

QHESZ

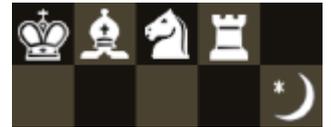


"Art evolution, invention art."

Introduction

A Chess variant invented by Simon Edward Jepps

"Evolution" is not an invention, it is the collective trial and error of productive ideas.



The "evolution" therefore, of Chess, is not the sole product of one good man, but the good product of all men's souls.

I have spent my whole adult life studying Chess variants and spending almost every hour of my day trying to solve the paradox that is the evolution of Chess.

Herewith, the evolution of Chess art my grail and my final work art thence literally the game of a lifetime.

Aye, it would be true, "popularity" art thus the commander of evolution, yet as you would presume, a man who has spent his entire life passionately seeking his grail, would only naturally call it so when he finds it. So at least, it is without question, *my chess evolution*.

Whilst I invented this game and whilst I defend it as the evolution of Chess, it would not have become a creation in my mind without the dedicated creativity of millennia old scholars before me.

Therefore, before I begin I would like to pay tribute to all those great masters throughout history who dedicated their precious time and minds to the pursuit of the "next" Chess.

Most notably, I would like to salute the inventor of **Omega Chess**, Dan MacDonald, who's recent incarnation into the arena of variants became one of many, yet noteworthy inspirations of my own game, herewith, "**Qhesz**".

Over the millennia, an evolution of thousands upon thousands of Chess pieces have been invented, and an evolution of thousands more upon thousands more games embracing those myriad of pieces.

Yet perhaps, none such piece has become as noteworthy as the Omega Wizard.

Indeed, the Wizard itself has also experienced an evolution of creativity, evolving from previous incarnations, adapting and developing to become a new piece in its own right.

The ancient **Camel** piece gave the Wizard its long "L" shaped sweeping move, whilst the historic **Ferz**, a predecessor of the modern Queen, gave the Wizard its trusty diagonal side step.

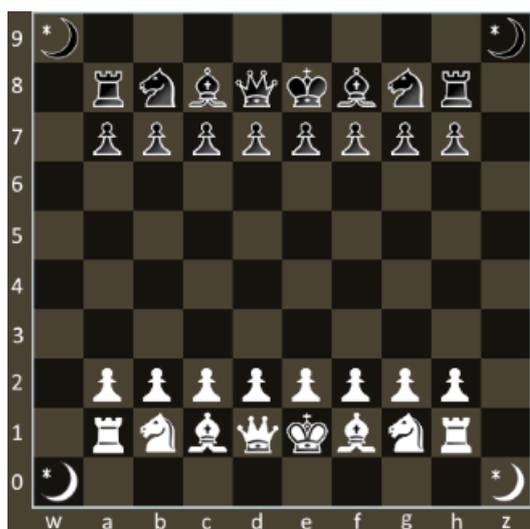
This evolution of what became the Wizard, is ever so naturally adapting to a 100 square board.

The Wizard is also the most suitable character and name for a modern Chess piece of a space faring and science faring age. I had considered others, but it only seems naturally invited to the board, as if it had already belonged there in another time and space.

Indeed, it was to be so.

The fate of my own game thence, was also to have a Wizard piece, but it would not come to pass before the first move of the first game, that my "Qhesz Wizard" would be yet one more incarnation of the last... and so from the Alpha, to the Omega, unto Qhesz... welcome will you please... **"The Wxyzaerd"**.

Set Up



The Qhesz Wxyzaerds are positioned on the corner squares of the 100 square board, whilst the standard Chess pieces are positioned as usual, yet within the inner 64 squares of the larger arena, thus creating "The Wxyzaerd's Realm" around the edge.

The labelling of the files and ranks, w-z whence a-h in between etc, is designed in a manner that, firstly enables standard classical Chess notation to be employed, thus saving any confusion about one's memorized studies, and secondly that artfully embraces the mystical character of the Wxyzaerd itself.

Pawns promote as in classical Chess when they reach the 8th or 1st rank, however they may not promote to a Wxyzaerd until they reach the 9th or 0th ranks.

Any piece may enter The Wxyzaerd's Realm, but...

- (1) NOT until the first Wxyzaerd of the game has moved, thus "opening" the realm.
- (2) NEVER to a Wxyzaerd square. The four corner squares may only be used by Wxyzaerds and Knights.
(~) Knights and Wxyzaerds may move as like each other from any Wxyzaerd square.
- (3) MAY NOT capture (Check is nullified) FROM an enemy Wxyzaerd square.

Therefore, until the first Wxyzaerd has moved, Qhesz is merely a standard 64 square classical game of Chess.

Rejoicefully, this means all classical Chess opening theory is completely compatible with Qhesz and not only that, but whence The Wxyzaerd's Realm is opened, the number of possible games now playable exceeds astronomical calculation!

Qhesz is thence a dance between the classical, the magical and if to be made so, the classically magical.

Notes on Setup

- As a point of study, 100 square setups present issues with Pawn placement during the Opening stages and also the Middlegame. Most significantly, the creation of vast spaces or "holes" in one's defense which are open to exploitation. Maintaining the 64 square setup here within the Qhesz board's central arena, not only solves issues such as these, yet wonderfully still allows the 21st century desired, modern 100 square play via the engagement of The Wxyzaerd's Realm.

Bishop's Passage

Whilst it is a founding rule that only Wxyzaerds and Knights may occupy Wxyzaerd squares, on an exceptional occasion, known as the Bishop's Passage, a Bishop may do so also.

The law of the Bishop's Passage states that a Bishop may occupy or thus capture to a Wxyzaerd square ONLY if its passage passes through or from within a fianchetto.

In other words, only if it is moving FROM or THROUGH any of the three squares diagonally projected from a Wxyzaerd square itself, architecting the fianchetto.

These are thus, a1, b2, c3, h8, g7, f6, a8, b7, c6, h1, g2, and f3.

Therefore the Bishop CANNOT move to a Wxyzaerd square unless it arrived there directly from or through any of the aforementioned squares of a fianchetto.

It is thence, that the fianchetto represents the archway of a sacred place, through which it may pass.

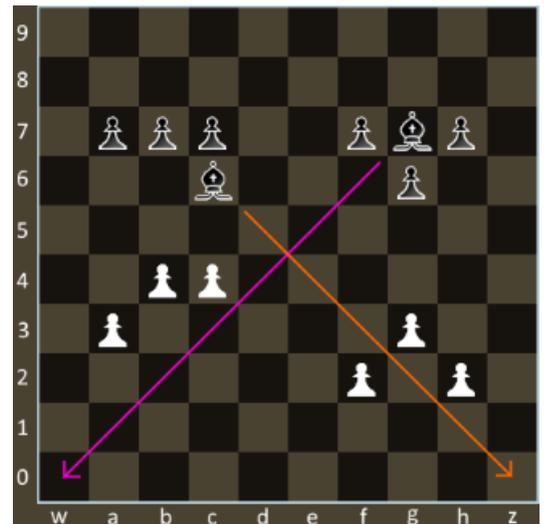
The Wxyzaerd's Spell

Whilst it is not necessary for a Pawn to move sideways or indeed backwards, as the wonders of the realm will be explained later, it may be fruitful under certain specific conditions. Therefore I decided to include the rule, "The Wxyzaerd's Spell", which allows this ability.

The rule herein states, that any Pawn defended by a Wxyzaerd, may move, but not capture, one square orthogonally.

For example, if the opponent pins your Knight against your Queen with a Bishop, as is common in Opening play, the popular "irritant" Pawn placed on **h3** could return back to **h2** following the retreat of the Bishop. Alternatively it could move to **g3** or **z3**.

This ability does not affect the Pawn's entitlement to move **two** squares forward from its home rank. However be aware that it may still only move **one** square forward from the 1st or 0th ranks.



Wxyzaerd Castling

In addition to regular Castling with the Rooks, Qhesz also allows an alternative method of Castling with the Wxyzaerds.

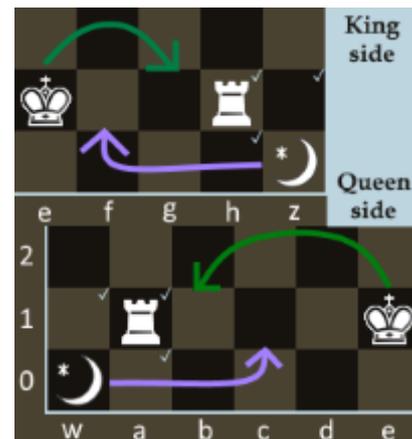
Regular Castling requires that neither the King nor Rook may have yet moved in order to perform the task. Wxyzaerd Castling follows a similar logic, yet whilst neither the King nor Wxyzaerd may have yet moved, the Rook may reside on any square adjacent to the Wxyzaerd.

"Wxyzaerd Castling" is the placing of the local Wxyzaerd beside the King instead of the Rook, whence otherwise Castling normally, leaving the Rook to defend near its home square. Thus one would move the King **two** squares horizontally, then place the respective Wxyzaerd beside.

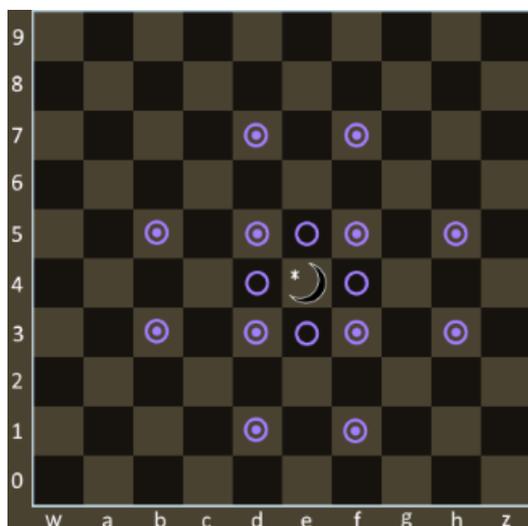
"Queen side" Wxyzaerd Castling requires the King to move **three** squares horizontally in order for the Wxyzaerd to be placed beside. Otherwise, whence only Castling regularly, the King would still only move **two** squares Queen side.

Wxyzaerd Castling is notated **W-W** King side and **W-W-W** Queen side.

As per Classical Chess rules, a King may not Castle into, through or out of Check.



The Wxyzaerd



The Wxyzaerd is notated with a "W".

Pronounced, "wiz-air-d", the Qhesz Wxyzaerd is an evolution of the Omega Wizard, and as such is represented with not only a crescent moon, but also a star to portray its difference in playability.

The Qhesz Wxyzaerd is a bi-colour-bound leaper. It may move one square diagonally or in an "L" shape, like an elongated Knight, 3 squares by 1 square.

However it is "bi-colour-bound", meaning it may also move 1 square horizontally or vertically, but only if to capture or thus deliver Check. Therefore a King positioned on "f4" in this diagram would already be in Check.

Notes on the Wxyzaerd

- The Qhesz Wxyzaerd, as mentioned earlier, is an evolution or incarnation of the Omega Wizard. Perhaps the term "descendant" would be more appropriate. The difference is its ability to move one square orthogonally whence to capture. The reason for this "enhancement" is culture of mythology. It did not seem right to me that a piece representing a magical sorcerer should be restricted in its ability to move 360 degrees. Secondly, it was necessary the Wxyzaerd provide suitable protection of both the King's and Queen's side during opening play.

- The Omega Wizard, in Qhesz at least, would present an imbalance of diagonally capable piece distribution over orthogonally capable piece distribution, since it has no orthogonal move. Thus the "Wxyzaerd" with its orthogonally capturing ability, replenishes the balance.
- Whilst its ability to capture orthogonally gives it somewhat "overseeing" strength, the decision to capture in this way places the Wxyzaerd on an alternate colour square, thus becoming bound to that colour for the longterm. In some cases, this may create unsavoury situations for itself, such as having two Wxyzaerds of the same coloured square. So yes, a very powerful move, but worry not for any unbalancing of the game, for it may not be wise to employ in all cases.

The Wxyzaerd's Realm



At first glance, The Wxyzaerd's Realm appears to present a "sphere of freedom", where players duel to the death without discipline, wisdom or grace.

Yet one would be mistaken.

The Wxyzaerd's Realm is not only aesthetically pleasing, but a seamlessly balanced beauty of grace, wisdom and logic.

It is, as I see it, the solution to an ancient puzzlement of how to evolve Chess, whence embracing both the classical and also the magical, yet without bringing the historic temple of wisdom tumbling down.

Indeed it is to be said, The Wxyzaerd's Realm is a beautifully fascinating new perspective on the seemingly musical artistry of Chess.

For it is anything but a free-for-all savage duel... unless of course, you mean to battle fate itself.

As mentioned earlier, there are **three** rules to The Wxyzaerd's Realm:

Any piece may enter the realm as if it were a natural part of the playing arena, whereby all the regular rules of Chess apply. However...

- (1) NOT until the first Wxyzaerd of the game has moved, thus "opening" the realm.
- (2) NEVER to a Wxyzaerd square. The four corner squares may only be used by Wxyzaerds and Knights.
(~) *Knights and Wxyzaerds may move as like each other from any Wxyzaerd square.*
- (3) MAY NOT capture (Check is nullified) FROM an enemy Wxyzaerd square.

The "outer realm" as I used to call it, was a concept I had many years ago in my young adulthood, which I developed for a game called "Trojan". At the time it had some complications, mainly due to Trojan itself, but nevertheless it is a concept that has always been "undying" to me and thus, with many years of study since those first variants, "The Wxyzaerd's Realm" of "Qhesz" is to be the fruitful result of a lifetime's dedicated work.

There are many points and studies to follow regarding the realm, which I hope will clarify any queries one might have, but in short, one will discover after a few well played games, that the realm's "invitation" is often a crafty test of thine wisdom and should be only carefully employed, else you discover rotten bate rather than a magic potion. One could describe it as either the "forbidden fruit of Chess", or the "transcendental foreknowledge of Qhesz", depending on what you desire.

Notes on the Realm

- One improvement over classical Chess, depending on your point of view, is the healing of trapped or "bad" Bishops during the Opening, or even Middlegame. Opening play does not always follow the established line and one may often find they have a Bishop unable to enter play for his own Pawns penning him in. The realm provides a "back step" allowing the Bishop to exit the home court via an alternative route.
- Another improvement over classical Chess, depending on your point of view, is that of the ever so irritating back rank mates. This is whereby the King is trapped behind his Castling Pawns, whence a Rook Check Mates him along the horizontal. The realm in this scenario would allow the King to hop about the 0th or 9th rank, deploying defences if available.
- Remember: *The Wxyzaerd squares are only for Wxyzaerds or Knights and one MAY NOT capture (Check is nullified) FROM an enemy Wxyzaerd square.* So fear not any surprise onslaught. The disallowing of regular pieces to occupy the realm's corner squares makes it extremely difficult for a player to instruct his army to charge down the flanks and annihilate the opponent. Especially if one's Wxyzaerd resides there. Indeed you will still find it as comparatively difficult to do so as it would be in classical Chess.
- Similarly, even if penetration to the 1st or 8th ranks were made, the King has escaping and defensive deployment chances to the 9th or 0th ranks. Thus the key statement being made here, is that "invasion" and "evasion" about the realm are still only equally as balanced as they would be in the classical playing field.
- Castling is less of a necessity and more of a convenience, since the ability to hop the King around the 0th or 9th rank provides alternative defensive possibilities equally as praiseworthy.
- The defensive possibilities are often equally as fruitful, if not more so, than any offensive lines pursuable about the realm, depending on any given stage of the game. In fact there are many defensive "gems" to be found within the "nervousness" of the realm, and one of these is actually the pure "ease" with which one can join both Rooks in only a few moves.
- Generally speaking, employment of the realm is equally as decisive as employment of the center, for just as if you attacked down the flanks in Classical Chess, this behaviour in turn leaves you vulnerable and weak about other parts of the board, since your pieces are occupied elsewhere. Thus this tactic, especially if employed too early into the game, may well result in a surprise counter attack elsewhere on the board.
- Whilst advancing along The Wxyzaerd's Realm with, say your Rooks, may be adventurous, it will be found more difficult to return home and assist your own King should it come under attack. In a manner of speaking, the temptation of the realm's "fair passage" can often be an illusion and therefore approach it always with cautionary logic.

- If a player desires to open The Wxyzaerd's Realm at the beginning of the game and launch a daring attack along the flanks, the only useful place to move one's opening Wxyzaerd this early in the game, would be the "central arena", leaving it uncomfortably vulnerable to attack. Thus the decision of "when" to open the realm should be a carefully made one.
- There is a balance at work amongst the mayhem. Whilst opening the realm might, depending on position, make it harder for your opponent to deliver mate, likewise the same distribution of logistics will apply to your own strategic endeavours, for example, the common back rank sting, or even, the sacrificial King's Pawn capture. And even yet, whilst you juggle with the decision to open or not to open, there are still countless, likeminded and similar strategies of other worldly flavours, when the Wxyzaerds start to dance.
- In summary, attempting to claim active majority of the realm merely allows the opponent to claim active majority of the center. Just as in Classical Chess, all parts of the board are equally as important, lest one fall short of a move.

Go Out And Buy A Qhesz Set

As I have said from the very beginning, *"I'm not in this for the money, I'm in this for the Qhesz"*, and so you will not find an actual "Qhesz Set" here to buy.

But that is because you don't absolutely need to buy one as a whole packaged product. Qhesz uses a standard Chess set with only the addition of Wxyzaerds and of course, a 100 square board.

If you already own a standard Chess set, then all you need to acquire is a 100 square board and a "fairy" piece to use as the "Wxyzaerd".

Fairy pieces can match existing sets, depending on the game at hand and Qhesz is an easy one to accommodate. A Wxyzaerd, although represented by the crescent moon, can actually look like anything you want. For example, a Queen from a different but colour-like set, a de-crowned King of a duplicate set, the head of a Pawn placed onto the neck stem of a beheaded Queen... or even an upturned Rook.

Furthermore, there is no law dictating what one "may or may not do" with little plastic figurines in their own home. So onwards with the gems...

- **House Of Staunton**, the world leaders in Chess manufacture, not only sell hundreds of different sets, but they currently have a wide range of "fairy" pieces, such as 'Fortress', 'Spider', 'Elephant', 'Dragon', 'Cannon' and more, with which you could mix and match to your heart's desire. They often update their links, so I recommend you search their site for the results. The term 'Musketeer' would be the most relevant search string.
- **Masters Games** sell a beautifully crafted "Jester Chess" set, played on a likewise beautifully crafted 100 square board. These are a bit pricey but are my own personal choice of set for "Qhesz". Good news is they sell both the boards and pieces separately.
- **Modern Chess Variants** sell their International Chess Variants Board, for a very good price. It is plastic but I have one and can vouch for its sturdiness.
- If you are a Lego fan, why not **Build One** out of Lego?

- **Omega Chess** is of course a game that actually features "Wizard" pieces. It uses a 104 square board, (4 extra squares, 1 at each corner), and also includes "Champion" pieces, which are somewhat interesting. However I cannot guarantee availability of any sets they might sell since I have never found one on the market.
- A great resource for information about equipment and indeed anything to do with Chess variants, is **The Chess Variant Pages** website, a jam packed trophy of Chess variant wonders.
- Finally, the 100 square checker board is actually the official size for **Professional Draughts** and so you will find these about, if you look or enquire well enough.

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