

Fox and Geese

Text by R.C. Bell in his book BOARD and TABLE GAMES from Many Civilisations.

Hala-tafl, the Fox Game, is mentioned in Icelandic 'Grettis saga'. Dr Finnur Jonsson, the literary historian, believed that this saga was written after A.D. 1300 by an anonymous priest who lived in the northern part of the island.

During the reign of Edward IV of England (1461-83) an entry was made on the accounts of the Royal Household for purchase of two foxes and twenty-six hounds of silver over-gilt for two sets of Merelles.

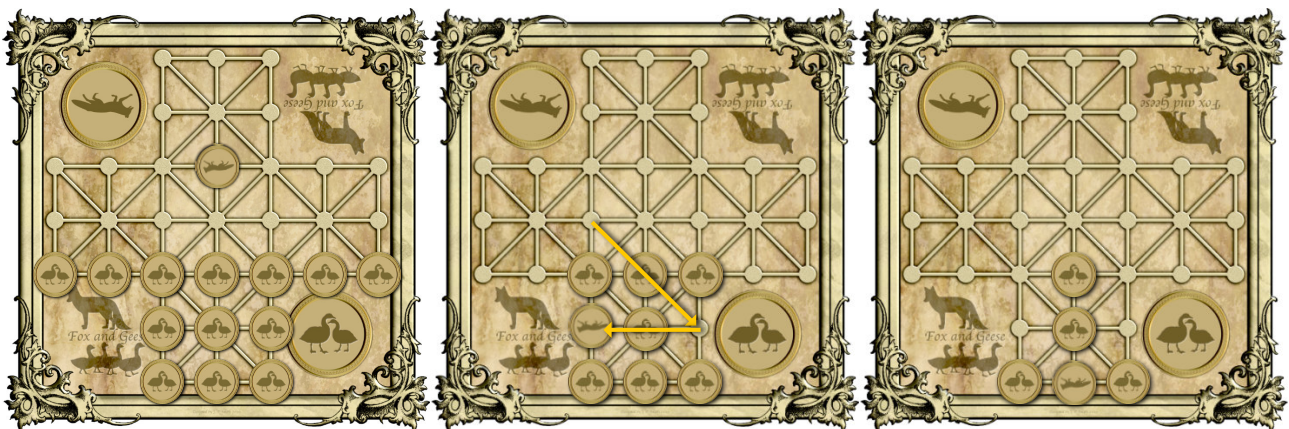
Fisks suggested that Fox and Geese may be the same game as Freystafl, which is mentioned in the late sagas.

Game Play and setup

Thirteen geese are arranged on the board [on all the points of the bottom three rows of the cruciform] and the fox is placed on any vacant point. *Image below left.*

The fox and geese can move in any direction along a line to the next contiguous point. If the fox jumps over a goose and lands on an empty point beyond, the goose is killed and removed from the board. *Image below middle.* Two or more geese can be killed in one move by a series of short jumps by the fox. The geese cannot jump over the fox, but they try to crowd him into a corner and make it impossible for him to move. *Image below right.* If the fox is immobilised he loses the game, but if he can deplete the gaggle of geese until they are unable to trap him he wins.

If the geese are correctly played the fox must lose. In later forms of the game the geese were increased to seventeen, but were deprived of moving backwards.



Asalto

(Officers and Sepoys)

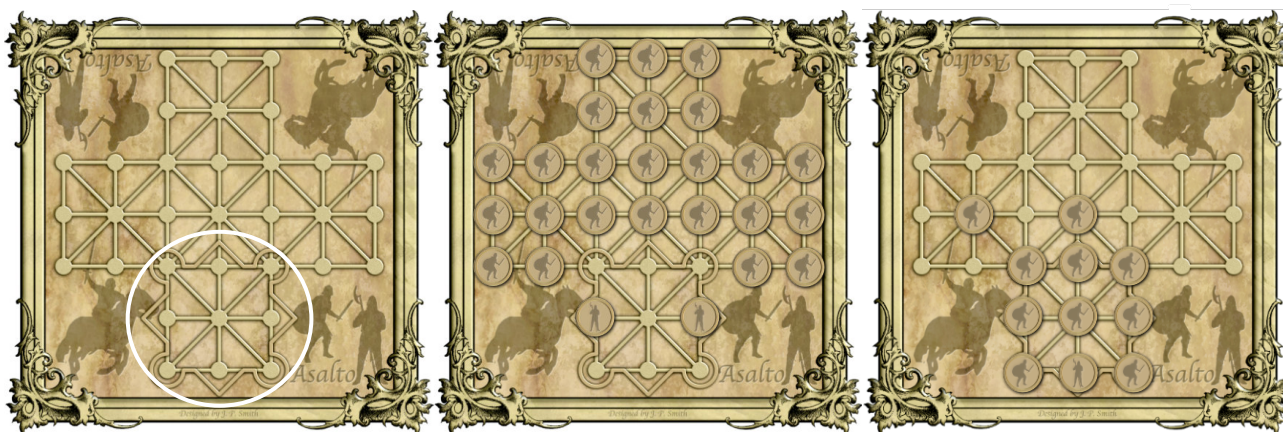
Text by R.C. Bell in his book BOARD and TABLE GAMES from Many Civilisations.

Asalto is a late form of Fox and Geese. The pieces can move along the marked lines orthogonal and diagonal. During the Indian Mutiny the game was renamed Officers and Sepoys.

The green square [gold in this printable version] represents a fort (*Image below left*), and one player places two officers [medieval sentries for this game] on any two points within its walls. His opponent controls the moves of twenty-four sepoy [medieval

infantrymen in this version] who occupy all the points in the neighbouring countryside. *Image below middle.*

All pieces move one point along any marked line, but the sepoys must always move towards the fort. [Sepoys cannot leap over and take the officers. Officers capture enemy sepoys by leaping over any that have a vacant point adjacent to the piece to be taken.] If a capture is possible an officer must make the capture or be removed from the board if he fails to take a sepoy. The sepoys win if they occupy every point in the fort, or if they trap the officers and render them unable to move (*Image below right*); but if they are depleted until this becomes impossible, the officers are victorious.

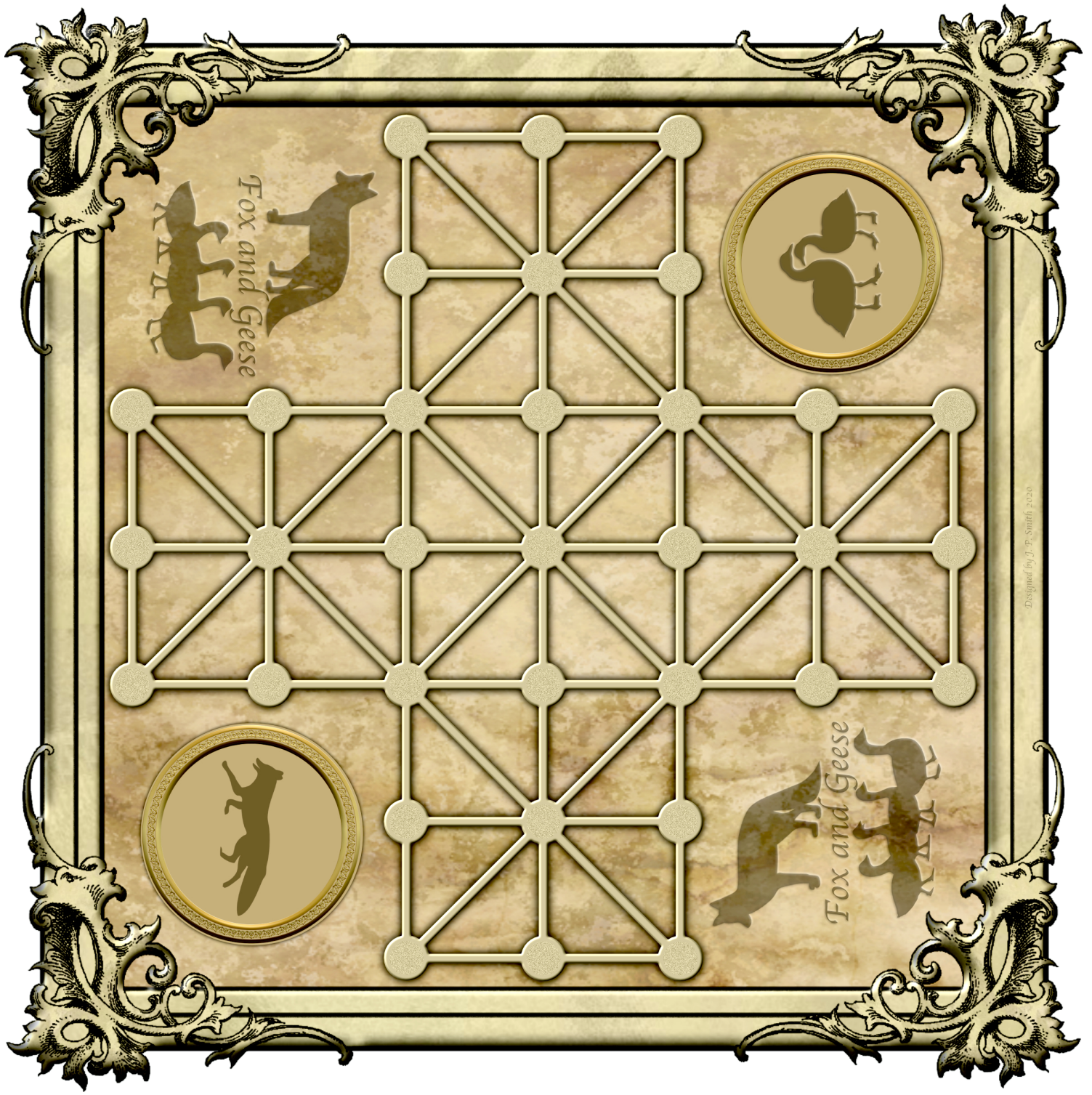


Contents:

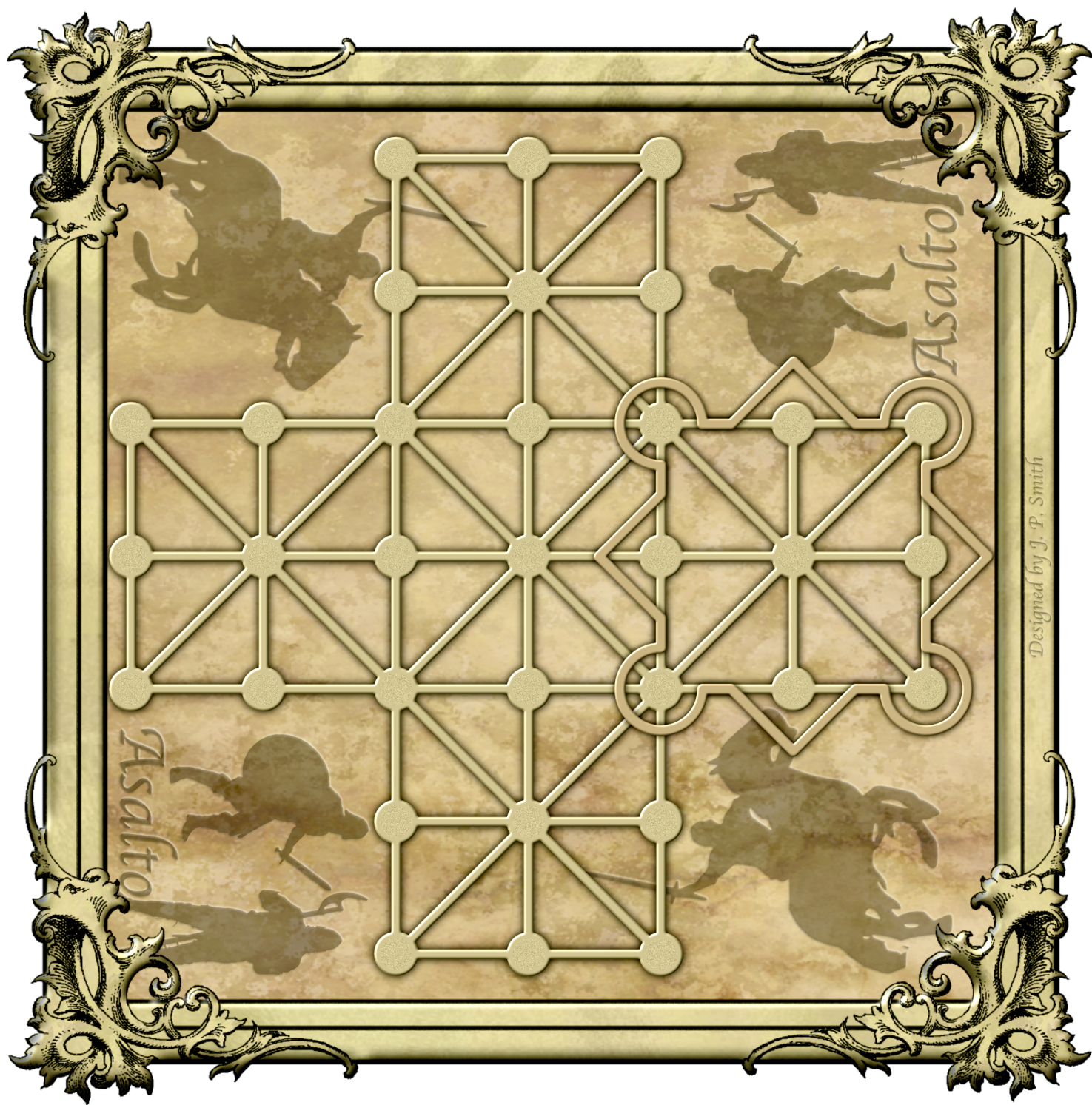
Page 3: Printable Fox and Geese board.

Page 4: Printable Asalto board.

Page 5: Printable playing counters for both games.



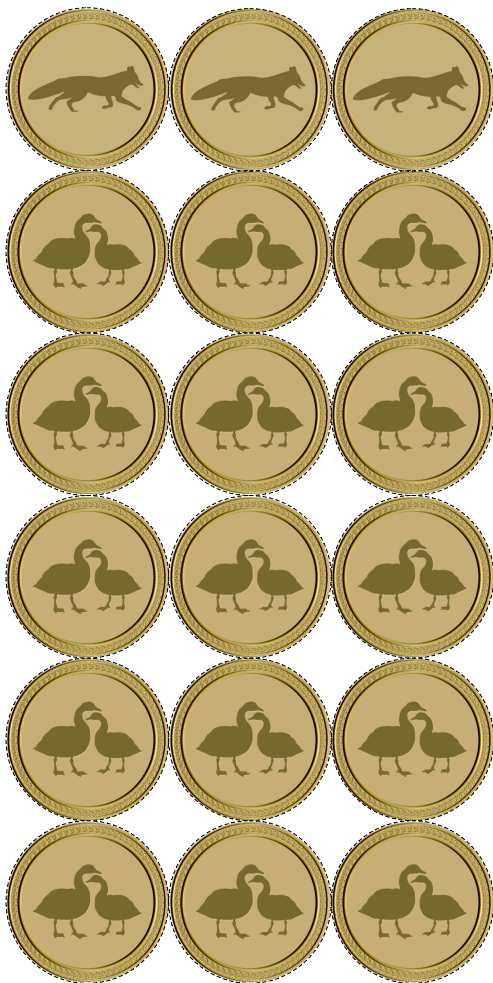
Designed by J. P. Smith 2020



Designed by J. P. Smith

Print, stick to card and cut out.
Alternatively use small coins or buttons.

Fox and Geese Counters



Asalto Counters

