

SOPHUS TROMHOLT (1851-1896) – A NEGLECTED DANISH GAMES INVENTOR

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Abstract. Sophus Tromholt (1851-1896) is remembered mainly as a northern lights explorer and for his photographs of Sámi people in northern Norway, now on the UNESCO World Heritage List. His long publication list also contains popular science books, travel literature and puzzle publications. Moreover, he was also a keen inventor of board games, playing a role in the early history of the board game company Otto Maier Verlag Ravensburg. After a short biography of Tromholt we present a history of his games *Mona*, *Samson*, *Rocco*, *Yum-Yum*, and *Rococo*.

Keywords: Board Game History, Late 19th century, Otto Maier Verlag Ravensburg, Sophus Tromholt, Published Games and Mathematical Puzzles.

Introduction

The company Ravensburger AG, today a leading manufacturer of brand name board games and jigsaw puzzles, was founded by Otto Robert Maier (1852-1925) in Ravensburg, a town in Upper Swabia in southern Germany. As a publishing enterprise, Ravensburger evolved from the

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¹ This paper is partly based upon a presentation by the first author at the 24th Board Game Studies Colloquium, held 16-20 May 2022 in Leeuwarden.

Dorn'sche Buchhandlung, a bookstore in Ravensburg, owned and run by bookseller, journalist and publisher Carl August Maier since 1845. After his death in 1867 his wife Julie inherited his share in the bookstore, and in 1876 their oldest son Otto Robert became co-owner.²

In 1883 Otto Maier founded Otto Maier Verlag, and the following year he published the first Ravensburger game: *Reise um die Erde: ein humoristisches-geographisches Gesellschaftsspiel* [A Trip Around the World: A Humorous Geographical Society Game]. This board game was modelled after the popular novel by Jules Verne, *Le tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours*, which had been published ten years earlier.³ This game became a bestseller and remained in Maier's catalogue for 30 years.⁴

As a result of this first, highly successful game, a whole series of games was soon published. Otto Maier signed a contract with a local schoolteacher and writer, Tobias Hafner (1833-1921), who created eight games published in 1885.⁵ During the following years the number of published games increased considerably. A list from 1892 mentions 31 games published by Maier,⁶ and in 1918 this number had increased to 300.⁷ Most of the games listed in the 1892 catalogue seem to have been educational Lotto games or Quartet games of a well-known type with geographical, historical or literary themes. But also a few more original games had been included by then. Two game inventors are credited in the list. Lothar Meggendorfer (1847-1925), an illustrator and early cartoonist from Munich, is credited for his *Neuestes Uhrenspiel*, published in 1890 as no. 21 by Otto Maier. Meggendorfer created some 40 board games, nine of which were published by Otto Maier during the years 1890-1906.⁸ Besides Meggendorfer, a certain Sophus Tromholt is credited for two games: *Samson*, a new board game, and *Yum-*

² See Pollitz 1983 and Rundel 1983 for more detailed information about the history of the company.

³ Pollitz 1983: 68f. *Reise um die Erde in 80 Tagen* (Verlag der Gebrüder Légrády in Pest 1873).

⁴ A reprint edition was published again by Ravensburger AG in 1983 and once more in 2010, see <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/152284/reise-um-die-erde-ein-humoristisches-geographische/versions>.

⁵ Pollitz 1983: 69.

⁶ "Buch- und Kunst-Katalog. Gesamt-Verlags-Katalog des Deutschen Buchhandels und des mit ihm im direkten Verkehr Stehendes Auslandes" XVI. Ergänzungs-Band. Dritte Abteilung.

⁷ Pollitz 1983: 79.

⁸ Ibid. 1983: 79. Meggendorfer's game world is described in Krahé 1983.

Yum, a puzzle game containing 12 figures and 300 puzzles and solutions. We know that Sophus Tromholt was also the inventor of a third game in the 1892 catalogue: *Mona oder Vogelspiel* [Mona or Bird Game]. *Mona* was published as no. 27, *Samson* as no. 28, and *Yum-Yum* as no. 29 in Otto Maier's number system. In 1893 Maier published a fourth game invented by Tromholt: *Rocco* as game no. 32, in the same box as the English game *Reversi*.⁹ Furthermore, it seems very likely that also the game *Rococo*, published by Otto Maier in 1894, was invented by Sophus Tromholt.

What do we know about this game inventor who had five games published within a very short time in Ravensburg? In his jubilee book *1883-1983 Hundert Jahre Otto Maier Verlag*¹⁰ (Ravensburg 1983) Andreas Pollitz only mentions the name plus the information that he was a gentleman from Möckern bei Leipzig.¹¹ Erwin Glonnegger in his *Das Spiele-Buch* also mentions Sophus Tromholt when describing the puzzle game *Yum-Yum*, saying that this "Swedish mathematician" lived from 1851 till 1896.¹² The life span is correct, and Tromholt did teach mathematics in a period of his life, in public schools, never at universities or high schools. However the information that his nationality was Swedish, is wrong.

Much more information about Tromholt can be found in the large biography by Kira Moss and Peter Stauning, published in Danish in 2012: *Sophus Tromholt. "Skæbnen og Nordlyset er jo lige uransagelige"*¹³ and by the same authors: "Sophus Tromholt: an outstanding pioneer in auroral research"¹⁴ and in Marthe Fjellestad Tolnes and Solveig Greve: *Starman. Sophus Tromholt Photographs 1882-1883*.¹⁵

A short biography

Sophus Tromholt was a Danish schoolteacher, northern lights explorer, photographer, author, and lecturer. He was an astonishing multi-faceted genius – today mostly remembered for his life-long study of northern lights

⁹ We are thankful to Tristan Schwennsen, Manager Archives, Ravensburger AG, for providing information about games published by Otto Maier.

¹⁰ Pollitz 1983.

¹¹ Ibid. 1983: 69.

¹² Glonnegger 1999: 102.

¹³ Moss & Stauning 2012b. The subtitle may be translated: "Destiny and Northern Lights are equally inscrutable".

¹⁴ Moss & Stauning 2012a.

¹⁵ Fjellestad, Marthe Tolnes & Greve, Solveig (2018).

and his fascinating photos of the indigenous people in among other places Kautokeino, Finnmark, Northern Norway.¹⁶

He was born in June 1851 in the town of Husum in Schleswig-Holstein, a part of Northern Germany which then belonged to Denmark. His parents were Danish, and together with their children they moved to Randers in Jutland. Sophus Tromholt finished his education as a schoolteacher in 1871 and worked as such in Jutland and Bergen in Norway until 1882.

During his years as a schoolteacher Tromholt published schoolbooks on arithmetic, geometry, and geography, the last gaining a medal at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1889. During his whole life he was a highly popular lecturer, especially in astronomy, and wrote several popular books on that subject. During this time, he also published several groundbreaking articles on northern lights science in Norwegian, Danish, German, and English publications. In 1882-83, during the first International Polar Year, Tromholt established an aurora observatory in Kautokeino, supported by several patrons. He intended to photograph the Northern lights, but as this was not yet technically possible, the result was his famous photographs of indigenous people. In 1884-87 he was given a grant from the Norwegian government.

When in 1887 the Norwegian government withdrew its economic support to Sophus Tromholt, he gave up his scientific research and moved to Germany together with his newly wedded wife, the much younger opera singer Maria Jess. They lived first in Dresden and later in Möckern near Leipzig.

In 1893 Tromholt made a long journey to the United States, visiting New York and giving astronomical public lectures to the Scandinavian community and reporting from the World Exhibition in Chicago to a Norwegian newspaper. Up until 1895, he was very active, travelling and giving lectures, translating and publishing several books. Then his health deteriorated, and Sophus Tromholt died only 44 years old, on April 14th, 1896, at Dr. Silberstein's lung sanatory in Blankenhain, Thuringia.

¹⁶ These photos are now on the UNESCO World Heritage List: <https://www.unesco.org/en/memory-world/sophus-tromholt-collection>. Among his results were the first reliable and accurate estimates of the height of the Northern lights, see Moss & Stauning 2012a.

The puzzle/mind sports books by Sophus Tromholt

Sophus Tromholt wrote several popular books that are best described as puzzle books. They contained a large variety of problems and puzzles, even if he also borrowed from other authors. Several of Tromholt's small puzzle books were translated into other languages. Tromholt was a steady deliverer of puzzles to many different magazines. Among others he wrote the column *TIDSFORDRIV* [pastimes] in the monthly magazine *ILLUSTRERET TIDENDE FOR BØRN* [Illustrated Magazine for Children].

A list of Tromholt's puzzle books published in Denmark and Norway:

1887 *RIVDTS. En haandfuld Hovedbrud og Underholdning for store og smaa Børn* [A Handful of Puzzles for older and younger Children], ed. B. Giertsens and Fr. Nygaard's Forlag (Bergen) and Jul. Schlichtkrull (Kjøbenhavn). The strange title RIVDTS is a rebus to be read as follows: T I D S F Ø R D R I V, that is TIDSFORDRIV. The preface in the book is written in code with a permutation of letters.

1888 *RIVDTS. Ny Samling* [RIVDTS. New Collection], same publishers as 1887.

1889 *Fyrstikspil. Tankesport og Tidsfordriv* [Match Puzzles. Mind Sports and Pastimes], Fr. Nygaards Forlag (Bergen), and Jul. Schlichtkrull (Kjøbenhavn). Republished several times in Germany during the 20th century.

1890 *Runer og Rænker. Tankesport og Tidsfordriv for Smaa og Store* [Runes and Shenanigans. Mind Sports and Pastimes for Young and Old], same publishers as 1889.

1891 *Den Forrykte Bog. Nyeste og Interessanteste Tankesport. Efter en fremmed Idé* [The Crazy Book. New and Interesting Mind Sports. After a Foreign Idea], same publishers as 1889.

1891 *Hundrede Snurrepiberier. Tidsfordriv paa Fysikkens Område. Frit efter Tom Tit's "La science amusante, 2e Série"* [One Hundred Spinning Pipes. Pastimes in Physics. Freely translated after Tom Tit's "La science amusante"] Jul. Schlichtkrull (Kjøbenhavn).

1892 *99 Nye Snurrepiberier. Frit efter Tom Tit's "La science amusante", 2e Série* [99 New Spinning Pipes, freely translated after Tom Tit's "La science amusante", 2e Série], same publishers as 1891.

Sophus Tromholt and his publishers

During his years in Germany, Tromholt made a living from popular scientific tours and lectures in several countries, including also Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, but also from the sale of the mentioned puzzle books. These small books were published simultaneously by the Danish book seller Julius Schlichtkrull (1851-1927) in Copenhagen, and by his Norwegian colleague Fredrik Nygaard (1843-1937) in Bergen.

Several of the mentioned booklets were also published in Germany, e.g. by Otto Spamer Verlag in Leipzig and Verlag des Universum Alfred Hauschild, Dresden.¹⁷ Sophus Tromholt's Danish and Norwegian book publishers did also publish board games. In November-December 1890 Schlichtkrull and Nygaard both introduced the abstract board game *Halma*, invented in 1883 by the American surgeon George Howard Monks.¹⁸ From 1888 and onwards this abstract game of traversal gained enormous popularity in a lot of countries.¹⁹

In December 1891 Otto Maier published it in Ravensburg as his game no. 26, in the same box as another abstract game *Go* (which was in fact not *Go*, but *Go Bang*, a variant of *Go-Moku*, Japanese Five-in-a-Row).²⁰

¹⁷ Advertisements in Duisburger Tageblatt 22/10/1889 and Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel 14/12/1893. The most popular books were translated into several other languages. *Fyrstikspil* [Match Puzzles] for example came in a Russian version in 1912. Over the years especially the German version has been published in large numbers, reaching 13.000 already in 1890. The latest edition came in 2007, and the latest puzzle book naming Tromholt as author, in 2009.

¹⁸ Nordisk Boghandlertidende 14.11.1890. Bergens Aftenblad 19.12.1890. Halma games published by Schlichtkrull and Nygaard are preserved at the Danish National Museum, Brede, mus.no. 7208/1973, <https://samlinger.natmus.dk/dnt/object/78915>, and in the Norwegian Nordmørmusea, TBM.5252, <https://digitaltmuseum.org/011023019227/leiketoy>.

¹⁹ On the history of Halma, see Bruce Whitehill: <https://thebiggamehunter.com/games-one-by-one/halma/>. Halma was also published in Sweden and Germany in 1890, see Stockholms Dagblad 11.12.1890, and Norddeutsche allgemeine Zeitung, Morgen-Ausgabe 18.12.1890.

²⁰ Advertisements in Riedlinger Zeitung 11.12.1891, Echo der Gegenwart 03.12.1892. Märkisches Tageblatt 02.12.1894. Dresdner Nachrichten 03.12.1898. Schwäbischer Merkur 09.12.1902. Pollitz 1983: 79 thought that Otto Maier published the game of *Go* in 1892, but as the advertisements show, the game equipment was for *Go Bang*, a game imported to Europe from Japan in the 1870s. Both games are described in the book *Allerlei Brettspiele*: 49-54, by "Caesar Mitis" alias Heinrich Schwalke, published by Otto Maier in 1905, but the game of *Go* did not appear in the Ravensburger program before 1917 (personal communication from Tristan Schwennsen, Ravensburger Spiele Archiv). See also Pratesi 2004:133. Nor is there any evidence of a star-shaped Halma board, named

In December 1891 Schlichtkrull and Nygaard also published two board games, both labelled “new” in their advertisements: *Agon* and *Mona*.²¹ *Agon* (also known as *The Queen’s Guard*) was not quite new, but probably new in Scandinavia; this abstract strategy game on a hexagonal board, invented by Anthony Peacock of London, was first published in 1842.²² *Mona*, however, invented by “the popular writer Sophus Tromholt”, was certainly a new board game.

In December 1892 Julius Schlichtkrull published two further inventions by Tromholt: *Rocco*, a board game for 2 players, and *Yum-Yum*, a mind game accompanied by 300 problems and solutions.²³ One year later the two games were published in Norway by Fredrik Nygaard as *Rocco* and *Jum Jum*.²⁴ All four mentioned games appeared once more in Schlichtkrull’s advertisements of December 1894, as “new games for Christmas”.²⁵

It is evident that Schlichtkrull, Nygaard, Maier and Tromholt were all aware of the great popularity of *Halma*, a game which seems to have inspired Tromholt, when he invented his board games *Samson* and *Rocco*. Unfortunately, Sophus Tromholt does not mention anything about his game inventing activity in the few known preserved letters from his hand, and his games are not described in any of his puzzle books. Furthermore, apparently no correspondence or contracts between Tromholt and his publishers has been saved. Therefore, we can only speculate about.

In his jubilee book *1883-1983 Hundert Jahre Otto Maier Verlag Ravensburg*²⁶ Andreas Pollitz gives a detailed description of the history of the publishing house. According to him Otto Maier was very much involved in the production of every game. From the early 1890s and onwards almost all contracts were accompanied by a very detailed organization plan, signed by the author and publisher, and Otto Maier seems to have been in contact

Stern-Halma, being published in Ravensburg in 1892, as claimed by Glonnegger 1999:104. This invention probably belongs to the early 20th century, see Michaelsen, article in progress.

²¹ København 12.12.1891; Dagens Nyheder 15.12.1891; Tromsø Stiftstidende 10.12.1891; Trondhjems Adresseavis 19.12.1891.

²² The history of *Agon* is described in Copisarow 2010. A game set of *Agon* from 1894 is kept at the toy museum Legetøjsmuseet in Copenhagen. Photo in Sigsgaard & Varnild 1982: 259.

²³ Nationaltidende 14.12.1892.

²⁴ Dagbladet 19.12.1893.

²⁵ Nordisk Boghandlertidende 07.12.1894.

²⁶ Pollitz 1983.

with many of his authors for years. Furthermore, Maier did not only edit a series of game books as “Otto Robert”, but he also invented and published several games himself under the pseudonym of “C. Hoffmann”.²⁷

Concerning the relationship between Maier and Tromholt we only know that Tromholt was credited for his inventions. Apart from the original edition of *Mona*, in which Tromholt’s name is only included in the rules, the name of the inventor is mentioned both on the box lid and in the rule sheets of his games. As shown by Rudolf Rühle, this was not a common procedure in the late 19th century. In many cases it is not possible to determine who is the author of a certain game unless this information may be deduced from other sources.²⁸

Mona oder Vogelspiel

Mona is a race game played by 2, 3 or 4 players with a six-sided dice with different colours on each side. A piece moves to the same colour square as the colour of the dice. They may be captured and returned to their home base, and the game is won by the player who is the first to reach the large red square with one of his/her pieces.²⁹ The game was published by Otto Maier Verlag in at least three versions. The earliest version, dating from 1892, is probably the one with the title *Mona* and the subtitle: *Neues Vogelspiel. Gesellschaftsspiel für Jung und Alt*, this name being written on the box lid in English, French, and Italian as well. The logo seems to be the original Otto Maier logo from 1883, modified a little in 1891 and somewhat more in 1892. An early set is kept at the Ravensburger Spiele Archiv.

An almost identical set, but with different, bird-shaped game pieces and game rules in German, is owned by Kira Moss, co-author of this article. In several languages it is mentioned on the board that this game is “copyrighted”, but no patents of any of Tromholt’s games are known. Another version: *Grosses Vogelspiel Mona von S. Tromholt*, also kept in the Ravensburger Spiele Archiv, bears no. 27 on the box lid, which could indicate that this version too was released in 1892. Sometimes two editions of Otto Maier’s games were published with the same number, most often a

²⁷ Ibid: 88f.

²⁸ Rühle 2006.

²⁹ The rules can be found on the web site of the Swedish programmer Mats Winther. On request of the first author of this article, Mats Winther made a Zillions-of-Games implementation of the game, available at <http://mlwi.magix.net/bg/mona.htm>

larger and a smaller version of the same game. However, the birds on the playing board are painted in a different style which very much resembles the one used in a quite different, circular bird game, published by Otto Maier in 1914 as no. 259. Therefore, this version was probably released in the early 20th century, perhaps in 1902. A newspaper advertisement this year mentions a *Mona* game which is much more expensive than the usual edition, costing 8 Mark instead of 3.³⁰ *Mona* was taken out of the Ravensburger program between 1905 and 1912, probably not before 1912, as it was still sold in December 1911.³¹

Finally, in 1930 the game was reintroduced by Otto Maier's sons who had then succeeded their father.³² It was published as game no. 398 and was this time illustrated by Dr. Fritz Ehlotzky (1886-1942). He also illustrated the famous game *Fang den Hut*, published by Ravensburger in 1928, and invented several games, the so-called *Elo-Spiele*. This version of "Mona" was taken out of the program in 1939.³³

Samson

Samson is played on a special board with three different sizes. The 8x8 inner board is used by two players, the 10x10 board by three, and the 12x12 board by four players. Each participant plays with 12 game pieces of the same colour. The six larger, bearing the letters SAMSON, are called cavaliers, whereas the six smaller ones are the soldiers. The task of each player is to forward his cavaliers to the opposite side of the board, that is to the squares marked by the respective letters. Captured soldiers are removed from the game, while captured cavaliers are returned to the beginning row.³⁴

It seems Tromholt had Chess in mind when he constructed *Samson*, as the soldiers capture like chess pawns, and the cavaliers, moving like chess

³⁰ See Aachener allgemeine Zeitung 30.11.1902.

³¹ Honnefer Volkszeitung 01.12.1911.

³² Otto Robert Maier's sons Otto (1891-1952), Karl (1894-1979), and Eugen (1899-1945) took over the publishing house after the death of their father in 1925, see Hess-Maier 2008.

³³ Personal communication from archive director Tristan Schwennsen, Ravensburg, 18.06.2019 and 21.07.2022.

³⁴ Tristan Schwennsen kindly sent us photos of the *Samson* game set, including a sheet with game rules in French, German, and English. The English text says: "Secured by a patent", but such a patent has not yet been discovered. On request of the first author of this article, games researcher Ralf Gering made a preliminary test of the *Samson* game. He discovered a serious flaw while analysing the end game, which might easily result in unfinished games.

queens, capture like chess kings. The object of the game, however, is identical with the object of *Halma*, and the game may thus be considered as a *Halma* variant, but with diversified pieces and captures - probably the first traversal board game with these features.

Rocco

Tromholt's *Rocco* has several similarities with his *Samson*, even if it is played on a much smaller board with 2x8 pieces, numbered from 1 to 8.

In this game the goal is to place all game pieces on their corresponding number on the opposite side. Game pieces step orthogonally, slide diagonally, and can be moved in all directions. A game piece may not move in the direction of an enemy piece unless there is a friendly game piece in between. As an alternative version players may choose to ignore the numbers on pieces and board, a rule which shortens the game.³⁵

Together with *Colorito*, *Rocco* may be regarded as the earliest published Halma variant with numbered pieces. In 1892 the *New Game of Colorito* was published in London by George Wright. In this game on a 10x10 board with 2x20 numbered pieces the aim is the same as in *Rocco*: to be the first to move his pieces onto the opposite side onto the field with the corresponding number. This game, whose inventor is unknown, seems to have received quite a lot of publicity. It is by some game players considered as a forgotten abstract gem, and it was republished by Nestor Games in 2010.³⁶

³⁵ Tristan Schwennsen kindly sent us photos of the *Reversi & Rocco* game in the Ravensburger Spiele Archiv. One more game was owned by the game researcher Rudolf Rühle who donated his collection to Das Deutsche Spiele Museum, Chemnitz. We also got permission to see and make photos of a *Rocco* game, published by Julius Schlichtkrull, Copenhagen, kept at the Danish National Museum, Brede (Dansk Folkemuseum, museum no. 815/1970. A similar alternative rule, shortening the game of *Colorito*, has been proposed by Daniel Danzer, see next note. On request of the first author of this article, Mats Winther made a Zillions-of-Games implementation of *Rocco*, available at <http://mlwi.magix.net/bg/rocco.htm>. In order to avoid a too drawish game, Winther modified the rules of *Rocco* by introducing the forced jump move.

³⁶ <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/35346/colorito>. According to the information provided there, "this game is mentioned in several letters of the Romanov sisters (daughters of the last Russian tsar) from 1915 and as one of the favorite games of Anastasia Nikolaevna." *Colorito* was republished by Néstor Romeral Andrés with updated rules, board design and variants by Daniel Danzer (2010). Adrian Seville kindly sent us a photo of the original rule sheet from 1892.

In 1899 the German musician Conrad Büttgenbach (1870-1939) invented a similar game, *Salta*, with 2x15 diversified game pieces on a 10x10 board. Just two years later, this game had achieved an international following in several European countries.³⁷ In Scandinavia, however, *Salta* never became as popular as *Halma*. A contributing factor may have been that a new board game craze reached Denmark and Norway in 1901/1902. This was the game of *Ludo*, a simplification of the old Indian game of *Pachisi*, first published in England as a game with rules and pieces in 1801. *Ludo*, invented by Daniel Neale in 1886, was a bestselling game from 1887. Like the variant *Royal Ludo*, dating from 1891, it was published by Alfred Collier of London.³⁸ From the English inventor and publisher, Fredrik Nygaard's publishing company in Bergen received the exclusive right to publish *Ludo* and *Royal Ludo* in Norway. It was then marketed as being the greatest success in this field since the emergence of *Halma*.³⁹

Rocco was published separately by Jul. Schlichtkrull in 1892 and by Fr. Nygaard in 1893. In that same year Otto Maier chose to publish Tromholt's game in the same game box as another relatively new game, *Reversi*, invented by Lewis Waterman, Bristol, in 1882.⁴⁰ From 1888 this game rapidly spread to a lot of countries.⁴¹ In December 1889 it was published in Denmark and Norway under the name of *Karasjaa*, and a few weeks later it was introduced in Sweden as *Karasjå*.⁴² Here it became even more successful, being

³⁷ For further information, see Gering 2001 and Glonnegger 1999: 206-207. This was an exceptional example of successful marketing. Celebrities as the actress Sarah Bernhardt, the chess world champion Emanuel Lasker, and the German emperor Wilhelm II contributed to the publicity of the game. A game from 1899 and game rules from 1900 are preserved at Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, NM.0327480+ and NM.03270481+.

³⁸ Concerning the chronology of *Ludo*, see Copisarow 2010.

³⁹ Bergens Tidende 10.12.1902. Advertisements in the Norwegian Morgenbladet 16.12.1902 and in the Danish Holstebro Dagblad 04.12.1901.

⁴⁰ On the history of *Reversi* see Copisarow 2010.

⁴¹ In December 1888 *Reversi* was for sale in Japan by the firm Maruzen under the name of *Shōgaku Yūgi Genpei Chie-kurabe*, see advertisement in Yomiuri-Shimbun 13.12.1888. The game was later described in 1907 in the book *Sekai Yūgi-hō Taizen* by Masayasu Matsuura, published by Habubunkan, personal communication from game researchers Kuromiya Kimihiko and Hironori Takahashi.

⁴² Nordisk Boghandlertidende 10.12.1889. A game set is kept at the Danish National Museum, Brede (Dansk Folkemuseum, museum no. 1713/1980, published by Larsen & Jørgensen, Copenhagen. Dagbladet 15.11.1889. The Norwegian publisher was Rich. Andvords Forlag, Kristiania/Oslo. Stockholms Nyheter 05. 02.1890. The Swedish publisher was Axel Lindahl, Stockholm.

republished four times and outsold within a month. Under its original name, *Reversi* was also introduced in Germany in December 1889.⁴³

In 1892 it reappeared in Denmark under the original name,⁴⁴ and in 1893 it was published by the firm N. W. Damm in Norway under the name of *Karasjå eller [or] Reversi*, sold in the same box as the game of *Draughts*, played on the same game board.⁴⁵ When boxing *Rocco* and *Reversi* together in 1893, Otto Maier may perhaps have had his doubts about the future of *Rocco*, compared to the already quite popular game of *Reversi*. The combined version of the two games, no. 32, went out of the Ravensburger program between 1905 and 1912, and so did also *Samson*, which was never published in Scandinavia.⁴⁶ *Reversi*, however, was reintroduced several times by Otto Maier as a separate game, first in 1907,⁴⁷ and again, with great success, in 1972, anticipating the success of the almost identical Japanese game *Othello* (by Goro Hasegawa) later in the 1970s.⁴⁸

In 1894 Otto Maier published *Reversi* and *Rocco* separately in a large box, *Der Grosse Spielkasten*, which contained 16 different board games, including games like *Halma* and *Gobang*, as well as Tromholt's games *Samson* and *Yum-Yum*.⁴⁹ *Rocco* was still for sale in Denmark in December 1894 together with Tromholt's other games *Mona* and *Yum-Yum*. After this year Schlichtkrull apparently did not make any further advertisements for these games. It seems that none of these games became bestsellers in Denmark or Norway, and we know positively that *Samson* was not a bestseller in Germany. A hand-written note by Otto Maier has the following text: "Keine Spiele mehr à la Samson, Kismet, Attention. – Höchstens in Verbindung mit interessanten Themen und Bildern." On the same slip of paper Maier

⁴³ Hamburger Fremdenblatt 18.12.1889.

⁴⁴ Berlingske Politiske og Avertissementstidende 02.12.1892. *Reversi* was sold in J. Chr. Pio's bookshop in Copenhagen.

⁴⁵ Damm 1947: 211.

⁴⁶ We have not found any advertisement, mentioning *Samson*, later than the one in Schwäbischer Merkur 09.12.1902. *Reversi & Rocco*, however, was still for sale in December 1909, see Honnefer Volksblatt 23.12.1909.

⁴⁷ This year, mentioned by Glonnegger 1999: 143, corresponds nicely with no.137 of *Reversi* sets sold by Otto Maier in Ravensburg, catalogue (from 1912?) in the last pages of Caesar Mitis: *Allerlei Brettspiele*, Otto Maier Verlag, 1st edition published in 1905.

⁴⁸ According to Pollitz 1983, *Reversi* was the most successful of the 19 games published in the Traveller Serie.

⁴⁹ Advertisement in Märkisches Tageblatt: Generalanzeiger für Witten und Umgegend, 09.12.1894.

wrote the names Weber and Obletter. Weber in Zürich and Obletter in Munich were the two largest toys and games retailers who received and sold Otto Maier's articles, and he consulted them regularly.⁵⁰

Otto Maier quickly discovered all the obstacles to success that are still in force today: it is hard to market a game with rules that are not commonly known, that has no promotional campaign to attract a critical mass of new players, and which is sold to salesmen who are unfamiliar with the game. Besides, new abstract, strategical games without special themes do not appeal very much to families who just play for fun, and concerning more dedicated, serious players they will have to compete with established games like *Chess* and *Draughts*.

Tromholt's *Mona* is a rather simple fun game with original features, including nice designs, and thus has a broader appeal than his *Samson* and *Rocco*. Therefore, it is not surprising that *Mona* was still published in Germany in the 1930s. Furthermore, if one wants to create a successful abstract board game, a lot of game testing is required. When considering the troubles Sophus Tromholt experienced in the last years of his life, not least his deteriorating health as well as his busy tour program with astronomical lectures, it seems quite likely that he did not have time for any further game testing which might otherwise have resulted in revised versions of these games. Tromholt's early death also prevented him from further promotion of his games. *Mona* and *Rocco* were still for sale in Christiania/Oslo at the end of 1896⁵¹, but we have not been able to find any newer Scandinavian advertisements for Tromholt's games.

The two other games mentioned in Otto Maier's note: *Attention!* and *Kismet* were published by him as no. 63 and 65 in 1897. The rules of *Kismet* are now lost, but the rules of *Attention!*, invented by Otto Sterkel (1873-1960), Ravensburg, were printed in a game book edited by Verlag von Otto Maier, Ravensburg in 1905: *Allerlei Brettspiele. Leichtfassliche Einführung in die beliebtesten Brettspiele*.⁵² This book, vol. 2 in a long series of game books, edited by Otto Robert Maier, was written by "Caesar Mitis", a pseudonym for Heinrich

⁵⁰ "No more games à la Samson, Kismet, Attention. – At most in combination with interesting themes and pictures". Information (with photos) provided by Dieter Hasselblatt in Rundel 1983: 38f and 51.

⁵¹ Aftenposten, 29 11 1896.

⁵² The two games are preserved, *Attention!* with a rule sheet, in the Ravensburger Spiele Archiv, according to Tristan Schwennsen. In 1983 *Attention!* was reprinted by Spielbox Magazine.

Schwalke (1883-1914), Freiburg im Breisgau.⁵³ A catalogue of Ravensburger games is included on the last pages of the book. Neither this catalogue nor the text by Schwalke mention any of Sophus Tromholt's games. Instead, other newer board games are described, including the very popular *Halma*, *Reversi*, *Salta* and even an imitation of the latter, named *Sala* (published by Adolf Sala Verlag, Berlin).⁵⁴

Yum-Yum

Tromholt's *Yum-Yum* must be regarded as a variant of *Tangram*, a dissection puzzle consisting of 7 flat polygons which are put together to form different shapes. This puzzle, invented in China around 1795, has its roots in Chinese mathematics. While the Pythagorean theorem was introduced to China in the first century A.D., it was a famous third-century Chinese mathematician, Liu Hui, who explained the theorem and described a physical method of dissecting and reassembling squares to prove it. The unknown inventor of what was later named *Tangram* was probably inspired by Liu Hui's dissection proof.

Only two years after problem and solution books became available from China, it became the first puzzle craze in many countries of the world. Many Chinese products came to Europe during this time, most of them made directly for the European market. Numerous copies of the so-called *Chinese Puzzle* made of ivory and wood also found their way from the Far East to Europe and America on sailing ships. The first craze hit Europe and America in 1817 and the following year, where a lot of books were published. Denmark knew a remarkable interest in the Tangram during 1818 with four publications. Although the Tangram did not reach the level of craze seen in other European countries like France, more Tangram publications appeared in Germany in the 19th century than in any other country.⁵⁵ In Germany a new craze began when the game was manufactured by the industrialist Friedrich Adolf Richter (1847-1910) in 1891 and marketed as the *Kopfzerbrecher* [Head Breaker] or *Anchor Puzzle*. Stimulated by this success, Richter published a similar game, named

⁵³ Pollitz 1983: 88f.

⁵⁴ *Sala* was played on an 8x8 draughts/chess board with 2x12 numbered pieces.

⁵⁵ Slocum 2003, especially 11-99. The first known rearrangement puzzle dates to the third century B.C., was of Greek origin, and was called the "Loculus Archimedes" or the "Stomachion". The Tangram soon became very fashionable, not least thanks to the true story that Napoleon played with this puzzle in his exile on St. Helena.

Quälgeist or, in English: *Tormentor*. Here the square was divided into 8 parts instead of 7. In 1892 this was followed by Richter's *Kreuzzerbrecher* or *Cross Puzzle*.⁵⁶

As Fr. A. Richter's main factory was situated in Rudolstadt, not far from Sophus Tromholt's home, we may assume that Tromholt knew about these new puzzles. With his long-lasting interest in mathematical puzzles, it is no surprise that he decided to launch his own competing game. Tromholt probably chose the name *Yum-Yum* for his puzzle, inspired by the popularity of the comic opera *The Mikado* with music by Arthur Sullivan and text by W.S. Gilbert. One of the main characters in that opera is named "Yum-Yum". The Jerry Slocum collection at Indiana University contains a contemporary "Japanisches Geduldspiel Yum-Yum (4-piece square)" (025046) which is quite different from Sophus Tromholt's puzzle. It seems that there is not anything connecting the two puzzles aside from the same title. The opera, and, more generally, Japanese culture was in the cultural consciousness of the time.⁵⁷

Tromholt's puzzle has been reissued under other names. In 1902 and again in 1907 Otto Maier reintroduced *Yum-Yum* in a new dress under the names of *Pythagoras junior* and *Nussknacker* (no. 105/158). The game was taken out of the program between 1912 and 1920.⁵⁸ It was included again in the Ravensburger catalogue from 1924.⁵⁹ *Tangram* got a renaissance from the middle of the 1970s,⁶⁰ and its many variants are discussed in several popular books on mathematics.⁶¹

The original *Tangram* has 7 pieces, whereas *Yum-Yum* has 12. The largest piece in both is a rectangular isosceles triangle with short sides of length say

⁵⁶ Glonnegger 1999:102-103 with illustrations.

⁵⁷ Thanks to Andrew Rhoda, Curator of Puzzles, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, for providing this information. The "Mikado" was first produced in London in 1885, and toured Germany and Europe in 1886 and 1887 and was successful on tour. An example from the same period of marketing a Western game as Japanese is known. When the game *Halma-Eckha* was introduced in the Netherlands around 1890, it was marketed as "het nieuwste Japansche Spel" [the newest Japanese Game], see https://www.spellenlab.be/speldatabase/18801?name=Halma&sort=year_desc&page=8

⁵⁸ Information provided by Tristan Schwennsen. Schwäbischer Merkur 09.12.1902.

⁵⁹ Maier 1924.

⁶⁰ See <https://www.e-s-g.eu/sammelgebiete/themen/tangram/>

⁶¹ Benesch 2008 discusses Tangram and its variants at length, including Tromholt's *Yum-Yum*.

b and the hypotenuse of length say a . By the Pythagorean theorem $2b^2 = a^2$. That $2b^2 = a^2$ also follows using the *Tangram* pieces. They can be placed to form a square with side a , and they can also form two disjoint squares, both with side b . The total area of the pieces is thus a^2 and $2b^2$.

Using the 12 *Yum-Yum* pieces one can of course create more figures than when using only the 7 *Tangram* pieces. The total area of the *Yum-Yum* pieces is $4b^2 = 2a^2$, hence it seems fairer to compare *Yum-Yum* to two copies of *Tangram* (called *Tangram2* in the following), having the same total area. The number of pieces is thus respectively 12 and 14 in the two puzzles.

Tangram2 has four pieces with area $b^2/2$, six pieces with area $b^2/4$, and four pieces with area $b^2/8$. *Yum-Yum* has also four pieces with area $b^2/2$, two pieces with area $3b^2/8$, four pieces with area $b^2/2$, and two pieces with area $b^2/8$. From the above we infer that from *Tangram2* we can form two disjoint squares of with sides a and a , three disjoint squares with sides a , b and b , four disjoint squares all with sides b . But also one square with side $2b$ is possible. Deleting the four large pieces the ten remaining pieces of *Tangram2* have area $2b^2 = a^2$, and using them only we can form one square with side a , and also two squares with sides b and b . Also, the 14 *Tangram2* pieces may form five disjoint squares (with sides a , b , $a/2$, $b/2$ and $b/2$). In fact, one can form six disjoint squares, using all the 14 *Tangram2* pieces, but seven squares is not possible.

How does *Yum-Yum* compare? The 12 pieces may form one square with side $2b$, two squares with sides a and a , three squares with sides b , b and a , but four or more disjoint squares using all pieces seems impossible (?). *Yum-Yum*'s advantage over *Tangram2* is that it has fewer and larger pieces. On the other hand, it has six different pieces (of four forms), whereas *Tangram2* has only five (of three forms). The one difficult piece in *Yum-Yum* is a rhombus twice the size of the rhombus in *Tangram*. The fewer and larger pieces also mean that *Yum-Yum* have fewer possibilities for figures than *Tangram2*.

It is not clear at all what objective Tromholt had in mind when he constructed *Yum-Yum*. Maybe his motive was only to create a more complicated puzzle than the seven piece *Tangram*? His construction, however, stood the test of time. In contrast to the other – at least in physical design – more beautiful original games of Tromholt.

Rococo

A board game named *Rococo* appears in several newspaper advertisements for games published by Otto Maier, Ravensburg, from 1894 to 1901. Shortly before Christmas 1894 the Austrian newspaper *Linzer Tagespost* brought an advertisement for 21 new games for young and old, available in a local bookshop.⁶² All games were published by Otto Maier, whose name is not mentioned - a common feature of these advertisements. Among these games Sophus Tromholt's *Yum-Yum* and *Reversi-Rocco* are included, but the game inventor is only credited for the game *Rococo*: "dieses Brettspiel ist die neueste Erfindung von Tromholt; eine Art Damenbrett mit origineller, sinnig erdachter Spielart".⁶³

In the same month *Rococo* appeared in a supplement to the German newspaper *Märkisches Tageblatt*, together with other games published by Otto Maier, including Tromholt's *Samson*, *Mona*, *Reversi-Rocco*, and *Yum-Yum*. Here Tromholt is only credited for *Yum-Yum*, and *Rococo* is only described as a new board game.⁶⁴ In the magazine *Jugendgartenlaube*, also from 1894, nine games published by Otto Maier in Ravensburg are recommended, including Tromholt's *Mona* and *Rococo*. Tromholt is not credited for any of the two games, and *Rococo* is described as coming from America.⁶⁵ This claim is repeated in an advertisement for games published by Otto Maier in a supplement to *Cannstatter Zeitung*.⁶⁶ Here *Rococo* is both mentioned separately and as one of the more than 20 games included in a big game box, a so-called *Spielkasten*. Together with *Rococo* and Tromholt's other games *Samson* and *Yum-Yum* also *Rocco* is named. We can therefore exclude the possibility that *Rococo* is simply a misspelling of *Rocco*.

The last reference to *Rococo* seems to be a supplement to *Karlsruher Tageblatt* from 1901, in which this game is listed together with eight other Ravensburger games, including *Samson*, *Reversi und Rocco*, *Kismet*, *Attention*, and *Halma-Go*.⁶⁷

⁶² Linzer Tagespost 21.12.1894.

⁶³ In English: this board game is the newest invention by Tromholt; a kind of draughts board with cleverly invented game rules.

⁶⁴ Interessante Beschäftigungsspiele für jung und alt. Werbebeilage zu Märkisches Tageblatt: Anzeiger für Witten und Umgegend 09.12.1894.

⁶⁵ Jugendgartenlaube: farbig illustrierte Zeitschrift zur Unterhaltung und Belehrung der Jugend. Vol.10. 262. Nürnberg, Verlag der Jugendgartenlaube.

⁶⁶ Lieblingsspiele für jung und alt. Beilage zur Cannstatter Zeitung 15.12.1897.

⁶⁷ Lieblingsspiele für jung und alt. Beilage zur Karlsruher Tageblatt 03.12.1901.

The claim that *Rococo* derived from America is probably unreliable. Even if two advertisements claim this, the information in the Austrian advertisement, crediting Tromholt for the invention, is more convincing in our opinion. Tromholt was reasonably well-known in Germany and Austria in the early 1890s, both for his astronomical talks and puzzle books. Naming the designer of a board game was quite an exception for that time, even if it sometimes happened in advertisements for Tromholt's games.

It is hard to explain why Tromholt should be credited for a game invention in his lifetime, if this game was in fact invented by someone else. The claim that *Rococo* had an American origin might perhaps be explained if Tromholt invented the game during his stay in the United States in the second half of 1893. Unfortunately, no *Rococo* game has apparently survived to this day. Unless new evidence is discovered, we can only speculate – based upon the name of the game – that *Rococo* may have been a modification of Tromholt's earlier invention *Rocco*, played on a board resembling a draughts board.

Conclusion and summary

As shown in this article, the multi-faceted genius Sophus Tromholt also used his creativity in the field of games. This adds one more, important facet to what is known about his life and work. Besides, we have been able to throw more light upon the inventor of some of the very first games, published by Otto Maier Verlag, Ravensburg, and thereby contributed to the early history of this, historically highly important publishing enterprise.

It seems Tromholt's games were forgotten in Denmark and Norway shortly after his death in 1896, and to our knowledge none of them were ever published in Sweden. In Germany, however, *Yum-Yum* and *Mona* must have acquired at least some popularity. *Yum-Yum* is the most mathematically interesting of Tromholt's four published games, and it must also have been a commercial success in Germany, otherwise Otto Maier would not have republished it several times.

However, Tromholt's most popular game was no doubt his first game *Mona* with its relatively simple rules and beautiful design, which makes it understandable that it was reissued by Otto Maier's sons in 1930 and sold throughout the 1930s. Being a funny family race game played with dice, it resembles the even more popular game of *Ludo* in several respects.

Unlike these two games, *Samson* did not sell well and was never published in Scandinavia. *Rocco*, published in the same box as *Reversi*, may have been more successful in Ravensburg, due to the popularity of the latter game. After 1905 both games were taken out of Otto Maier's program, *Reversi* being then published as a separate game. In Heinrich Schwalke's board game book from 1905, edited by Otto Maier, neither *Samson* nor *Rocco* is mentioned.

With his *Samson* and *Rocco* from 1892, Sophus Tromholt, together with the unknown English inventor of *Colorito*, was the first games inventor who tried to improve the already then very popular game of *Halma* by introducing numbered or diversified game pieces. *Samson* was the most complicated of these games, being rather large, and having two types of pieces, moving and capturing in different ways. *Rocco* was a smaller, less complicated game, but both games had flaws in their rules, resulting in prolonged, in some cases never-ending games. Until more evidence is found, we can only speculate about the exact nature of Tromholt's *Rococo*, published by Otto Maier not much more than a year before the death of the Danish inventor.

Probably due to his busy life, it would have been difficult for Tromholt to find the necessary time for modifying any problematic rules in his games. His early death put an end to eventual plans about doing this. A few years later, around 1900, Conrad Büttgenbach would achieve an enormous success with his similar game *Salta*, like Tromholt's *Rocco* and *Samson* to be regarded as a more complex version of *Halma*. However, at least in Scandinavia, *Salta* never became as popular as the original game.

Sophus Tromholt will be remembered mainly because of other achievements, especially in ethnographic photography and Northern lights science, but even if he had only limited success as a game inventor, he certainly deserves a place in the history of board games. Tromholt played, after all, a role in the early history of one of the most successful game publishing companies ever, the Otto Maier Verlag Ravensburg.

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Figure 1 Sophus Tromholt (1851-1896). Portrait by W. Hølbeling. (© Norsk Folkemuseum).



Figure 2 Mona 1892-edition. Version with round pieces. (©Ravensburger AG).



Figure 3 Mona 1892-edition. With larger box with space for bird shaped ceramic pieces. (Kira Moss's collection).



Figure 4 Grosses Vogelspiel Mona. Probably 1902. (©Ravensburger AG).



Figure 5 Mona 1930-edition. (©Ravensburger AG).



Figure 6 Samson, 1892. (©Ravensburger AG).

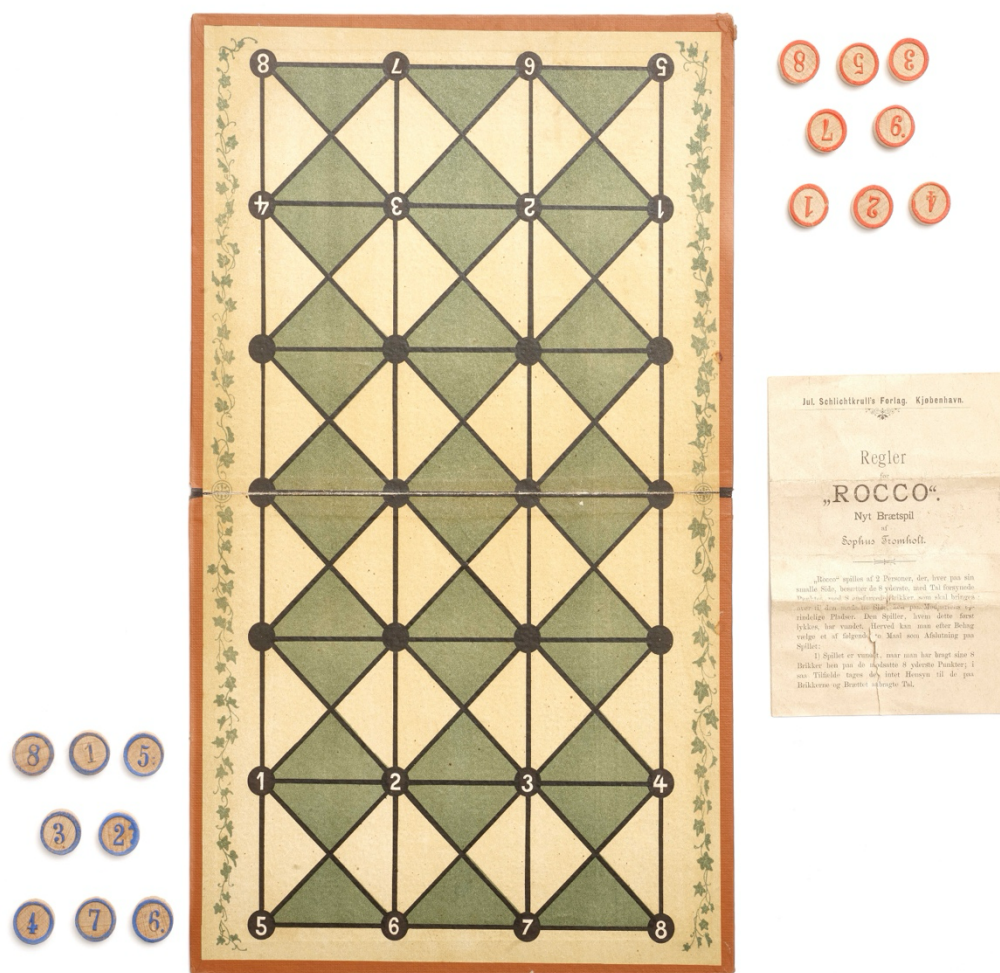


Figure 7 Rocco, 1892. (©Danish National Museum).



Figure 8 Reversi/Rocco, 1893. (©Ravensburger AG).



Figure 9 Yum-Yum, app. 1892. Danish version, published by Jul. Schlichtkrull, Copenhagen. (Kira Moss's collection).



Figure 10 Nussknacker, 1902. (©Ravensburger AG).

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Appendix: Rules of play in Mona, Samson and Rocco

Mona oder Vogelspiel

Neues Spiel von Sophus Tromholt.

Dieses Spiel kann von 2, 3 oder 4 Personen gespielt werden. Jeder Mitspielende erhält gegen Bezahlung von einigen Spielmarken 3 gleichfarbige Steine oder Vögel, mit denen er spielt. Es bekommt also jeder Mitspielende seine eigene Fabe. – Der Gang des Spieles wird durch einen Würfel bestimmt, der dieselben Farben hat, wie die Felder des Spielplans. Das Spiel beginnt bei den untersten Feldern mit den schwarzen Punkten in der Mitte. A (der z. B. mit schwarzen Steinen oder Vögeln spielt) würfelt 3mal hintereinander und setzt nach jedem Wurf einen seiner schwarzen Steine (Vögel) auf dasjenige unterste Feld, dessen Farbe er wirft. Wirft A z. B. Rot, Grün und Gelb, so setzt er seine schwarzen Steine auf die roten, grünen und gelben Punkte. – Nun kommt die Reihe an B (der z. B. mit roten Steinen spielt). Dieser wirft z. B. Schwarz, Weiss, Rot. B setzt also seine roten Steine auf die schwarzen und weissen Felder. Da aber das rote Feld schon von A besetzt ist, so wirft er den schwarzen Stein des A hinaus und setzt sich an dessen Stelle. Wenn der Spieler alle 3 Steine eingesetzt hat, darf er mit dem Ziehen beginnen. So lange ein Stein noch ausser dem Spiel ist, darf sein Inhaber nicht ziehen. Es wird nach den schwarzen Linien vorwärts (gerade und schräg) oder seitwärts gezogen. Rückwärts zieht man nicht (ausgenommen den letzten Zug ins Ziel).

Jeder Spieler würfelt dreimal und muss nach jedem Wurf einen seiner Steine nach demjenigen Felde ziehen, dessen Farbe er geworfen hat, je um ein Feld vorwärts. Mit welchem seiner 3 Steine er ziehen will, bleibt ihm überlassen. Ein Wurf, der nicht ausgeführt werden kann, wird dennoch gezählt.

Auch im Laufe des Spiels kann ein Spieler Steine eines Gegners hinauswerfen; es ist aber Regel, da er es nur im **Notfalle** thun darf. Könnte er auch mit einem andern seiner Steine ziehen, so muss das Schlagen unterbleiben. Die geschlagenen Steine müssen wieder von vorne anfangen und zwar darf nicht weiter gezogen werden, bis der geschlagene Stein eingespielt ist.

Es gilt, so rasch als möglich vorwärts zu kommen, dem mit Mona bezeichneten Ziele zu. Wer zuerst das Spiel mit einem seiner Steine erreicht, hat das Spiel gewonnen und erhält die Kasse.

SAMSON

A new game by SOPHUS TROMHOLT.

There may be two, three or four partners in this game. If played by two persons, these have to use the inner, smaller board, the second in size is for three, the largest for four players.

Each partaker plays with 12 stones of equal colour (red, black, yellow, blue), the 6 larger of which, bearing the letters SAMSON, are called *Cavaliers*, whereas the 6 smaller ones are the *Soldiers*.

Each player occupies one of the borders of the board, so that the colour of his stones corresponds to the colours indicated at the respective outside border. The Cavaliers take the cases bearing the respective letters (S on S, A on A, etc.), whereas the soldiers occupy the cases marked by points.

Two players therefore use black and red, three black, red and blue stones. Each player has now the task to forward his Cavaliers to the opposite border of the board i.e. to the cases marked by the respective letters. Hereby the following rules are to be observed.

The soldiers may be drawn forward or sideward in *straight* direction over any number of free cases.

A Soldier must never be drawn backwards or in oblique direction, but he may beat a stone of the opponent, if the latter occupies a neighbouring case *before* him in *oblique* (never in straight) direction.

The Cavaliers may be drawn forward, backward and sideward, in straight as well as oblique direction by any number of free cases. A Cavalier may beat a stone of the adversary, if the latter stone is in a neighbouring case in straight or oblique direction. Further one Cavalier may beat another one, bearing the same letter, if both are in the same straight or oblique row, how many cases be between them, supposing these to be free.

Then one Cavalier may pass over any other stone in a neighbouring case in straight or oblique direction, if the case on the other side of the latter stone is free.

Any beaten Soldier leaves the game and is used no more; any beaten Cavalier, if it is the turn of the respective player, may be put again on any case of the first or beginning row bearing a letter, if such a case is free, otherwise the beaten Cavalier must wait till such a case comes free.

Any Cavalier being in a case marked by a letter cannot be beaten (hereby only the letters on the border of the respective board are to be considered of course); a Soldier however may be beaten on any case.

Any Cavalier having reached his aim at the opposite border, may leave it again.

That player who first reaches with his Cavaliers the cases he has to reach has won the game.

Secured by a patent

ROCCO

Neues Spiel von Sophus Tromholt.

Rocco wird von zwei Personen gespielt, von den jede auf der schmalen Seite des Brettes die 8 äussersten, mit Zahlen versehenen Punkte mit 8 gleichfarbigen Steinen besetzt; diese Steine sind nach der entgegengesetzten Seite, auf die ursprünglichen Plätze des Gegners zu bringen. Der Spieler, dem dieses zuerst gelingt, hat gewonnen. Hierbei kann man nach Belieben eines der folgenden zwei Ziele als Abschluss des Spieles wählen:

- 1) Das Spiel ist gewonnen, wenn man seinen 8 Steine auf die entgegengesetzten 8 äussersten Punkte gebracht hat; in diesem Falle wird keine Rücksicht auf die an den Steinen und dem Brett angebrachten Zahlen genommen.
- 2) Derjenige Spieler hat gewonnen, der zuerst an dem entgegengesetzten Brettende seine Steine so angebracht hat, dass jeder Stein auf der von demselben getragenen Zahl steht; in diesem Falle werden die Steine bei Beginn des Spieles auf die Zahlen gestellt, welche sie Tragen.
Die Spieler ziehen abwechselnd jedes mal einen Stein. Nach den Linien des Brettes kann man die Steine von einem Punkte *) nach einem anderen, unbesetzten Punkte in jeder Richtung, vorwärts und rückwärts, gerade und schräg ziehen, in schräger Richtung so weit man will (auf einer und derselben Linie), in gerader Richtung nur von einem Punkte nach einem benachbarten Punkte auf derselben Linie.

Hierbei ist folgende Hauptregel zu beobachten: **Man kann nicht einen Stein längs einer Linie ziehen, die auf der einen oder anderen Seite (oder möglicherweise auf beiden Seiten) nach einem Stein des Gegners führt, wenn man nicht auf derselben Linie einen (oder mehrere) seiner eigenen Steine zwischen dem Stein des Gegners und dem zu ziehenden zu stehen hat.**

Kein Stein kann geschlagen oder übersprungen werden. Es muss jedesmal gezogen werden.

Obgleich dieses Spiel in Betreff für Anlage und Ausführung sehr wenig verwickelt ist, bietet es doch viel Unterhaltendes und Spannendes dar, zowie es auch manche Feinheiten zulässt.

Kommt ein Stein des Gegners in eine solche Lage, dass er nicht gezogen werden kann, während man selbst Interesse daran hat, dass er entfernt wird, muss man auf die vorteilhafteste Weise seine eigenen Steine derart ziehen, dass der Gegner einen Ausweg findet.

Spielt man mit Rücksichtnahme auf die Zahlen, thut man am besten, zuerst die meisten seiner Steine nach der entgegengesetzten Seite zu bringen, ohne die Zahlen zu beachten; erst dann versuche man so schnell wie möglich jeden Stein auf seinem bestimmten Platz zu bringen; auch hier ist natürlich die Hauptregel zu beobachten.

*) Unter Punkte sind hier die Stellen verstanden, wo schräge **und** gerade Linien sich schneiden.