

Move, People (Checkmate!)

By Nancy Mann

Games are an integral part of all cultures. Playing cards began first in Asia and India. During the Gupta Period in India, many board-games were invented. During the reign of Akbar the Great (1556-1605) elaborate board-games were invented; other regions of the world were also inventing games of chance (or “Go”) that show the complexity of language, art and philosophy of societies. Military games were sometimes forced upon generals to increase their mental skill.

About five thousand years ago, near Turkey, important persons were buried, with groups of forty-nine carved stones – an unknown but popular game. A Senet board game was found in King Tut’s tomb; in 3,000 B.C., the Royal Game of Ur was fashioned for the first time; the forerunner of Backgammon.

Iranians and Indians claim to have invented chess. Ancient Indian palace inventories list chess games, also called Ashtapada. Ashtapada, with elephants as bishops, spread to Arabia, and 1400 years later, the Moors brought the game to Spain. Europeans were thrilled to play it for 1200 years; particularly royalty, and we now have Sandia labs and U.S. laboratories that play computer chess in MEMS – microelectromechanical systems.

Ivan the Terrible outlawed chess in Russia, yet the St. Petersburg Society of Chess was founded later, and was quite famous. All Soviets endorsed chess; Russia spawned grandmasters.

Harry Potter tried to prevent the theft of a philosopher’s stone in the movie, with chess scene; Hoi An, Japan, offers Kung Fu artists, now completely viral.

A chessman is any of thirty-two movable objects, and it can be an object made of wood, shell, ivory, gold, or living men and women. The smallest chess board is the diameter of four human hairs – the largest are several football fields in size.

Five hundred noblemen, peasants, “horses” and knights, re-enact chess, (1454) in Italy. This was a result of a duel. Humans move on a fire-ringed plaza, for amazed tourists. Society for Creative Anachronisms regulates sparring of trained actors.

Dr. Ken Regan, Association of Chess Professionals, linguist, engineer, doctorate-holder from Oxford, mathematician par excellence, is an expert on cheating. He proposes monitoring players and smart ponies during bathroom visits. He has processed over 200,000 games. There are a finite number of positions on the chessboard, he states, and a vast number of themes – good vs. evil, occult vs. science. Experts in spotting fraud are needed, as Las Vegas competitions, with prizes up to \$1,000,000 will begin. Regan speaks of opportunities – learning, game design as over 600 million people now engage.

IBM supercomputer Deep Blue defeated the first-winning Garry Kasparov, but no human has beaten a computer since 2005. Chess has no time outs, no assistance or coaching; because it is evolving, rules are being created: children make good pawns, football players make rooks or

knights, no "selfies," no handguns are allowed, no steroids, no weddings or other ceremonies allowed on the game-board; flame-proof costumes required, venous support stockings required (for standing), nothing shall be inflated or deflated, no non-union trumpets, no caddies, and tame elephants are desired.