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The Game of Seven: Glückshaus and Related Dice Games*

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Abstract

Glückshaus is a relatively modern version of the larger family of Games of Seven (games played with two six-sided dice and a stake board with fields usually numbered 2-12, often with an emphasized 7.). This paper looks at various historical versions of the game and shows how the modern Glückshaus version and its pecularities (e.g. a missing field for the number 4) came about when the dice game was combined with a stake board for a card game

Introduction

Early modern game boards with fields numbered 2-12, often with a central or accentuated 7, are usually referred to as boards for the game "Glückshaus". This dice game is played with two six-sided dice. The numbered compartments on the board are used for placing stakes. This paper describes several historical versions of the game, from its oldest traces to a modern misunderstanding in the 1960s.

I first came across *Glückshaus* a few years ago at a German Christmas market that had a medieval-themed section. The game came in the shape of a leather bag with dice and a sheet of instructions (figure 1). Unfolded, the leather lies flat and is used as the board. The accompanying sheet with rules and information about the game claims that the game originated in Southern Germany in the 15th century, mentioning extant game boards in the Bavarian National Museum [BNM] in Munich from the 16th century. It also says:

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Figure 1: Glückshaus game layout on leather, Germany, ca. 2008.

> "Gewöhnlich war der Spielplan als Haus dargestellt, welches in Felder b.z.w. Räume der Zahlen 2-12 aufgeteilt war. Die Nummer 4 fehlt allerdings häufig."[1]
>
> ("Usually the board was designed as a house divided into fields or rooms numbered 2-12. The number 4 is often missing, however.")

This information is consistent with what can be found on the internet, where Glückshaus appears in several online shops, forums, and blogs that deal with medieval reenactment and LARP. Leather versions such as the one described above are common. Today the game mostly seems to be played in medieval reenacting and larp communities. Contemporary boards come in various shapes, sometimes missing the field for the 4, sometimes only numbered 3-11. Often, the field for the number 2 contains a pig, the 12 a crown or a king, and the 7 an image or symbol of marriage like interlocking rings.

Parlett categorizes Glückshaus as a stake-board game: There is no interaction between elements placed on the board, and their positions relative to each other are irrelevant (Parlett, 1999, pp. 8 and 30-32). He gives the rules as follows:

> "It [the Glückshaus board] has eleven compartments numbered 2-12. Each in turn throws two dice. If the compartment corresponding to the cast is empty, the caster places a stake on it;

[1] Anon.: Glückshaus, oder auch Sieben, Lucky Dig (sic!) oder House of Fortune. s.a. [ca. 2008?], s.l. (sheet accompanying the leather game). Manufacturer unknown, possibly Allerley Spielerey.

> if not, he wins the stake already there, leaving it empty again. This does not apply to compartment 7, the commonest throw, on which stakes are left to accumulate. Throwing a double-1 entitles a player to sweep all the stakes except that in compartment 7, while a double-6 sweeps the board entirely." (Parlett, 1999, p. 31f.)

In the latest edition of Glonnegger's popular *Spiele-Buch* Glonnegger and Voigt present a few specifications and a variation: All players start with an equal amount of stakes/ tokens. Players who have no more tokens left are out; the final player to remain wins the rest of the board. Variant rule: As long as the compartment corresponding to the result of the dice roll has fewer tokens on it than its number, you have to place a stake there. Only a "full" compartment (e.g. nine tokens on the compartment 9) may be emptied. The rest of the rules still apply (Glonnegger & Voigt, 2009, p. 64).

Several traditions of this game are known, such as the antisemitic *Jeu du Juif* which was sold in several Western European countries, the Italian *Gioco della Barca* (Game of the Boat), and the *Arlequin/ Zevenzot* game popular in the Low Countries. In Germany, the game is sometimes named *Pinke* or *Die lustige Sieben*. Apart from visual features of the prints, there were also variations in the rules. Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that these games are all part of the same family.

The field showing the number 7 usually stands out on the board design, and due to its special place in the game rules (and, obviously, due to the probabilities when rolling two six-sided dice), some names of the games carry the seven in the title (Der Siebener trinckt aus, Zevenzak/ Zevenzot, Die lustige Sieben, Böse Sieben). That is why I refer to this family of games as *Game of Seven* (*Jeu du Sept, Siebenerspiel*), building on a term already used by Lhôte (Lhôte, 1994, p. 607)[2] and Plock/ Seville (Plock & Seville, 2012, pp. 120 and 122). When talking about individual traditions within this family, I will use the established names.

Although the name "Glückshaus" appears to be comparatively well-established, I will argue further below that this name should only be applied to a specific tradition which started in the second half of the 20th century.[3]

Despite its having been played across several countries and centuries,

[2] On p. 491 and p. 513 Lhôte also lists Glückshaus and Jeu du Juif, respectively).

[3] This is also the time when that word was first used as a name for this dice game. While the word "Glückshaus" has been used in the middle of the 19th century, it just denoted a happy household but did not refer to a game.

there is not much research about the game and its history. Himmelheber refers to it in his catalog of the games collection in the afore-mentioned BNM (Himmelheber, 1972, pp. 145-148), and Depaulis discusses it in his article on Loteries de Salon (Depaulis, 1987). Seville, in his paper on the *Nouvelle Combinaison du Jeu du Juif*, deals with the beginning of the Jeu du Juif tradition in France (Seville, 2013, pp. 4-6). Otherwise, the game has only be mentioned in passing.[4]

What are the oldest boards, and what is the oldest extant version of the rules for the game of seven that we know of? How can we explain the missing number four? And when did the name "Glückshaus" that's so prevalent today first come about?

I will start by presenting the earliest known game boards and the oldest version of the rules we still have, then give an overview over various traditions such as the Game of the Jew and the Harlequin game before addressing the modern name and design of the game as it is widespread today.

Wooden Boards with fields numbered 2-12

The oldest surviving game boards for the game of seven are wooden boards. For the most part, they share a similar design: A rectangle or square is divided into 3x3 fields numbered 3-11 (with the 7 occupying the center). The 2 and 12 are placed in fields added to the 3x3 grid at the top and bottom, respectively. The remaining space is often used for ornaments (figure 2). They were made in the 17th and 18th centuries, with one exception that is probably much older (dating to ca. 1475-1525).

The following section lists these wooden boards for the game of seven, first three from private collections, then two of a similar design from museums. These five boards share a number of characteristics. Finally, the sixth and oldest board will be discussed.

Lhôte shows a board from a private collection (Lhôte, 1994, p. 606), dated to the 17th century and said to be from Germany. No further details are provided. It shows floral ornaments and animals (possibly cats or monkeys/singeries) in the squares to the left and right of the numbered compartments (figure 3).

Of a very similar design is the board shown in *Spielwelten der Kunst* (figure 4). Based on the floral ornaments in the wood inlay it has been dated to ca. 1730 and tentatively linked to the town of Bamberg, Germany

[4]E.g. Holländer, 1999, p. 32; Endrei & Zolnay, 1986, p. 35; Haag, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, & Schloss Ambras Innsbruck, 2016, p. 117, Birkhan, 2018, p. 155.

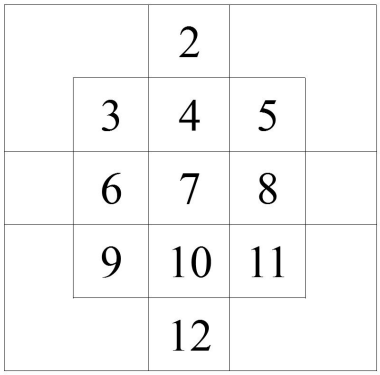


Figure 2: Graphic of basic layout of the wood inlay boards for the game of seven (17th & 18th cent.).



Figure 3: Board pictured in Lhôte, 1994.

(Seipel, Holländer, & Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, 1998, cat. no. 28, p. 103, ill. on p. 104).

Another board from a private collection was presumably created in the late 17th century by an artisan from Glarus, Switzerland (Brunner, 2004, pp. 318f.). (figure 5)

A fourth board of the same general pattern is held in the collection of the Castle Museum in Pszczyna, Poland (inv. MP/S/1239; figure 6). To my knowledge it hasn't been mentioned in literature so far, and I do not know how it is dated.[5]

[5]This board came to my attention by chance on the Board Game Studies mailing list. My thanks go to the Castle Museum in Pszczyna and curator Sylwia Smolarek for images, information, and the permission to reproduce the images in the BGS journal.



Figure 4: Board (from Bamberg, Germany?) pictured in Seipel et al., 1998.



Figure 5: Board from Glarus pictured in Brunner, 2004.

A fifth board for the game of seven is housed in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (BNM). It is included in Himmelheber's catalog of games in the BNM collection[6], and is said to originate from Augsburg, ca. 1600 (Himmelheber, 1972, cat. no. 49, p. 48f. = inv. no. R 2863). (figure 7)

The boards described by Himmelheber (Augsburg), Seipel/Holländer (Bamberg?) and Brunner (Glarus) are each part of a hinged games board/box, with the game of seven and chess on the two outside faces, and a trictrac board across the inside faces. Hinged games boards usually combine chess and trictrac with Nine Men's Morris (Merels), which was replaced with the game of seven in each of these cases. Judging from the picture provided by Lhôte, that board is probably hinged to another board, too, although I have

[6]There are other alleged "Glückshaus" boards in Himmelheber's catalog which I will discuss later.



Figure 6: Board from Pszczyna, Castle Museum.



Figure 7: Board from Augsburg, Germany, BNM R 2863.

no way to confirm this.

The Pszczyna board is part of the same trio of games: The trictrac board is embedded in a table, and the two other boards can jointly cover the tric trac board. Assuming that this gaming table was built in Pszczyna sometime in the same era as the other boards (17th to early 18th century), this would potentially place it in a German-speaking context, since during that time the Duchy of Pszczyna/ Pless (Silesia) was ruled by the Promnitz family of Saxon/ Bohemian nobility.

To summarize what we have so far: These wooden boards with the same layout pattern for the game of seven, insofar as we know or can guess anything about their age and provenance, date from ca. 1600 to 1730 and originated in German-speaking areas, ranging from the Swiss canton of Glarus in the south-west to Pszczyna in the east. Four of the five surviving boards,

and maybe the fifth as well, were combined with boards for chess and tric-trac. All of them employ wood inlaying using various types and colors of wood, and all of them follow the same layout of the numbered fields. Some also show flowers or animals as ornaments in the corners of the board. These opulent boards seem to indicate the game (or games) played with it enjoyed some popularity among the wealthy.

Himmelheber describes another board with eleven fields numbered 2-12, although he doesn't use the term "Glückshaus" in this case, referring to the game as "Die lustige Sieben" which he treats as synonymous (Himmelheber, 1972, cat. no. 351, p. 146 = BNM inv. R 94).[7]

Compared to the boards previously described, this one is comparatively plain. It is a two-sided board for dice games. Eleven circles are painted onto each side, with the circle in the center being slightly larger than the rest and containing an image of a chalice. None of the previous boards has a numbered field featuring an image. On one side of the board, the circles are numbered 2-12 with the 7 occupying the central field with the chalice. Despite the layout differences, this side of the board is functionally comparable to those described above and was meant to be used for the game of seven (figure 8).

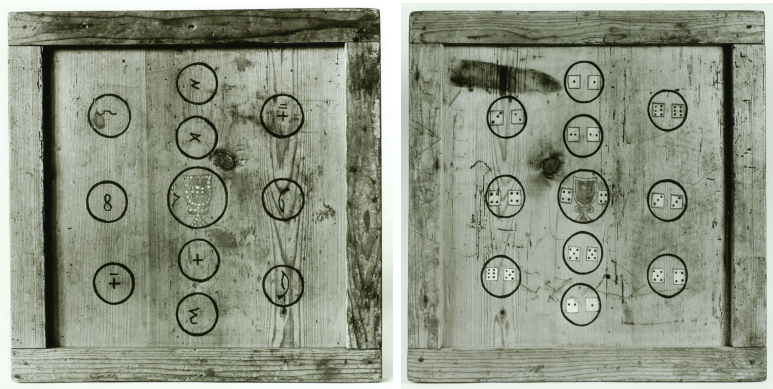


Figure 8: Two sides of the gaming board in the BNM, R 94, ca. 1475-1525.

On the other side the fields are marked with combinations of two die faces. In these pairs, the pip values are either the same (1-1, 2-2, etc.) or a single step apart (2-1, 3-2, etc.) with the higher value on the left. The combination 4-4 appears twice: Once in the central field with the chalice, and in a circle next to it (figure 8). The 4-3 is missing, though, which

[7] See Himmelheber, 1972, p. 145 for the synonymous use of Glückshaus/ Lustige Sieben. "Lustige Sieben" is the title of a modern game of seven published by Hugo Gräfe Verlag.

to me suggests that a mistake was made, and one of the double-4s should instead have been a 4-3 – probably the one occupying the central circle. The eleven fields then would show results equivalent of 2-12 in the same arrangement of the numbers as on the other side of the board. Does this mean that we have two board versions for the same game, combined on this single object? Himmelheber suggests that the side with the combinations of die faces served as board for some variation of the owl game (Pela il Chiu/ Jeu de la Chouette/ Eulen- or Käuzchenspiel), apparently basing this assumption on the dice combinations as sole indicator. However, only eleven of the 21 possible combinations are covered – if the exact pairing of dice faces (instead of the sum) was relevant, many rolls would be meaningless because they are not represented on the board. Also, in contrast to owl games the individual fields have no prescribed action/ value spelled out on the board. It is possible that this side of the board is meant for some mixture of owl games and the game of seven (maybe only putting down or taking stakes when you rolled the correct combination). Regardless, the other side was apparently intended for the game of seven in the narrow sense.

Himmelheber only gives a rough dating: "Dieses einfache Spielbrett geht in seiner Gesamtform und in seiner Malerei auf Vorbilder des 16. Jahrhunderts zurück. Es wäre dennoch denkbar, daß es wesentlich später entstanden ist." (Himmelheber, 1972, p. 146) ("This plain board in its overall shape and painting goes back to models from the 16th century. Nevertheless it is possible that it was created much later.").

Linking the board to the 16th century implies that it is potentially older than the five boards discussed above. An epigraphical comparison of the numbers on the board with other sources suggests that the board might be even older. Based on the shape of the numbers the board is probably from 1450-1550, likely 1475-1525.[8] This would mean that it is older than the previously discussed wooden boards.

To recapitulate, we have six wooden boards with eleven fields labeled 2-12, five of them following a similar layout of framed squares, one with circles instead. On each of these boards the seven occupies the central field:

- BNM, R 94 (publ. in Himmelheber, 1972); ca. 1475-1525, Germany.
- BNM, R 2863 (publ. in Himmelheber, 1972), ca. 1600, Augsburg,

[8]have to thank Christine Wulf and Jörg Lampe (Göttingen, Akademie der Wissenschaften, project *Deutsche Inschriften*) and Franz-Albrecht Bornschlegel (Munich, Ludwig Maximilian University, Center for Epigraphical Research and Documentation) for their expertise and help. F.-A. Bornschlegel also pointed me to Topitz, 1982 to confirm the dating.

hinged games board.

- Priv. coll. (publ. in Lhôte, 1994), 17th century, Germany, probably hinged games board.
- Priv. coll. (publ. in Brunner, 2004), late 17th century, Glarus, hinged games board.
- Castle Museum in Pszczyna, MP/S/1239 (unpublished); not dated, part of game table.
- Priv. coll. (publ. in Seipel u. a., 1998), ca. 1730, Bamberg (?), hinged games board.

Neither the game's contemporary name(s) nor its rules are known to us. We can guess that the rules might have been similar to those of later games.

The oldest known rules: Drinking games

In the case of board R 94 in the BNM collection there's a chalice drawn into the central field of the seven, emphasizing its prominence and indicating that the game might have been played as a drinking game. While this remains speculation regarding the game (or games) played on these boards in the 16th and 17th century, the oldest printed rules for a game of seven prove that it was indeed played as a drinking game in the 18th century.

There are two texts of rules for the game, one published in the 1733 edition of the *Palamedes Redivivus*, the second on the printed game "Der Siebener Trinckt" (ca. 1740). The two rulesets are slightly different.

Palamedes Redivivus is the title of a book of games first published in 1678 in Leipzig. Later editions were expanded; the game of seven enters the collection in 1733 under the name "Böse-Sieben-Spiel". It remained in the later editions of 1739, 1749 and 1755. The Böse-Sieben-Spiel is part of the short section titled "Kurtze und deutliche Nachricht von den zwey und dreißig Charten-Spiel, von Scheffel-Spiel und den Böse-Sieben-Spiel" (sic, Anon., 1733, p. 210). The inclusion of rules for a drinking game in a game book of the time is remarkable. Whether the Böse-Sieben-Spiel and the other two short games of the section were previously published elsewhere I do not know. The rules for the game are the following:

> "Das Böse-Sieben-Spiel wird mit 2. Würffeln gespielet, und sind 11. Nummern befindlich, die mit Gelde besetzet werden,

> die böse-Sieben wird nicht besetzt, sondern wer Sieben wirfft, muß ein Glaß Wein oder Bier trincken, wirfft einer die Nummer, worauf er sein Geldt gesetzet hat, der bekommt seinen Satz wieder, wer aber zwölffe wirfft, gewinnet alles, was auf den Nummern stehet, hernach wird von neuen zugesetzet, und wirfft allezeit einer nach den andern." (Anon., 1733, p. 212)

A notable difference to most other versions of the rules is the fact that, apparently, players only collect those stakes which they have put down themselves (unless somebody rolls a 12 and wins the entire board). Instead of accumulating coins, the seven stays empty. Players have to drink a glass of wine or beer when rolling a 7. These two exceptions – having a drink and winning the board – are combined and both associated with the 7 in the rules for the following game.

"Der Siebener Trinckt" was printed by Albrecht Schmidt in Augsburg ca. 1740.[9] The design features eleven fields numbered 2-12, each showing a humorous drawing in the style of "gobbi" (grotesque dwarves). This style was inspired by works of Jacques Callot and popular around that time (Bauer & Verfondern, 1991). The seven is placed in the large, central field, showing a dancing dwarf wearing a fool's cap, holding a purse in the left hand, and drinking from a mug in the right. The rules are printed below this field (figure 9). Here only the roll of a seven is treated as an exception: Winning the contents of the board, taking a drink, and starting first in the next round. On all other outcomes, including the 2 and 12, the default rule applies: Players take the stakes from the field equivalent to their roll, or put a stake there if the field is empty.

The text reads:

> "**Das so genannte Spiel, der 7bener Trinckt und zieht zugleich alles**
>
> Dieses lustige Spiel wird mit 2 Würffeln gespielet und durchgehends von jeder Person in alle Zahlen 1 Heller oder so viel beliebig gesezet[,] wann dieses geschehen würfft ein jeder in der ordnung herum, und ziehet die meinste Zahl zum ersten nachgehends aber ein jeder dasjenige was er geworffen und woferne in seiner geworffenen Zahl nichts vorhanden muß er in dieselbe 1 Heller sezen, welches solange continuiret, biß daß einer 7 würfft welcher alles

[9] Colored etching, 341mm x 288mm. Cf. Himmelheber, 1972 (cat. no. 354 = BNM Gg 365), p. 148; also see Depaulis, 1987, p. 186.



Figure 9: Der Siebener trinckt, ca. 1740, BNM Gg 365.

> zieht u. zugleich Trincket, auch nachdeme von neuen gesezet worden mit dem ersten wurf zu werffen wieder anfänget."
>
> ("*The so-called game, the Seven drinks and draws (wins) everything at the same time.* This enjoyable game is played with two dice and everybody places on every number 1 Heller or as much as pleases. When this is done each in order throws the dice, and the highest draws first but then everyone after that what he has thrown, and should his resulting number contain nothing he has to place 1 Heller on it. This continues until one throws a 7 who draws everything and drinks at the same time, and who also – after the board has been dressed anew – starts again.")

Bauer vaguely mentions games of similar design: "In der Sammlung Bertarelli in Mailand und in einer italienischen Privatsammlung gibt es eine Reihe späterer, ähnlicher Spiele. Darauf tauchen die „gobbi" Callots ebenso auf wie Zwerge unbekannter Herkunft." (Bauer & Verfondern, 1991, p. 46). ("In the Bertarelli collection in Milan and in an Italian private collection there are few games which are younger and similar. They show Callot's "gobbi" as well as dwarfs of unknown origin.")

Drugulin's *Historischer Bilderatlas* lists a game of the same title, but ascribes it to the Nuremberg printer Johann Trautner, dating it to ca. 1750 (Drugulin, 1964, vol. 1, p. 110, no. 2716).

The basic mechanic (dress empty fields, win stakes from 'dressed' fields) means that every roll can either be lucky or unlucky, depending on the current state of the field belonging to the number rolled. Only the roll of seven marks an exception from this default mechanic – in this case, winning

the entire board.[10]

This is decidedly different not only from the *Palamedes* version of the game, but also from the rules as they are usually presented today, according to which the seven is always an "unlucky" roll on which players have to place a token on the responding field, whereas only the double-1 and double-6 are always lucky.

In the absence of other evidence, it is plausible to assume that earlier boards with fields numbered 2-12 and a central 7 were used for games with the same basic rules: Put a stake in when rolling the number of an empty field, win the stake when rolling a dressed field, with an extra rule for the seven (e.g. win everything on the board and have a drink). The Böse-Sieben-Spiel shows that rolling a 12 could be treated as an exceptional, lucky roll as well. Alcoholic drinks could have been a common element of the game, but it is equally feasible that the game was just played for money.

Jeu du Juif

The default mechanic of *Der Siebener trinckt* forms the core characteristic of several games that are each named after the central graphic element on the board (associated with the 7). One such tradition is the antisemitic *Jeu du Juif*, in which the central field shows a Jew.[11] The game first appeared at the end of the 18th century in France and has been described in a contemporary encyclopedia of games, the *Dictionnaire des Jeux familiers*:

> "Pour le jeu des juifs, il faut deux dez & un carton divisé en onze cases, depuis deux jusqu'à douze. Dans la case du milieu, marqué 7, se trouve un juif a table jouant & amenant un sonnet. Le nombre des joueurs n'est pas fixé: celui qui amène le plus haut point commence à jetter le dé, & les autres ensuite.
>
> Tout joueur qui amène 7, met au juif sept jettons. Celui qui amène 12 fait rafle, & gagne les jettons qui se trouvent sur toutes les cases. Tout autre numèro fait gagner à celui qui l'amène les jettons de la case où se trouve le numèro, s'il y en a. Si la case est vide, le joueur la garnit du nombre qui convient à la case.

[10] The print "Il Nuovo Gioco degli Asini" ("Noi siamo sette") by Giuseppe Maria Mitelli from 1687, described by Alberto Milano, is probably an interesting parallel. It is presented as a simple (possibly jocular?) game played with two dice: Who gets a seven first, wins (Milano, 1993, p. 132). A French parallel is shown in Garnier, 1990, no. 686.

[11] The following paragraphs rely heavily on Depaulis, 1987, and Seville, 2013. Any mistakes are my own.

> Le jeu une fois commencé, personne ne peut y entrer qu'après la rafle, & alors le joueur en entrant prend le cornet." (Lacombe, 1796-1797, p. 90)
>
> ("For the Game of the Jews you need two dice and a board divided into eleven fields, from 2 to 12. On the center field, marked 7, there is a Jew at a table playing and rolling a double-6. The game can be played with any number of players, whoever gets the highest roll starts throwing the dice, and the others follow suit. Every player rolling a 7 pays seven markers to the Jew. When rolling a 12 you "make a raffle" and scoop up everything from all the fields. On every other number you receive the markers of the field with the number you rolled. If the field is empty, the player puts the corresponding number of markers on that field. Once the game has started no person may join until after a raffle, and the player, upon entering, takes the dice cup.")

The dice roll winning the entire board is the rare double-6 = 12, as it was in the Böse-Sieben-Spiel, while the most common result, the 7, is the only result that is consistently unlucky for the player, driving home the antisemitic message of the game: Unless you're lucky, the Jew will take away your money. The default mechanic remains the same, but the number of tokens needed to dress a field in this game corresponds to the dice result: The higher the roll, the higher the stakes.

Apart from this description dated to "year 5 of the republic", i.e. 1796-1797, we know of two undated games printed by Basset (figure 10)[12] and Chéreau, respectively. Based on the shape of the publishers' addresses, Depaulis argues that these prints must be either from 1791-1792 or 1802-1805 (cf. Seville, 2013, p. 4). Their rules correspond to those from the *Dictionnaire* cited above.

On both prints, ten fields form a broad ring around a central field for the 7, making a total of eleven fields. The central field shows a person – the eponymous Jew – at a table on which a lies a board with the same layout as just described. The numbers in the outer ring are arranged in order, either in clockwise (Chéreau) or counter-clockwise direction (Basset). Each field is illustrated: Chéreau's print is mostly showing flowers, Basset's various tools and objects.

Although the earliest surviving rules for the Jeu du Juif date from the last decade of the 18th or the first of the 19th century, there is evidence of an

[12]Image source: http://www.giochidelloca.it/scheda.php?id=1230 (accessed May 1, 2019).

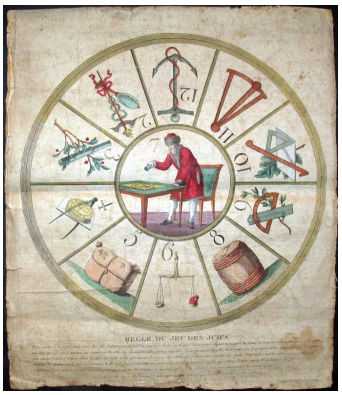


Figure 10: Jeu des Juifs, Basset.

older tradition. Based on research by Adrian Seville and Thierry Depaulis, the *Nouvelle Combinaison du Jeu du Juif* was probably published in Paris by Crepy in 1783. As suggested by its title, it's not a repetition of the game concept we're familiar with. Instead, it provides rules for two different games: One is a game of chance more similar to *Pela il chiu* and the like (each field has a fixed value, and depending on your roll you win some tokens from the bank or pay into it); the other is a race game, although the track is surprisingly short, since the game is still played with two dice (Cf. Seville, 2013, p. 8). Both the images and the engaging text make the *Nouvelle Combinaison du Jeu du Juif* shine. A slightly different but clearly related game is *Le Nouveau Jeu des Ballons Aerostatiques à l'Usage des Esprits Élevés* (published in 1784, also by Crepy), which references the *Jeu du Juif* rather generally.[13]

Although the *Nouvelle Combinaison* and the *Nouveau Jeu des Ballons Aerostatiques* are not themselves games of seven, they suggest that the *Jeu du Juif* version of the game of seven tradition started in the early 1780s at the latest.

Depaulis (1987) points to many other surviving versions of the Jeu du Juif, which show how widespread the game was. He mentions a Spanish *Juego de los Judios* from 1848 by a French publisher as well as the British *New Game of the Jew* which was published by Wallis/ Dunnett/ Wallis in 1807 in London (Depaulis, 1987, p. 186f.; Whitehouse, 1971, p. 62f., ill. 29).[14] The latter game board shows rectangular fields in random order

[13]Cf. Strouhal, 2015, p. 36f. on game no. 29. Also see http://www.giochidelloca.it/scheda.php?id=676 (accessed March 27, 2019).

[14]This (or a younger reprint) is probably the game about which

arranged around the central 7, which is the only field with an illustration, showing an old Jew counting coins. The British rules are mostly equivalent to the French, but players have to start by putting seven tokens on the Jew. Also, the rules suggest to play "either with a pair of Dice or with a Totum marked on 12 sides", although the latter would obviously lead to a very different distribution of results without the bell curve of outcomes for two six-sided dice. More irritating is the fact that the totum would include results from 1-12, whereas the board does not even have a field for the 1.

The Game of the Jew was also known in the Low Countries, for example

> *Het nieuw vermakelyk Spel, gevolgt na 't Fransch, genaamt de Jood*
>
> printed by S. and W. Koene (Amsterdam, op de Linde-Gragt), woodcut signed "J. Oortman", dated ca. 1800-1810 by the Rijksmuseum, online:
>
> https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-88.076 =
>
> http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.529258 (accessed May 1, 2019).

It combines a circular image of a Jew in the center with an overall rectangular layout, arranging the numbers 2-6, 8-12 anti-clockwise around the central woodcut (figure 11). The rules differ from the French and British versions in that the number of tokens to be placed on empty fields does not depend on the number rolled/ shown on the corresponding field, but is a fixed amount to be agreed on before the game. As in the British game, the field with the Jew serves as a starting pot into which everyone pays an amount so that there is a higher sum at stake from the beginning, making the roll of a 12 (winning everything on the board) more interesting right away.

The antisemitic cliché of Jewish usury and avarice (cf. Raphael, 1995 and Bruns, 2007, in particular pp. 184-187, 189f.) suggests that two games from Germany titled *Der Geizhals* and *Der Geizige* ("miser" or "scrooge") are related to the Jeu du Juif tradition, although their titles do not name the religion of the central figure. *Der Geizhals* is a game listed and illustrated in Bestelmeier's 1803 catalog of toys and games (Bestelmeier, 1979, no. 177). A print of this game titled *L'avare/ Der Geizhals* survives in the Swiss

Stephen Sondheim quipped that it "taught kids to be antisemitic". Cf. http://79.170.40.182/sondheim.org/archive/php/newse5ba.html?id=450 (accessed March 27, 2019). The website quotes from an article by Stephen Schiff, "Deconstructing Sondheim" from The New Yorker, March 8, 1993, p. 76f.



Figure 11: Het nieuw vermakelyk Spel, gevolgt na 't Fransch, genaamt de Jood (Koene).

Museum of Games (La Tour-de-Peilz). The game board shows only nine fields laid out as three rows of three squares each, numbered 3-11, with the central field (the seven) containing an image (figure 12). While the omission of the 12 is less surprising (in the Jeu du Juif the 12 wins the whole board, so there is no need for a field since no stake will ever be placed there), the fact that the 2 has been dropped is more interesting. I think that this indicates that the 2 has acquired a special meaning equivalent or at least similar to the 12. We cannot be sure that the *Geizhals* is indeed part of the family of games under discussion in this paper. But this assumption best explains the features of the board as well as its similarity with the Jeu du Juif.



Figure 12: L'avare/ Geizhals, Swiss Museum of Games.

The rules for the later game *Der Geizige*, published by Oehmigke & Riemschneider in Neuruppin, ca. 1840, support this argument since they

state that the 2, just like the 12, has the same special meaning: If these fields are dressed (according to the default rule of putting stakes on empty fields), then rolling a 2 or 12 will win everything that is on the board. If the whole board is emptied and the player rolls a 2 or 12 again, then they will have to put a stake on every single field. (Himmelheber, 1972, p. 153, cat. no. 361 = BNM inv. no. 29/ 560)

In *Der Geizige*, compartments for the 2 and 12 need to remain on the board (figure 13), but with a simplified version of the rules (2 and 12 always win everything on the board) the board could be reduced just nine fields numbered 3-11. This makes it plausible that the *Geizhals* game in Bestelmeier's catalog is indeed a game of seven.



Figure 13: Der Geizige, BNM 29/560.

The Harlequin Game and the Game of the Boat

Returning to the Low Countries, the game of seven was not only published in the antisemitic Jeu du Juif variant, but also as *Arlequinspel* (harlequin game). Regarding both the central figure as well as the rules it is reminiscent of *Der Siebener trinckt*: Thematically the iconic harlequin figure is close to the clownesque dwarf of the German game. And in both variants of the game of seven there are no exceptions for rolling the 2 and 12, the only special outcome is the 7. But the *Arlequinspel* is not a drinking game, instead players rolling a 7 always have to put a coin in the bag of the harlequin. You stay in the game as long as you have coins left of the fixed amount everyone starts with; last player to remain wins what the harlequin has accumulated.

Harlequin games were published from the early 19th until about the middle of the 20th century, also using titles such as Zevenzak (bag of seven)

or Zevenzot (fool of seven), and with slight variations of the rules (de Meyer, 1970, p. 174). The older harlequin games were often bilingual (Dutch and French), for example (ill. 15):

Het nieuw arlequinspel / Le nouveau jeu d'arlequin

L. Lazare, Den Haag, first third of the 19th century

http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.539794



Figure 14: Het nieuw arlequinspel / Le nouveau jeu d'arlequin (Lazare).

Italy had a similarly vibrant tradition, which started in the 18th century and lasted into the 20th century: The *Gioco della barca* (game of the boat) often showed its numbers in a circle around the central 7, picturing a boat (Milano, 1993, p. 131). However, a print presented by Alberto Milano shows a different design in which the numbers follow a layout similar to the wooden boards discussed earlier (Milano, 1984, image on p. 24, info on p. 119). Printed by Francesco Prato in Torino, maybe near the end of the 18th century, the game has special rules for the 7 (always pay into the boat), the 2 (dress all empty fields), and the 12 (take everything). This is an early example for a special action on the roll of a 2 (ill. 16).

Into the 20th century: Finke berupfen, Schluckhansel, Topfspiel, and Böse Sieben

Since the late 19th century, several versions of the game have been published in German. A version without illustrations (figure 16), reminiscent of the layout of the wooden boards from the 17th and 18th centuries, has

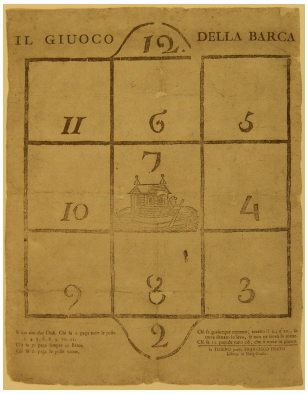


Figure 15: Giuoco della Barca, pictured in Milano, 1984).

been included in various game anthologies from the late 19th century onward under the title like "Finke/ Pinke berupfen" (GutsMuths, Klumpp, Schettler, 1878, p. 356; and Wagner, 1888, p. 358). Walter Blachetta presents "Das dicke Büberl" (figure 17) but also refers to the previous name as given by GutsMuths et al. or Wagner (Blachetta, 1942, p. 85f. and table 8). "Das dicke Büberl" seems visually close to "Schluck, Hansel" (also "Schluckhansel"), another title under which the game circulated. Publisher Schmidt Spiele and its predecessors released it as "Das lustige Topfspiel"[15], other versions go by "Die böse Sieben" (figure 18), although I see no evidence for an unbroken tradition going back to the early 18th century when this name was used in the *Palamedes redivivus*. Still others use "Lustige Sieben" (Hugo Gräfe Verlag)[16] – not to be confused with a gambling game of the same name, in which players place bets before the roll of dice.[17]

But we have yet to explain how the term "Glückshaus" arose, and why there is no field for the 4 on many contemporary Glückshaus boards.

Glonnegger's Glückshaus

Apart from the wooden boards mentioned above Himmelheber lists two other objects in the BNM collections as "Glückshaus":

- BNM inv. no. R 93 (Himmelheber, 1972, cat. no. 329), dated 1527

[15] Cf. http://www.e-s-g.eu/sammelgebiete/themen/topfspiel/ (accessed Jan 31, 2019).

[16] Cf. the versions listed at https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/39096/lustiges-topfspiel (accessed Jan 31, 2019).

[17] Cf. Anton, 1889, p. 321f. and https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lustige_Sieben (accessed March 27, 2019) for this different game.

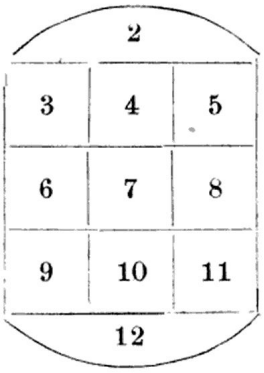


Figure 16: Finke (Pinke) berupfen (GutsMuths et al., p. 356).

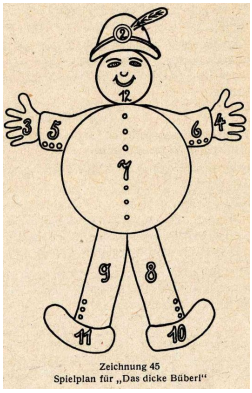


Figure 17: Das dicke Büberl, Blachetta, 1942.

- BNM inv. no. I 14.105 (ibid., cat. no. 352), dated 1583

They are boards with game layouts on both of their sides, but the fields on the alleged "Glückshaus" sides show letters instead of numbers, and they only have seven and ten fields respectively.[18] In the catalog entry for BNM I 14.105, Himmelheber guardedly voices doubt:

> "E. Glonnegger vermutet in dem Spielplan der Vorderseite ein Glückshaus. Um irgendeine Abart dieses Spiels dürfte es sich dabei auch handeln, obwohl die Zahl der zehn Spielfelder überrascht, sowie das Fehlen der Zahlen in den Feldern." (Himmel-

[18]Most of the letters are the usual references to playing cards. The boards are clearly staking boards for card games. Since they each show a tower I think they might be for Turmspiel, but they could also be for Pochspiel or a similar game.



Figure 18: Böse Sieben.

heber, 1972, p. 148)

> ("E. Glonnegger assumes the game plan on the front to be a Glückshaus game. It is probably some variation of that game, although the number of ten fields is surprising, as well as the lack of numbers on the fields.")

Himmelheber refers to the game collection *Schöne Alte Spiele*, edited by Erwin Glonnegger[19], which was first published in 1963 and includes rules and a game board for a game labeled "Glückshaus". Glonnegger chose the Munich board BNM, I 14.105 (figure 19) as basis for the design of his Glückshaus board. He split the base compartment into two fields (to reach a total of eleven fields) and replaced the letters in the fields with the numbers 2-12 (figure **??**). This change isn't documented in *Schöne Alte Spiele*, though. Glonnegger also explicitly references the 7 as wedding (Hochzeit), the 2 as pig/ luck (German idiom "Schwein haben" = being lucky), and the 12 as "being the king" (König sein). (Glonnegger, 1972, pp. 113-118) Note that while the 2 and 12 on Glonnegger's layout show the pig and king respectively, the wedding can be found on the field marked 10, and the 7 is off-center, on a field depicting two crossed spears.

Glonnegger does not state where the name he chose originated. My best guess is that he was inspired by the architectural elements of the Munich board I 14.105 to invent the name "Glückshaus" since he needed a title for the game in his *Schöne Alte Spiele* collection. In 1972, Georg Himmelheber took it up for his catalog (using it alongside "Lustige Sieben", see above)

[19] Cf. http://www.luding.org/cgi-bin/GameData.py/DEgameid/21372 (accessed May 1, 2019).



Figure 19: Board for a card game (Pochen or Turmspiel?), dated 1583, BNM I 14.105.



Figure 20: Glonnegger‘s „Glückshaus“ board from 1963.

and the name has been in use ever since. However, in the 2009 edition of Glonnegger's classic *Spiele-Buch* the name "Glückshaus" was dropped. The rules are described under the heading "Glückswürfelspiele" (dice games of chance), which seems a bit repetitive and out of place, since only a single game is presented in this section, and there's another section title almost immediately above, reading "Glücksspiele mit 2 Würfeln und Spielplan" (games of chance with 2 dice and a game board). Glonnegger and Voigt (who helped updating the *Spiele-Buch*) must obviously have known the name "Glückshaus" since previous editions had used it, but chose not to use it anyway (Glonnegger / Voigt, 2009, p. 64).

Glonnegger's introduction to "Glückshaus" in the rule book for *Schöne Alte Spiele* places the game in medieval times:

"Glücksspiele dieser Art waren im Mittelalter weit verbreitet.

> Die Spielpläne enthielten meist eine aus 8 bis 11 mit Ziffern oder Buchstaben versehene Einteilung in Form eines Kreuzes oder Doppelkreuzes; manchmal auch in Form eines Kreises. Auf vielen Spielplänen findet man auch noch bildliche Darstellungen, die zum Teil der Erläuterung der Spielregel, oft aber nur der Ausschmückung des Spieles selber dienen. Die Spielregeln unterschieden sich bei dieser Art von Spielen kaum. Schon damals wurde gelegentlich statt der Würfel ein auf dem Spielplan angebrachter Drehpfeil oder ein Satz Karten verwendet. Offensichtlich sind solche Spiele die Vorläufer des heute noch bekannten "Poch"-Spieles und wahrscheinlich auch des Roulette." (Glonnegger, 1972, p. 113)
>
> ("This type of games of chance was widespread in medieval times. The game boards were usually divided into 8 to 11 fields with numbers or letters and arranged in the shape of a cross or double cross, sometimes in the shape of a circle. On many game boards you can find imagery, too, partly referencing the game rules, but often serving just ornamental purposes. The rules hardly differed among this type of games. Already at that time the dice were occasionally replaced with a spinning arrow or playing cards. Obviously these games are the predecessors of the Poch game still known today and probably also of roulette.")

The supposed widespread existence of "this type of games of chance" in medieval times is hard to back up with sources. While games of chance with dice were definitely in use, I know of no traces supporting the claim that dice games of chance using a stake board, or games of seven in particular, did exist before the late 15th century. Of course, we do know about other games with a stake board from the 15th century, such as Poch and Glic, but they used playing cards, not dice. Glonnegger's description is interesting because it details some variations but ultimately leads to more questions than answers. It alleges a general uniformity of rules while pointing out high variations not just in the visual presentation of the game, but also in its very structure (number of fields, numerals vs. letters, type of randomizer).

Looking at the "Glückshaus" rules from *Schöne Alte Spiele*, replacing the dice with cards seems very unlikely, although Glonnegger maintains that this happened historically. The rules presented by Glonnegger clearly correspond to the probabilities of certain outcomes: The exceptional fields with special rules are those with the lowest (2, 12) and highest (7) probabilities when rolling two six-sided dice. This feature cannot be easily reproduced when

playing with a deck of cards. Also, the Glückshaus rules rely on a game board that covers every possibility, having fields for all potential results. Every possible outcome leads to either a win or a loss. With cards, the board would need many adjustments to recreate this lively back and forth and the changing "landscape" of the board.

The historical boards for card games, on the other hand, usually have compartments for stakes on particular cards or combinations (e.g. a "marriage" of king and queen), while other cards or combinations are not represented on the board at all. The two alleged "Glückshaus" boards in the BNM collection with seven and ten fields labeled with letters can best be compared to other boards for card games of the time (like Pochen or Turmspiel), whereas Glonnegger's attempt to turn them into boards for a dice game is not convincing.

The last step before we arrive at the modern version of Glückshaus presented at the beginning of this paper is the book *Games of the World*. In it, the team around editor F. Grunfeld describes a variety of games and playful activities (e.g. chess as well as stilts). The entry on Glückshaus follows Glonnegger's example and re-uses the Munich board (BNM, I 14.105), which it shows both as a faithful reproduction (with letter markings specific for playing card games like O and V for the German cards Ober and Unter) and the adaption with numbers 2-12 (Grunfeld, 1977, p. 140f.). The 7 has moved to the wedding field in the central tower, just below the king. Another departure from Glonnegger's version is the omission of the 4: The original board has ten fields, which is why Glonnegger split the bottom compartment in two, squeezing in a new field next to the "lucky pig". The suggested board layout in *Games of the World* just drops the 4 (apparently a random choice) and includes the rule: "If a 4 is thrown, the player makes no move and passes the dice to the next player." (Grunfeld, 1977, p. 141) Otherwise, the rules correspond to those given by Glonnegger: Players place or take stakes according to their dice rolls, the 7 accumulates its stakes, the 2 allows to take everything from the board except the stakes on the 7. Rolling the 12 allows to collect the entire board, including the 7 (figure 21).

Games of the World also shows one of the wooden boards for a game of seven, namely the Munich board BNM R 94 with the chalice in the central field (described further above). A note next to the image says: "The dice scores painted on the pine board are used for gambling on a version of Glückshaus (see page 140)." (Grunfeld, 1977, p. 137) The name "Glückshaus", coined just a few years earlier by Glonnegger, is used as a generic term here. I hope to have shown that the modern Glückshaus games have introduced new elements. Therefore I suggest to use Glückshaus only

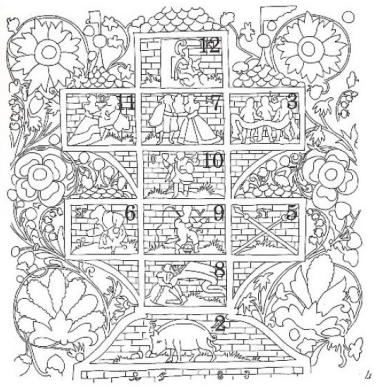


Figure 21: Glückshaus without a field for the number 4 (Grunfeld, Games of the World).

as a term for this modern branch of the family, and use games of seven as the general term instead.

The Name of the Game

What might have been the name(s) of the game played with this type of board in the 17th or even 16th century? The old boards themselves provide no clues, but the younger games discussed above share similarities in their names. They are usually called either by the central graphical element of the board (e.g. Jeu du Juif, Gioco della barca, Arlequinspel) or carry the word for the number 7 in their title (Der Siebener trinckt, Zevenzak, Böse Sieben). Of course, other names follow neither of these two patterns: Schluckhansel refers to the whole board layout (an insatiable boy) rather than just the central 7 (his huge belly). The meaning and etymology of Finke berupfen (or Pinke berupfen) isn't entirely clear. "Pinke" can historically denote money or a money pouch in certain German dialects (among other things, e.g. also a type of boat), so "die Pinke berupfen" might be translated as "picking the purse". Ernst Heimeran, on the other hand, explains "Finke" as a bird trap (Heimeran, 1953, p. 92).

Since the oldest surviving boards had no illustrations on their central field, we can only guess that the game might have been named for its most prominent feature, the number seven and the special rule associated with it. A common point of reference for games of the 16th and 17th centuries is the extensive catalog of leisure activities in Johann Fischart's *Geschichtklitterung*, a loose translation of sorts of Rabelais' *Gargantua*. The 25th chapter of the *Geschichtklitterung* includes a list which Fischart, by the third edition

published in 1590, had expanded to over 600 entries of games and entertainments. It contains not only games, but also dances, songs, and references to riddles (Bulang, 2013).

The entries in Fischart's list which Rausch considers to be dice games (Rausch, 1908), pp. lvii-lxv) either seem to be generic terms for gambling ("schantz") or refer to different games (e.g. "der blinden würffel", "der mehesten Augen"). "Seß eß" refers to two dice showing a 6 and a 1, which in sum is a 7, but the term does not appear to a specific game, as indicated by the line from Hans Sachs quoted by Rausch (ibid., p. lxiii).

Fischart's catalog contains two entries with the word "seven":

- Fi 100 (b) Wer kan siben Lügen verschweigen (shortened in the third edition to Fi 99 (c) Wer kan siben Lügen)
- Fi 455 Adam hett siben Sön

The former could not be explained by Rausch (ibid., pp. lxvii-lxviii) but seems an unlikely candidate for the game of seven. It probably references a proverb or riddle. The latter is a phrase from a song or poem, perhaps for a circle dance (ibid., p. 58).

Finally, three entries are reminiscent of the name first attested in the 1870s, Finke/Pinke berupfen:

- Fi 530 Wie gibst den Fincken
- Fi 23 Gänßlin beropffen
- Fi 149 Röpflins

Rausch puts the first (without any explanation) into his category of games of running, jumping, and playing tag (ibid., p. 54). He tentatively lists the other two among the card games but admits this is speculation, and that these entries might as well reference a proverb. However, he points out that in Straßburg in 1475 a game called "gansen" was prohibited, and quotes a line from Hans Sachs ("sie möcht mit euch das rüpffleins spiln"), which makes it plausible that Fischart might indeed have had a game in mind with these expressions (ibid., p. xxxix and xlvii). Nevertheless, there are no strong arguments for assuming that these or any of the other expressions in Fischart's catalog refer to the game of seven. "Gänßlin beropffen" might as well refer to a game in which players tried to rip off the head of a goose (cf. Birkhan, 2018, p. 258 and 305).

While we do not know how people originally referred to this dice game with a staking board, all versions we have seen place special significance on

the number 7, and several versions – including the oldest publications we know – incorporate that number into the title. Therefore, "game of seven" (Jeu du Sept, Siebenerspiel etc.) is an appropriate term to refer to this family of dice games. The term "Glückshaus" should only be applied to modern versions in Glonnegger's tradition.

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