Article by Fred Horn

In the first paragraph of Jim Polezynski’s article, “Origins of Stratego Games” (see AGPI Quarterly Vol. 5 No. 2, pages 12-17) he references my lecture from 2008 in Lisbon with Mr. Alex de Voogt. This lecture focused more on the Chinese version JUNG-Qi, with only a small introduction on the forerunner: STRATEGO.

It is best to go to my documented research as introduced (at the lecture held with Michel Boutin) on December 14, 2013 at the Brussels High School in Belgium. The complete printed version follows.

THE HISTORY OF STRATEGO

FACTS • TALES • STORIES • LIES

This lecture was part of a dual-presentation with Michel Boutin, who discussed the history and development of the game L’ATTAQUE.

INTRODUCTION: Modern versus traditional games

The first paragraph of this introduction is part of the published proceedings from Colloquium XI of Board Game Studies held in Lisbon, Portugal in 2008. At that colloquium Alex de Voogt and I lectured on the development and dispersal of L’ATTAQUE games.

“The study of board games concentrates on board game materials, such as boards and pieces, and game concepts, which include rules for moves and positions. The dispersal and development of materials and playing rules are central in the historical studies that exist on board games from the beginning of the twentieth century dominated by Culin (1895), Murray (1913, 1952) and Bell (1960, 1969) up to the present with a recent overview from Glonnegger (1988) and Parlett (1999). Even though Murray was an anthropologist by training (Wendling 2002), his histories of board games resulted in a strong historical focus on games from academic disciplines such as archaeology, philology, and art history with themes relating to development and dispersal.

Modern and traditional games are understood differently within this context of mostly historical studies. Modern games may be distinguished from traditional games because their history is not only limited in years but also considered to be of a different kind. Murray for instance did not discuss games that had been invented in the United Kingdom in the twentieth or even the nineteenth century. Although Murray does not explain this selection, it is generally thought that games invented by a known individual and distributed by a games company are to be treated differently.
Do You Know?

Here are some pictures of the game JUNG-Qi as mentioned on the previous page. Alex de Voogt and I gave a lecture about this game in Lisbon. In our opinion JUNG-Qi appeared in China via the USA after the publication of STRATEGO by Milton Bradley (1961-1963). There has not been a lot of research done on this game except for all the variants...not about its history. Can anyone offer any other information on JUNG-Qi? Contact Fred Horn at wm.fred.horn@kpnmail.nl

Editor note: With the use of Google Translator, the title in red translates to “New Ground War Chess,” and in the yellow bar below it states “Produced by Pegasus Factory.”

Clockwise: JUNG-Qi box lid, game board, rules, and playing tiles

The rules were printed on a separate piece of rice paper. Quite challenging! I engaged some Chinese acquaintances in an attempt to read it and they couldn’t. Turns out you had to look through the paper! The print was not from a negative but from a positive print plate with the characters. Very unusual.

Historical studies on such modern games concentrate on tracing patents and discussing the history of games companies (cf. Whitehill 1999) or occasionally the artwork of the printed paper (Goodfellow 1999). On the other hand, the traditional games are seen as part of a long historical development and require research in the field and an inventory of variations such as those made for mancala games (de Voogt 1999) in order to answer questions on development and distribution, which seem trivial in the case of modern games.

Both the development and the dispersal of modern games may be in the hand of a games company that determines the written rules and introduces the game to a chosen market. Only the company changes the written rules, and the distribution is regulated through locally acquired patents. As a consequence, inquiries on the distribution and development of modern games are unlikely to exist outside the study of games companies and inventors.”

So much for the BGS proceedings.

But things are changing now simply because of the advance of time.

Information and reliable sources are not so easy to be found anymore, archives have been destroyed and people with knowledge about the subject are dying out, taking their knowledge with them into their grave.

To know more about the development and history of relatively modern games the researcher has to dig up parts and pieces, a kind of (what I call) modern-archeology with also leaning heavily on oral history of told stories by the ones who had been “part of.”

This story of the game STRATEGO is partly based on oral history from people who are no longer with us. Also uncovering files and digging in archives through the last 30 years has given a good idea about what could be the history of the development of the game STRATEGO. But still there are loose ends and unsolved problems. >>
In the early part of the 1970s, A.J. de Graaff (deceased) from the firm Hauseman and Htte (Jumbo) asked me to make a compilation of the inventory of all their older games in storage. In doing so I found an example of the game L’Attaque, a game I had not seen before. Of course, with the resemblance to STRatego (a Jumbo game) it struck my eye and I asked Mr. de Graaff about it.

At first, de Graaff did not want to say much about the game but after continually asking him, he said it had been acquired when they (Jumbo) were negotiating about getting the rights for the STRatego game.

In the early 1950s a certain Mr. Mogendorff had brought STRatego to de Graaff’s attention after the publishing of the game by ‘Smeets en Schipper’ had expired in 1949. Looking for a new publisher Mogendorff had also offered the game to several Dutch firms, among them H&H, but only Jumbo showed some interest.

After “some trouble,” as de Graaff relayed, they struck a deal and he (representing Hauseman and Htte) signed a contract with Mogendorff. They published the game in 1958.

1) What kind of trouble? and 2) was there more information on the deal? Mr. de Graaff wanted to keep it a secret, so this was all he told me. But surely, L’Attaque was, in my opinion, a forerunner of STRatego.

In the early eighties I attended a small party at my brother’s home in Leiderdorp. Someone mentioned my interest in board games and one of my brother’s neighbors—a certain Michel Voorn (deceased)—joined in the conversation.

He asked me if I knew of a game called “TEK” and I responded that I was very sorry, but I had never heard about such a game. “Let’s go across the street to my house and I’ll show you the game” was his reply.

Out of a cabinet came a box from which Mr. Voorn revealed a game board along with game pieces and proceeded to set up his game of TEK on the table.

I immediately recognized a game that strongly resembled the old game of “L’Attaque,” which explains to some extent the chosen name Voorn used for his game. It was obvious the board and pieces were handmade, so I asked him about the origin of this game and who manufactured the game.

When I returned a few weeks later to take some pictures of the game, Mr. Voorn told me his father made the game, following the instructions of a Canadian Air Force officer, who told him the design and the rules for the game. This all was written down in a little booklet which Voorn still possessed. The year was 1941/42 and the officer was in hiding from the Germans after being shot down over Holland.

This officer had a lot of time to spend doing nothing, felt bored, remembered a game from home, and asked Mr. Voorn’s father to make such a game. The game Voorn’s father crafted is quite similar to “L’Attaque” or “Attack” (the name in English) which surely was the game the officer remembered from home. Only this board had an 11 by 9 square playing area with three ‘lakes’ of 3 by 1 squares in the middle.

He asked me if I knew of a game called “TEK” and I responded that I was very sorry, but I had never heard about such a game. “Let’s go across the street to my house and I’ll show you the game” was his reply.

In total, three games were made by his father—the first in 1942 for the officer who used it to play with others in hiding (“onderduikers” in Dutch). After the war this game came into Michel Voorn’s possession, but he handed it over in 1974 to a brother from The Hague. A second one was made in 1948 for another brother in Spanbeek and in 1974, a year before his death, his father made a third game, the one I had seen at Michel Voorn’s home. Mr. Voorn was not aware of any other similar games and was quite surprised when I presented him a copy of STRatego.

The rules for “TEK” were written down separately in the small booklet but I neglected to copy them at the time, so I had to depend on what Michel Voorn told me about them. Afterwards I learned, not surprisingly, the rules correspond closely with the rules for playing “L’Attaque” but with two strategically important exceptions:

a) Attacking is not “back-to-back” but orthogonally (right angles) next to another piece.

b) The SPY is allowed to attack diagonally, making it a much stronger piece.

Surely these are so-called “House Rules” from the officer’s family.
In November 2002, J.J. Mogendorff (deceased) from Wassenaar sent a letter to Ed Collins, who at the time had a website about STRATEGO (closed since 2005), giving some reminiscences out of his childhood:

Dear Ed,

My name is Jacques Johan Mogendorff. I am the grandson of the inventor of 'STRATEGO'—or copy of the principles of L'ATTAQUE, as Thierry Depaulis so pointedly states in an e-mail on your site dated September 2001—and can only add a comment or two and story to the "not complete" history of the game.

As we were told, 'Opa Jacques' (Grandfather Jacques) sat together with his two sons (my father and uncle) and came up with a game with the soldier and officer names (or faces or silhouettes) printed on the back of little chairs. Like the ones in a boardroom, a vertical part with the image, and four legs to prevent it from falling over. Soon afterwards these were replaced by flat wooden pieces, red and blue, with the shapes a castle tower with crenels or 'battlements.' Later again, the plastic pieces took over...

Also, other and more detailed elements of the final setup and layout must have been altered, the name invented, whilst one cannot disagree that the basics do have a strong similarity with the ones of L'ATTAQUE.

In any case, indeed the game became very popular, already then, and—due to their need for money, as they were left bereft by the W.W.II and the War camps—Mogendorff sold the game to Jumbo.

Without doubt, the story that we were told must have been coloured somewhat. I'm glad to see that the game lives on, that you made a great STRATEGO site and that so many people play on or have fond memories from playing the game in their childhood.

With best regards,
Jacques Mogendorff
The Netherlands

After contacting the grandson, he was not able to get much more information than stated in his letter. He still remembered his grandfather as a very strict and closed person. And as far as he knew his grandfather never talked about his game or its origin. Also, he had no idea what money had been paid for the license.

N.B.
What he remembers and thus told in his letter can only be from a much later date than the moment of "inventing the game" given the kind of pieces he talks about.

For the Board Game Studies Colloquium of 2004 in Philadelphia, USA, I gave a talk about the game of STRATEGO and some variants, giving a review of my findings about the game till that moment, also printed in the publication: "How About Stratego."

In 2004/05, heirs of Mr. Gunter Sigmund Elkan began a lawsuit against Hasbro because of the infringement to their rights on Mr. Elkan’s game "STRATEGY."

In 2005 the following two articles were published in The Register-Guard, an Oregon, USA paper:

1) January 26, 2005 -- It's not every day that a family discovers its dramatic roots in a bundle of long-forgotten documents. But Springfield resident Heidi Cox and her siblings did.

And the roots they discovered are entangled in Nazi German intrigue, the Holocaust, long-lost family fortune, and an alleged copyright infringement that may, through a federal lawsuit, restore some of the family's heritage.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Portland, claims that the classic board game "STRATEGO" is actually the game "STRATEGY."

that Cox's father, Gunter Sigmund Elkan, copyrighted in 1948. The game company Milton Bradley reviewed and rejected STRATEGY, according to a 1948 letter that is part of the court record.

The company, now owned by Hasbro Inc., began producing a battlefield strategy game under the name STRATEGO in 1961, and it's been popular ever since—with new versions and Internet sites operated by fans.

The lawsuit seeks an unspecified sum for copyright infringement. No trial date is set. Hasbro spokesman Jonathan Moskin said Tuesday that the company believes the lawsuit is unfounded: "We consider the suit without merit. Our hope is that it soon will be dismissed," Moskin said.

Cox's lawyer, Roy Thompson of Portland, disagrees: "I'm happy about this is a valid claim," said Thompson, who has been intrigued by the family's history. >>
Elkan, a Holocaust survivor who escaped to Canada via Great Britain, died in 1973 without ever having divulged the family's history to his children, Cox says. Papers documenting the game's creation and other facts about the Elkan family remained undiscovered for decades, she says.

"I just recently found out we were Jewish," said Cox, who is an active member of a local Christian congregation. Thompson discovered that Fritz Elkan, the father of Gunter Elkan and grandfather of Cox, was a wealthy engineer who probably held a patent on a chemical fire starter that became an essential ingredient in the Nazi war effort. Fritz Elkan, a Jew, bought his son's freedom after the Nazis took him captive.

The Nazis stole Fritz Elkan's factories and fortune. Gunter Elkan eventually became a Canadian before moving to the United States.

Cox sees the lawsuit as a way to validate what she just discovered about her family roots.

"I'm just glad it's finally being corrected and talked about, and it's going to be known it was my dad and not Milton Bradley," she said. "It will be justice served."

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and:

2) November 24, 2005 — Springfield family loses ruling over board game

A federal judge in Portland has rejected the claim of a Springfield woman and her siblings who sued Hasbro, Inc., for copyright infringement with the popular board game "STRATEGO."

In a lawsuit filed in January, Heidi Cox of Springfield and her relatives claimed their late father, Gunter Sigmund Elkan, developed the game. They relied on a 1948 letter that they had found among their father's documents in which Milton Bradley Company rejected his game, which Elkan called "STRATEGO."

The company, now owned by Hasbro, began producing STRATEGO in 1961. Responding to the lawsuit, Hasbro documented the origin of STRATEGO with a Dutchman, Jacques Johan Mogendorff, in 1942. Hasbro has paid millions in royalties to Mogendorff's family over the years, according to court records.

In a 12-page ruling, U.S. District Judge Garr King said he relied on evidence most favorable to the Elkan estate, as required by law. He ruled Friday that Hasbro disproved the Elkan claim of ownership. Reached Monday, Cox and her lawyer, Ron Thompson of Portland, said only they respectfully disagree with the ruling.

In 2004 a lawyer representing the firm Jumbo asked me if I could give additional information about the origin of the game STRATEGO. Jumbo was asked to inform Hasbro so they could refute a claim over infringement. Of course, this was about the case started by Heidi Cox as discussed above.

To get ammunition for the refutation the board of directors at Hauseman and Hötté gave me full access to all of the correspondence and documents they still owned related to the game.

This was the moment Jumbo at last opened their files to give me ammunition for my "Statement" of February 25, 2005 to the US States District Court, Oregon.

The research presenting historic evidence is largely based on that information. The lawsuit ended because the heirs stopped the procedure and this was while I could prove that STRATEGO was already published before 1947 because of the use of a "K-nummer" (K-number for paper distribution) by Smeets & Schipper. Also, the documents provided by the Elkan family for the lawsuit were available.

The family could not give an example of board and pieces, but they came forward with a Certificate of Registration for the copyright of "STRATEGED" dated June 1, 1948 and a set of 'printed rules' from a firm out of Pellingham, Washington.

Dated February 25, 2005, I signed a Declaration to be used by Hasbro with all my findings and the conclusion that the game STRATEGO was already published before 1947 in Holland.

N.B.
The research on the game would have ended with my publication for BGS 2004, was it not for the occurrence that this lawsuit was started by the Elkan family.

At last, I had access to new and interesting files and documents. Without these, this story would probably have stayed a mystery forever.

Starting with the publication of the complete story "From L'ATTaque to ......." with Michel Boutin, we tried to contact Heidi Cox and her lawyer Roy Thompson. We could not trace down Heidi Cox and although I had some email correspondence with Roy Thompson he was not willing to share any information about the case.

Name STRATEGO registred by Van Perlestein & Roepere Bosch N.V. April 20, 1942

Name STRATEGO goes to Mogendorff March 1958
On August 1, 2006 a certain Hans Waterreus (deceased?) mailed Jumbo:

"Today it was on radio that Stratego starts a new phase. They also mentioned that the game's age is 50 years. I did play the game for the first time in 1944, teached by an uncle, and thereafter played it every evening with my father by the light of a candle. I still own the game and if you like, I can send you a photograph, with the cardboard soldiers lined up."

My friend Ben Leijten, then working for Jumbo, had after this first message additional email contacts with Hans Waterreus in which he told how it was the so-called "Hongerwinter" (winter 1944/45) that he played the game, and the game was manufactured from cardboard. The photo he sent to Ben is a picture of the Smee & Schipper game.

In 2012 Ben and I tried to contact Waterreus again, but his email address was no longer valid, thus our attempt failed.

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Next, to research the history of Stratego itself, as there is still much more to discover about all its variants and its followers.

The development of the rules of Stratego is also worth looking at. And there are the tournaments; a World Championship along with the "Official Rules."

Also to be considered is the Chinese game JUNQ-QI, about which Alex de Voogt and I discussed in April 2008 at BGS XI in Lisbon, Portugal. Our findings were published in the proceedings of that colloquium in 2009.

Much pictorial material concerning Stratego and its variants can be found on the Dutch site HONGS:

http://www.hongs.nl/index.asp?src=stratego&zio=j&q=f=li

where one can also find a link to the former Ed Collins site.

N.B.
Both websites are not available anymore (2021). The HONGS site can currently be found at https://www.spellenlab.be

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The events in chronological order

Based on what is written above; the available documents; and the known oral history; we can now make a good and educated guess of the precise events over the years. It all began in 1942 or perhaps already in 1941.

Pre-Jumbo 1941-1952

1941/1942
A Canadian officer is shot down and gives Mr. Voorn, from The Hague, the rules and design for a game he knows from his youth. Mr. Voorn writes and draws them down in a little booklet.

Mr. Voorn makes an identical game to L'Attaque: "Tek" and it is used by the officer and others in hiding from the Germans ("onderduikers" in Dutch—at most Jews; people out of the Resistance; allied soldiers) and after the war this game comes in the possession of Michel Voorn (son) from Leiderdorp.

1942
Van Perlstein & Roepen-Bosch N.V. (a trade firm from Amsterdam) registers as mark ("Merk" in Dutch) the name STRATEGO dated April 20, 1942 with number 77,543.

On this same date the firm also registers the names ACADEMIE nr. 77,542 and De Zesdaagsche nr. 77,544—all three under the heading: Gezelschapsspellen (Family-games).

N.B.
We have no idea what this registration really means and why this firm did it. But Mrs. Annet Betsalet, who did research on the family van Perlstein, states that the firm, long before the war, was involved in importing and selling games (o.a. Mah-Jong), so they easily could have registered only the names for later use. Van Perlstein himself is also a known factor in helping "onderduikers" and the firm had also connections with Smee & Schipper by selling their game MONOPOLY.

The complete 'Sam van Perlstein—Archive is still stored at a granddaughter’s attic in Amsterdam, but unsorted or accessible (The situation in 2013).

In 2009 for the BGS I lectured about Jaap van der Gaag and his game ACADEMIE. Jaap was part of the Resistance during W.W. II and he also invented games to earn some income. The only published game from him we know of is the game ACADEMIE, brought out during the war. Jaap wrote a book about his war adventures, but unfortunately for us he did not mention van Perlstein or his game ACADEMIE.

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During all my collecting days (now 50 years) I have never seen, or heard of, the game De ZESDAAGSCHE. So, it is still unknown if this title was ever published when and by whom.

The best guess is that van Perlstein registered some names for Family-games and offered them for use to people he wanted to help because they themselves could not handle affairs in the open (like v.d. Gaag—Resistance and Mogendorff—Jew). Perhaps he also was the in-between-party bringing inventors and publishers together.

That should explain the license-agreement between Mogendorff and Smeets & Schipper. We also know that ACADEMIE was sold in shops by December 1942 and was printed by Mortelmans. No publishers’ name has ever popped up.

1942-1944

As far as we know Gunter Sigmond Elkan (being Jewish) ran away from the Germans. Leaving his homeland in Germany he traveled to Holland and hid somewhere in 1942, probably in the region around or in The Hague. Jacques Johann Mogendorff living in The Hague (and also being Jewish) went into hiding after 1942. Both developed a similar game during the war. It seems a “best guess” is that both “onderduikers” saw or played the game Mr. Voorn had crafted for the Canadian officer—the game that existed in the hiding places (“onderduik-adressen”). No one ever stayed very long in one place so those who liked the game had to remember its design and rules to make their own version.

1944

J.J. Mogendorff licensed the game STRATEGO to Smeets & Schipper for five years. There is no surviving evidence in the form of a contract or agreement. Although, from Mr. Waterreus’ statements, we know the game was sold in late 1944. Waterreus remembers this game as an uncle’s gift.

Also, Mr. De Graaff from Jumbo knew for sure that Mogendorff’s license with Smeets & Schipper had expired in 1949 and that it had been existed for 5 years.

1948

Gunter Sigmond Elkan, now from Vancouver, registers the “copyright” on the game ‘STRATEGY’ on June 1 for Canada and the USA.

1949

The license for STRATEGO expires and Smeets & Schipper do not want to continue publishing it.

1949-1951

J.J. Mogendorff tries to sell his game again, without success. According to de Graaff he offered it to nearly all the existing Dutch game companies, but they all refused.

1952

Only Jumbo shows interest and de Graaff from Hauseman and Hötte (Jumbo) starts negotiations, but Jumbo has doubts about the ownership of the game.

1952-1958

During this period Mogendorff had to solve problems about “owning the game.”

Jumbo was not completely satisfied with his claim on the game. There is no surviving correspondence, but de Graaff told that he (Mogendorff) had to come to terms with:

(a) Smeets & Schipper and
(b) van Perlstein.

1956

Also during this period Jumbo discovers a similar game, buys it, and asks Mogendorff if there is an international “Octrooi” on the game, obviously referring to ATTACK from Gibson. Mogendorff replies: “That game seems to be an exact copy of my STRATEGO!”

It seems clear Mogendorff had no idea about the former Edan-patent on the game “L’ATTaque” or the publication in England of “ATTACK,” so what could he say?

Also, Gibson could not offer any clue (or they wanted not to, because they produced ATTACK without any known ownership. In my opinion they simply had stolen it), but, according to de Graaff, Mogendorff also did not want to tell more about the development of the game STRATEGO, which was confirmed later by his surviving family members.

N.B.

If the history is what we think it is, then Mogendorff knew about “Tek” recognized its resemblance to ATTACK, and knew of course about his own involvement during the war! Thus, it was better to keep quiet and say nothing.

That was also Gibson’s policy. Say a lot about the other two games (DOVER PATROL; AVIATION) of the series and its companion game Tre-Tactics but say nothing about Attack.

But after some years things started to turn in the right direction for Mogendorff.

1958

February 28, 1958—v. Perlstein & Rooper-Bosch N.V. ask the “Merkenbureau” to transfer the ownership of the name STRATEGO to J.J. Mogendorff. This is confirmed on March 1, 1958 in ‘Merkenblad’ 1958 NR 3 under number: 130 494.

March 31, 1958—by answering a letter from February 21, Mogendorff tells Jumbo the name is now his property. He also states that “to his knowledge” there is no patent worldwide concerning the game.

March 7, 1958—Smeets & Schipper sends a letter in which they give Mogendorff: “full responsibility for het Strategegospel” and he can handle as he likes without constrains” making way for internal registration.

May 17, 1958—name registered in France under ‘Jeux’ number 209.823.

June 5, 1958—name registered in England under ‘Toys and games’ class 28 nr. (A)771859.

This was the moment they all had been waiting for. Everything was cleared out and thus on June 10, 1958 the contract for Europe between (H & H) Jumbo and Mogendorff was signed.

Jumbo had already started the production of the game, so the first Jumbo STRATEGO games came onto the European market in 1958. But Jumbo had worldwide plans with the game.

1959

April 15, 1959—registration of the name STRATEGO in South Africa and Australia.

April 17, 1959—also in New Zealand, all under the name J.J. Mogendorff.

(H & H) Jumbo and Mogendorff were satisfied with their deal, thus in May 1959 the contract of June 10, 1958 is extended to the rights outside of Europe (USA; Canada; Australia; New Zealand; South Africa).
1960
April 5, 1960—"trademark" STRATEGO registered in the USA as property of Jacques Mogendorff under number 695.538 (Principal Register).

1961
April 5, 1961—"Trademark" STRATEGO also registered in Canada under number 117,487 for: "Games of Skill involving use of a game board and game figures."

1962
In the period January/February 1962 H & H wants again clearness from Mogendorff about Gibson, concerning the negotiations with "their American relation."

It seems this concerns the negotiations between H & H and Milton Bradley and again there was trouble (or perhaps doubts or not exact knowing) over the rights, but H & H puts the paragraph from May 1959 in their 'contract into operation for the USA; Canada; Australia; New Zealand' (with the date April 1962) This must be the (H & H) contract with Milton Bradley. This starts the American production of the game by Milton Bradley.

Then things changed dramatically: January 9, 1962: Jacques Johann Mogendorff dies.

On June 26, 1962 the heirs of J.J. Mogendorff (wife Sientje Vroman and two sons Max Louis and Adolf) sell all the rights on the game to H & H, and the firm becomes the "sole owner" of:
1) the name (trademark) STRATEGO,
2) all the rights to manufacture and market the game.

On September 26, 1962 the name STRATEGO is in the USA registered under H & H.

1964
January 22, 1964—the name STRATEGO is also registered for Australia under H & H. In fact, the history about the development of the "Original" STRATEGO ends at that moment.

Jumbo (H & H) now owns all rights to the game and, as said before, the different publications; changing of the product materials; variants; new rules; etc... are well documented on websites like HONGS.

I will end with just two data points:

1989
October 12, 1989—the registration for the "Benelux" is renewed at the "Benelux Merkenbureau" for the name STRATEGO owned by H & H.

1990
Jumbo starts with all kind of variants and use of comic characters mostly inspired through their American partner Milton Bradley (now Hasbro).

But that will be a complete other story.

N.B.
One has to keep in mind that the use of "Patent" is not part of the Dutch law. There are two different options: "Auteursrecht" (author’s rights) and "Octrooi," which is like a patent but only for 'industrial handling.' A third option is to register a "Merk" (the name of the product).

Thus the 'family' did not transfer the rights to publish the game—NO they sold the 'Auteursrechten' to Jumbo for as far as I know 75,000 = guilder, a lot of money in these days.

Second remark:
It cannot be true that in the first GUNNIN SHOJI games from before the turn of the Century aeroplanes and tanks were used. These only came into existence during WWI after 1914. Also, the number of pieces used in most games must be 24 for each player (3 rows of 8 pieces).

Third remark:
As can be concluded from the story above, Gibson was not able to provide any evidence about owning any rights to the game of L'ATTAQUE. As I stated, I think they published the game without any (written) approval of Hermance Edan. They also never started any lawsuit against Jumbo although they were asked in the 1950s if they were the ones 'owning the rights.'

Fourth remark:
Mr. Michel Boutin did a lot of research on the use of uniforms in the game of L'ATTAQUE. There are many more different types of uniforms used in this game than only the French and English.

Fifth remark:
It is not the place here to give a complete overview of all the diverse patents of similar games that had been filed during the last century. This is a research project in itself!

Sixth remark:
In my opinion the other Gibson games are NOT STRATEGO variants because the goal of the game is NOT capturing a Flag (or any other piece representing the army).

This counts in the same way for the games Jim Polezynski describes in his follow-up article.

Stratego variants
Here is what I call a STRATEGO variant:
What makes a game 'STRATEGO-like'?

- It is a 2-person boardgame
- The board has at least two ‘no entry area’ (lake; mountain; no-mans-land; etc.)
- Two opposing ‘Armies’ battle each other
- Each Army has ‘movable’ (the army) and ‘stay put’ (bombs and flag) pieces
- The movable pieces do have a ‘circular’ order of ‘Strength’
- Capture is by ‘replacement’—taking a ‘weaker’ or ‘equal valued’ piece
- The lowest numbered piece is the only one to capture the highest numbered piece
- Winning is by ‘conquering’ the opponents ‘Flag/Stand’ that means the piece that represents the Army
- The “start” situation is the player’s choice (no fixed beginning square for a piece)
- Information about ‘Strength’ and ‘moveability’ is hidden
- Each piece moves and captures in the same way. (There are some (minor) exceptions to this rule)
- Only one kind of piece can capture and then remove ‘Bombs/Mines’ from the board

Additional Information!
This article covered what we knew up to 2013, but (unbelievable) new information has recently popped up!
A

When visiting Geus van Diggele some years ago he showed me a new find which he thought was interesting for me because of my interest in the history of the game STRATEGO.

It is a Dutch manufactured game titled ‘VICTORIE.’ The person from whom Geus purchased the game said his father bought or got it as a present in or just after the war. The way the game looks, it seems to have been manufactured in a (very) small production. The most logical guess is that the game is from just after the war (1945?).

B

Some months ago, my brother-in-law presented me a game he found in a “Kringloopwinkel” (secondhand shop) called “Mi Ma,” a game that was nearly an exact copy of STRATEGO (or could it be the other way around?).

This time it was evident the game had been produced and manufactured in a professional way. Box, board, and pieces (wooden triangles) must have come from a professional publisher/manufacturer.

The uniform of the soldiers, shown on the lid, are from the Dutch mobilization period (1939). This was confirmed by people from a Dutch War Museum.

Nothing more could be found about these games, so where do they fit in the story as told above? A real mystery!