Player 1 starts on the middle row at the left hand side. Player 2 starts on the middle row on the right hand side of the central flower. See the direction of play on the image below.

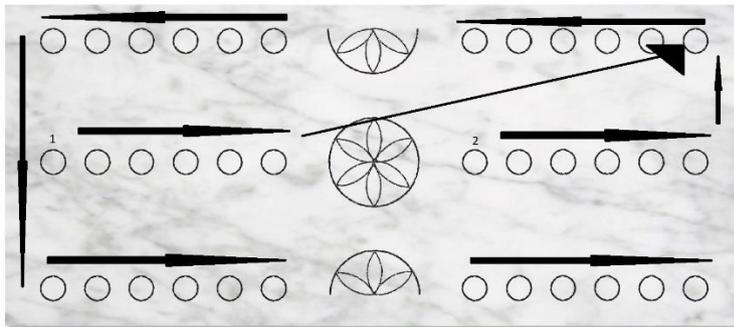
Each player takes it in turns to throw three dice. You can move 1, 2 or 3 pieces using a combination of numbers on the dice. You can put pieces on to the board or move pieces that are already there.

You can stack your own pieces on top of each other. This keeps them safe from being taken off the board. You can't land on a circle containing more than one of your opponents' pieces.

You can land on a circle containing one of your opponent's pieces and if you do, that piece is taken off the board and given back to your opponent. They then have to start that piece at the beginning.

You can only take pieces of the board if all your pieces are in the last 12 spaces.

Direction of play



Duodecim scripta game board for printing

This board is based on one found in the Agora of Aphrodisias in Turkey.

