

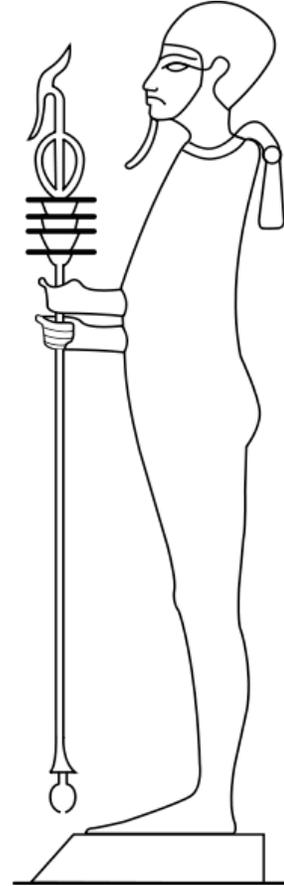
Rosicrucian Chess Reference

(with complete rules for play)

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I. History

Rosicrucian or “Enochian” Chess was originally devised for the inner order of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, known to initiates as the R.R. et A.C. It was premised on a new synthesis of the Angelic materials of ✠ John Dee and ✠ Edward Kelly with other occult systems including geomancy, tarot, and astrology, and it was a four-handed chess variant with a strong kinship to the Indian ur-chess chaturanga. Used for both recreational play and divination, the original Golden Dawn rules were not preserved in a completely playable form. The volume *Enochian Chess of the Golden Dawn* redresses many of their practical deficits on the basis of further development by author Chris Zalewski, an initiate of a New Zealand body descended from the Golden Dawn offshoot Stella Matutina. The present rules rely on Zalewski’s scholarship and ideas, while making some revisions in light of “first principles” of both chess and angelic magick. Thanks also to Michael McKenny for his published digest of rules for play.



II. Boards

Rosicrucian Chess uses a set of four elemental boards constructed from the servient squares of the elemental tablets of Dee and Kelly. Only one of the four boards is used in any given game. Each board is a square grid of 64 square cells, like the modern chessboard. Thus each eight-by-eight board is divided into four four-by-four sub-angles, with the traditional arrangement:

Air	Water
Earth	Fire

The extreme corner squares are known as “throne” squares.

Advocates of Enochian Chess in the Golden Dawn tradition have often insisted that the “pyramids” of the squares, or some variation of them, should form the basis of the coloring scheme for the chessboards. The present rules make an alternative

recommendation, which is more conducive to game play, and provides a greater magical charge to the boards, while being visually simpler and more elegant.

Each board should alternate squares in the “flashing” colors of its element, thus: Earth in black and bright green; Air in yellow and purple; Water in blue and orange; and Fire in red and green. On the throne squares, place the sigils of the Elemental Kings in their elemental colors. On all other squares, inscribe the letters from the corresponding squares of the elemental tablets, in the complementary “flashing” color of each square. Exception: the four squares at the center of the board should be in the color of their respective sub-angles, matching the sigils at the corresponding throne squares.

Remember, *only the servient squares* are used. Omit the kerubic squares, Calvary crosses, and Great Crosses from the game boards. Aleister Crowley’s “Liber Chanokh sub figura LXXXIV,” Regardie’s Golden Dawn exposures and many other more recent works on Enochian magic provide sources for the lettering of the tablets.

All of the sigils and letters should be placed so that they are read *from across the left side of the board*. Their relative positions are just as shown on the elemental tablets, but each letter or sigil is turned by right angles as needed to be readable from the proper direction. These figures should demonstrate:

T	h	e	s
e	L	e	t
t	e	r	s
S	h	o	w

The first grid at the left shows an arrangement of letters around the conjunction of the sub-angles at the center of an imaginary elemental tablet. (The non-servient letters have been omitted.) In references for ceremonial magic and cryptography, they are always shown in this fashion for legibility.

But in Rosicrucian Chess, players are looking at the board from all four directions. Accordingly, the letters are divided up and reoriented.

T	h	⊖	s
e	L	⊖	t
t	e	⊥	s
S	⊥	O	M

The second grid at the left shows the central sixteen squares of a chessboard premised on the hypothetical tablet in the first grid. Note that none of the letter *positions* are changed, only their *orientations*. All of the letters in a given sub-angle share an orientation.

On an actual board, the letters should be Enochian, or perhaps in one of the magical “weapons” alphabets: Daggers or Arrows.

III. Chessmen

A. Attributions and Designs: Each of the four sides has nine unique chessmen: a king, four pieces, and four pawns. The kings and pieces each have unique attributions to Egyptian gods, and the four pawns are always attributed to the children of Horus.

King of Air – Socharis	King of Water – Ptah Chaphen Chex
Knight of Air – Seb	Knight of Water – Sebek
Queen of Air – Knousou Pekht	Queen of Water – Thoueris
Bishop of Air – Shu Zoan	Bishop of Water – Hapimoun
Rook of Air – Tharpesht Jefine Pasht	Rook of Water – Shooen

King of Earth – Osiris	King of Fire – Chnupis Kneph
Knight of Earth – Horus	Knight of Fire – Ra
Queen of Earth – Isis	Queen of Fire – Sati Ahstoreth
Bishop of Earth – Aroueris	Bishop of Fire – Tum
Rook of Earth – Nephthys	Rook of Fire – Anouke

Knight's Pawn – Kabexnuv
 Queen's Pawn – Tmoumthph
 Bishop's Pawn – Ahephi
 Rook's Pawn – Ameshet

Golden Dawn tradition encourages chessmen made in detail to resemble the godforms to which the pieces are attributed.

An elegant alternative can be achieved with a couple of inexpensive Staunton-style chess sets. Paint the base for each piece in the color of its element. Then paint the tops of the Kings white, Knights and Knight's Pawns red, Queens and Queen's Pawns blue, Bishops and Bishop's Pawns yellow, Rooks and Rook's Pawns black. With hollow plastic chessmen, the names of the gods can be written (in hieroglyphics or Coptic) on small slips of paper, rolled up, and inserted into the pieces for magical charging.

Another design possibility takes advantage of the correspondences with the tarot. The Kings are Aces, the Knight, Queen, Bishop, and Rook are the court cards of each suit, and the Knight's Pawn is the deuce, the Queen's Pawn the trey, the Bishop's Pawn the six, and the Rook's pawn the ten. Cards could be set in slotted stands for play, although this approach requires rather large boards or somewhat tiny cards.

A thirty-seventh piece, attributed to the god Ptah, is entirely white, and used only in divination play. (For tarot, use any Major Trump chosen in accordance with the matter being divined.)

For design of boards and chessmen, consider that modern chess prescribes a ratio of 0.78 to one for the size of the diameter of the base of the largest piece to the width of a square on the board.

B. Motive Powers

1. **Kings** move as in modern chess: a single space in any direction, perpendicularly or diagonally. (There is no castling.)
2. **Knights** move as in modern chess: one space perpendicularly plus one diagonally, so that their eight destination squares are the nearest ones that are in no straight line from the point of origin.
3. **Queens** move two squares only, neither more nor less, and are not blocked by intervening pieces. (They “jump” like Knights.)
4. **Bishops** move as in modern chess: diagonally in a single line of up to eight squares.
5. **Rooks** move as in modern chess: perpendicularly in a single line of up to eight squares. (Repeat: There is no castling.)
6. **Pawns** move as in modern chess, one space straight forward to a vacancy, or one space diagonally forward to capture. They do not have an option of two squares on their first move. Nor can they capture *en passant*.
7. **Ptah** (used in divination play only) does not move.

IV. Setup

All four sides set up the chessmen identically. The board is oriented so that each player has his throne square on the far right of the nearest row. Kings go on their throne squares. Pieces are placed *from right to left* on the nearest row according to one of the following schemes or settings. (“Of Earth” indicates an arrangement on the Earth board.)
Important: In initial setup, one piece shares the throne square with the King.

Earth of Earth or Earth of Fire: King and Rook, Bishop, Queen, Knight.

Air of Earth or Air of Fire: King and Bishop, Rook, Knight, Queen

Water of Earth or Water of Fire: King and Queen, Knight, Rook, Bishop

Fire of Earth or Fire of Fire: King and Knight, Queen, Bishop, Rook

Earth of Air or Earth of Water: King and Rook, Knight, Queen, Bishop

Air of Air or Air of Water: King and Bishop, Queen, Knight, Rook

Water of Air or Water of Water: King and Queen, Bishop, Rook, Knight

Fire of Air or Fire of Water: King and Knight, Rook, Bishop, Queen

(All these settings include the location of the Rook two spaces from the Queen.)

Pawns are placed in the second row, in front of their respective pieces.

V. Basic (“Sport”) Play

A. Sides and Equilibriums: Each side is associated with the one opposite in an “equilibrium,” against the two perpendicular sides. Thus there are two equilibriums: Passives (Earth and Water) versus Actives (Air and Fire). Ideally, play is conducted with four players, paired into equilibriums, but a single player may control either equilibrium, permitting play by two or three players. “Table talk” is not forbidden, but it must be audible to the opponent(s). One player may leave control of his play to his partner, temporarily or permanently.

(Note: The present reference innovates with this use of the term “side” to reference a group of chessmen. Earlier authorities often term these as “armies,” which seems poorly suited to designate nine chessmen, or as “angles,” which creates confusion. In this document, a “sub-angle” refers to a square quadrant of a board, which is itself abstracted from an “angle” of the Great Angelic Table. Likewise, “equilibrium” has been substituted for the military “alliance.”)

B. Sequence of Play: Play begins with the side of the board being used: e.g. Earth plays first on the Earth board. Play proceeds clockwise through the four sides. Each side moves one piece to a vacant square, or one occupied by an opposing piece, which is thus captured and removed from play.

C. General Movement: No two pieces may occupy the same square, with the important exception of the throne square in the initial position. After the King or the other piece on the throne square moves, it is forbidden for multiple chessmen to occupy the square. A capture on the throne square when it is still occupied by the King and an unmoved piece will capture both. For the movement of individual chessmen, see section III.B. above.

D. Check and Checkmate: When a player moves so as to create a threat of imminent capture to an opposing King, he must declare check. No player may move so as to place his own King or an allied King in check. However, it is permissible to move a checkmated King: i.e. if a King is in check and the check cannot be broken, the King may still be moved into a different checked position.

E. Stalemate: If a side has no move available except such that would put its unchecked King into check, that side is stalemated. Play continues, but the side is not allowed to take a turn until such time as a move by another side alleviates the stalemate condition.

F. Capture and Exchange of Kings: A King can be captured, if its friendly King is still in play. All remaining pieces on the side of a captured King are *frozen*. They may not be moved or captured.

G. Exchange of Kings: If two opposing Kings are captured, the remaining opponents may agree to an exchange of Kings, returning both into play. The Kings are placed on their throne squares, or as near to them as possible without being in check. The exchange is effected at the end of any turn of the player who captured the second King. All frozen pieces become unfrozen at that point.

H. Seizing the Throne: Moving a King onto the throne square diagonally opposite his own transfers control of the friendly chessmen. The two sides still take separate turns, but are under the control of one player. Frozen pieces may be reactivated by this method. The player retains control of both sides even if the King that seized control is moved off of the throne square. If the usurping King is captured, control of the seized side reverts to the original player, assuming that the side still has a King to lead it. Otherwise both sides are Kingless and that equilibrium has lost the game.

I. Pawn Promotion: Pawns which reach the far row from their starting row can be promoted, if that side has already lost one or more pawns. (If not, it must remain there until captured, or until a pawn is lost.) Pawns are only promoted to the corresponding piece, except in the case of a “privileged” pawn, i.e. the sole uncaptured pawn of a side, which may be promoted as the player elects. No pawn can be promoted to King.

J. Concourses: Note that each Bishop and Queen is restricted to one color of square, and that Bishops in one equilibrium share the same color, as do Queens. Both Bishops and Queens have a special capture available to them called the *concourse*. Concourses may occur on the four squares at the center of the board, the four squares at the center of each sub-angle, or the four throne squares. If Bishops occupy three of the squares in any one of these sets of four, the completion of the concourse by the fourth Bishop captures the two opposing Bishops and brings the friendly Bishop under the direct control of the player completing the concourse. A concourse of Queens works the same way.

K. Wins and Draws: Checkmate of a king after the capture of its allied king is a decisive win. Either equilibrium may cede victory by resigning. If either equilibrium has no remaining chessmen other than Kings, the game is a draw. The game is also drawn if a side is stalemated and its partner is also incapacitated (*i.e.* also stalemated, King captured, or the stalemated King has seized a friendly throne).

VI. Game Notation

A. Spaces on the board are specified by sub-angle (triangular element glyphs, or the initial letters of Air, Earth, Water, Fire), file (1-4), row (a-d), and letter of the square as actually shown on the board. This letter of the square is optional, but can be useful for divination. The sub-angle notation may be omitted for chessmen in the home sub-angle of their side.

	Air								
	1a	2a	3a	4a	1d	1c	1b	1a	Water
	1b	2b	3b	4b	2d	2c	2b	2a	
	1c	2c	3c	4c	3d	3c	3b	3a	
	1d	2d	3d	4d	4d	4c	4b	4a	
	4a	4b	4c	4d	4d	3d	2d	1d	
	3a	3b	3c	3d	4c	3c	2c	1c	
	2a	2b	2c	2d	4b	3b	2b	1b	
Earth	1a	1b	1c	1d	4a	3a	2a	1a	Fire

B. Chessmen are noted with ordinary abbreviations: K for King, Q for Queen, B for Bishop, N for Knight, R for Rook. Pawns are abbreviated Np for Knight’s Pawn, etc.

C. Events and Conditions: x for capture, + for check, +x for capture of King, # for pawn promotion, © for concourse, \$ for stalemate, ? for dubious move, ! for decisive move.

D. Turns consist of one move for each side, and are best recorded in four columns, arranged in the sequence of play. Each row on the recording sheet then represents a complete turn.

VII. Divination Play

A. The Magician is one of the (two, three, or four) players, being both querent and diviner. The Magician operates the side corresponding to the board chosen (as well as its partner in equilibrium, if there are fewer than four players). The goal of the Magician in play is to move his King to the Ptah space, and to keep him there for a full turn of play by all sides. His partner in equilibrium will aid him in this goal, while the opposing equilibrium will work to prevent it.

B. The Ptah Piece is painted entirely white. (A checker will suffice.) The Magician places the Ptah on a square of one of the four boards, specifically chosen to represent the nature of the question being divined. Astrological and geomantic correspondences for the squares according to the Golden Dawn system can be consulted in this regard; see Liber Chanokh, *sub figura* LXXXIV. Alternately, the square may be chosen based on its association with the powers attributed to its angel according to Doctor Dee's *Book of the Angels of the Four Quarters*. Ptah marks the Ptah space, and he does not move or prevent any chessmen from entering or crossing the Ptah space. He cannot be captured.

C. A Significator Piece represents the Magician in the context of the question. The significator may be identified after the usual manner of a tarot significator, since all of the court cards are represented by pieces (see III.A, above). Note that the side of the Magician is determined by the question, and the significator may be part of a side not operated by the Magician.

D. Ritual Invocation is recommended prior to commencing a divination. The Angelic Keys or Calls of Doctor Dee are most suitable, of course. So, after the Magician has selected the board and assigned sides to the other players, a Lesser Pentagram Ritual may be done by way of preparation, followed by the Greater Pentagram Ritual invoking the element of the board. Then the chessmen would be set up, and then the Magician would recite a Key or other suitable invocation, prior to placing the Ptah on its square. The First Key is universally applicable, but others may be used instead, if they suit the particular divination. Further sources for alternatives include the Holy Books of Thelema, the Chaldean Oracles, the Hymns of Orpheus, certain Psalms from the Bible, and Anna Kingsford's "Book of the Mysteries of God."

As a basic item of magical hygiene, it is advisable to perform a Lesser Pentagram Ritual after Rosicrucian Chess divination. If a game seems to present lingering tangential effects, the Greater Pentagram banishing of the board's element is in order.

E. Randomizing Movement: Unlike sport play, which permits the players the tactical choice of which piece to move in any given turn, chess divination constrains play by the roll of a die. At each player's turn, he or she rolls, to the following effect:

Die Roll	Piece to be Moved
1	King, or Pawn if King is immobilized
2	Knight
3	Queen
4	Bishop
5	Rook
6	Pawn

If the die roll calls for a piece that has already been captured, or has its movement completely blocked by chessmen of its own equilibrium, then there is no move, and the turn passes to the next side. A dash is marked on the record of the game for that play. If the roll calls for movement of a piece that can only be moved to a threatened square, or that would open the side's King to check, then the move must still be undertaken. (Remember that the threatening chessmen may not be permitted to move because of the die constraint.)

F. Interpreting Outcomes: The game concludes on a positive result if the Magician's principal King reaches the Ptah square and holds it *unchecked* for a full round of play. The game concludes on a negative result if both Kings of the Magician's equilibrium are captured, or if the principal King is stalemated after the capture of the other King in its equilibrium.

For a complete interpretation, it is best to fully record the game. (See Section VI, above.) Aspects of play that may be interpreted to divinatory effect include: the extent and nature of challenges faced by the principal King on the Ptah square; general trends and fates of the individual sides; the movement and fate of the significator relative to the Ptah square; *words actually spelled* in Enochian by the letters of the squares entered, in sequence of play.

