

# **THE GAME OF THE CHESSE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649590957

The game of the chesse by William Caxton

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**WILLIAM CAXTON**

**THE GAME OF  
THE CHESSE**



**The Game of the Cheese,**

by

**William Carter.**

UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

The holy apostle and doctour of the people saynt  
 t Poule sayth in his eppistle. Alle that is Wryten  
 is Wryten vnto our doctryne and for our ler-  
 nyng. Wherefore many noble clerkes haue endeouored  
 them to Wryte and compyle many notable Werkes and  
 historyes to the ende that it myght come to the knowlege  
 and vnderstondyng of such as ben ygnoraunt. Of Which  
 the nombre is infenyte / And accordyng to the same saith  
 Salamoy. that the nombre of soles. is infenyte, And  
 emong alle other good Werks. It is a Werke of ryght  
 special recomendacon to enforme and to late vnderstonde  
 wysedom and vertue vnto them that be not lernyd ne can  
 not dyscerne wysedom fro folye. Thene emonge Whom  
 there was an excellent doctour of dyuynyte in the royaume  
 of fraunce of the ordre of thospital of Saynt Johns of  
 Iherusalem Whiche entended the same and hath made a  
 book of the chesse moralysed. Whiche at suche tyme as I  
 was resident in brudgys in the counte of Flaunders cam  
 in to my handes, Whiche Whan I had redde and ouerseen /  
 me semed ful necessarye for to be had in englysshe / And  
 in escheuyng of ydlenes And to thende that some Whiche  
 haue not seen it / ne vnderstonde french ne latyn. I deli-  
 uered in myself to translate it in to our maternal tonge /  
 And Whan I so had achyueued the sayd translacon, I  
 dyde do sette in enprynte a certeyn nombre of theym,  
 Whiche anone were depessed and solde. Wherefore by cause  
 thys sayd book is ful of holsom wysedom and requysyte  
 vnto euery estate and degree, I haue purposed to  
 enprynte it / shewyng therein the figures of suche persons

as longen to the playe . In Whom al astates and degrees  
 len comprysed / beseechynz al them that this litel Werke  
 shal see / here , or rede to haue me for excused / for the rude &  
 symple makynz and reducyn in to our englysshe / And  
 Where as is defaute to correcte and amende / and in so doynz  
 they shal deserue meryte andz thanke , andz I shal pray for  
 them / that god of his grete mercy shal redarde them in  
 his euerlastynz blisse in heuen , to the Whiche he brynge  
 vs , that Wyth his preacious bloodz redemedz vs Amen

This booke is deuydedz and departed in to fouz traytyes  
 andz partyes .

### The first traytye

How the playe of the chesse Was fyrst founden	j
and vnder What kynz capitulo . . . . .	
Who fond first the playe of the chesse capitulo . . . . .	ij
Wherefore the play Was founden andz maad Capitulo . . . . .	iii

### The second traytye

The forme of a kyng of his maners and estate ca . . . . .	j
The fourme & maners of a quene ca . . . . .	ij
The condicions & forme of the alshyns ca . . . . .	iiij
The ordre of chyualtre or knyghthode her offpces and maners capitulo . . . . .	viij
The forme and maner of wokes capitulo . . . . .	v

### The thirz traytye

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The maner & offyce of a Smyth capitulo	ij
The offyce of notaries/aduocates. scriueners and drapers or clothmakers capitulo	iiij
The maners of marchauntes & chaungers capitulo	iiij
The forme of phisiaciens . lechers spyers and apotyca / ryes capitulo	v
Of tauerers. hostelerz & bitaillers capitulo	vj
Of keepers of townes . Receyuers of custum and tollenars capitulo	vij
Of messagers . currouers . Rykauldes and players at the dysse capitulo	viiij

#### The fourth trapye

Of the chesse lorde in genere how it is made capitulo	j
The draught of the kyng and how he meueth hym in the eschequer capitulo	ij
Of the moeyng of the quene and how she yssueth out of her place capitulo	iiij
Of the yssue of the Alphyns capitulo	iiij
Of the meuyng of the knyghtes capitulo	v
Of the yssue of the wokis & of her progresse capitulo	vj
Of the yssue of the comyn peple/ Whom the pallnes represente capitulo	vij
Of the epilogacon and recapitulacion of thys booke capitulo	viiij



This first chapitre of the first tractate sheweth vnder  
 der What kyng the playe of the Chess Was founden and  
 maad? . Capitulo primo



Monge alle the euyl condicions & signes that may  
 a be in a man the first and the grettest is . When he se  
 eth not ne dredeth to displese & make Wroth god by synne  
 & the peple by luyng disordonatly / When he wretcheth not  
 nor taketh hede vnto them that reпреue hym and his by-  
 ces / But sleeth them . In suche wyse as did the emperour  
 new . Whiche did so slee his mayster seneque for as moche  
 as he myght not suffre to be reпреuyd & taught of hym . in  
 like wise Was sotyne a kyng in babilon that Was named

Enylmerodach a Iolye man Without Justyse and so cruel that he did do helde his faders lody in thre hondred pieces and gaf hit to ete and deuoure to thre hondred hyrdes that men calle Boultres / And Was of such condicion as Was New / And right Wel resemblid and Was lyke vnto his fader Nabugodonosor • Whiche on a tyme Wold do slee all the sage and Wise men of babilone • For as moche as they coude not telle hym his dreame that he had drempd on a nyght and had forgotten hit like as hit is Writon in the byble in the booke of danyel • Vnder this kyng thene Enylmerodach Was this game and playe of the chesse founden • True it is that some men Wene that this play Was founden in the tyme of the bataylles and siege of troye • But that is not so / For this playe cam to the playes of the Caldees as diomedes the greke saith and referreth / that amonge the philosophres Was the most renomed playe amonge al othez playes • And after that cam this playe in the tyme of alexander the greke in to egypt and so vnto alle the parties toWard the south • And the cause Wherfore this playe Was so renomed shal he sayd in the ij chapter

This chapytre of the first tractate shewyth who fonde  
 first the playe of the Chesse. Capitulo ij



This playe fonde a phylosopher of thozent Whycche  
 t Was named in caldee Epereser or in greke philemes:  
 for Whiche is as moche to say in englisshe as he that louth  
 Justyce and mesure / And this phylosopher Was renommed  
 gretly among the grekes and of Athenes Whycche  
 Were good clerks and phylosophers also renommed of their  
 connyng / This phylosopher Was so Just and trewe that he  
 had leuer dye / than to lye longe and be a fals flaterer  
 With the sayd kyng / For Whan he behelde the foul & syn-  
 ful lyf of the kyng / And that no man durst blame hym