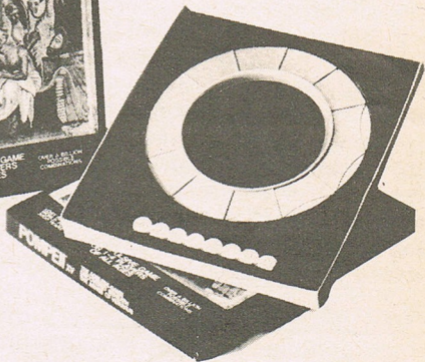
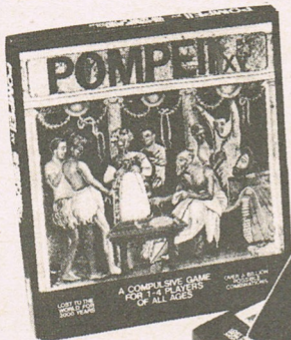


POMPEII XV



POMPEII XV

EQUIPMENT

1. A circular board with twelve numbered compartments and a central throwing area.
2. Fifteen counters numbered on one face with numerals from 1–15

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To fill all twelve of the compartments on the board using all fifteen counters, or to achieve the lowest possible score as totalled by the unfilled compartments and unused counters.

RULES FOR PLAY

A. The Game as a Solitaire Game

1. The counters are all picked up, shaken in cupped hands and thrown down in the central area of the board. Only the counters which fall with the numbered side up are in play.
2. The player tries to satisfy the numbered compartments on the board. This can be done in one of three ways.
 - a) By placing one counter into the compartment of the same number.
 - b) By placing two counters into a compartment, the sum of the numbers on the counters being the same as the number of the compartment.
 - c) By placing two counters into a compartment the difference of the numbers on the counters being the same as the number of the compartment.
3. Not more than two counters can be placed in any one compartment.
4. Once placed in a compartment the counters cannot be removed or re-arranged at any stage of the game.

5. If any upturned numbers cannot be used then the turn ceases.

6. When all the upturned numbers have been used the player picks up the blank counters, re-shakes and re-throws into the central area of the board. The numbers which fall face uppermost are then used to satisfy the compartments which were not filled on the first throw.

All the exposed numbers on the second throw must be used or the turn ceases.

7. The player continues throwing until he either:
 - a) makes a throw where he cannot use all the upturned counters, or
 - b) all the counters fall face downwards, or
 - c) he has filled all the compartments.

8. The perfect score is when he fills all twelve compartments using all fifteen counters.

B. The Game for Two or More Players

The rules of play are exactly the same. Each player in turn plays the game as described above.

At the end of each player's turn he adds up his score.

- a) All unused counters face uppermost count against him.
- b) All unsatisfied compartments count against him.

His score is the sum of these and the player with the lowest score is the winner. Counters which are face downwards at the end of the throw do not count against the player.

The game can be played as straight games and the total number of games won recorded. Alternatively, the players may play to a predetermined number of points say 100 or 200 and the player's whose total score first reaches this number loses the game.

W.M. Horn. With Compliments.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The original board and counters were found in the excavations at Pompeii. The board was circular with scalloped edges and divided into twelve compartments. The board was made of solid silver, the pieces were made of bone and had Roman numerals on one face only.

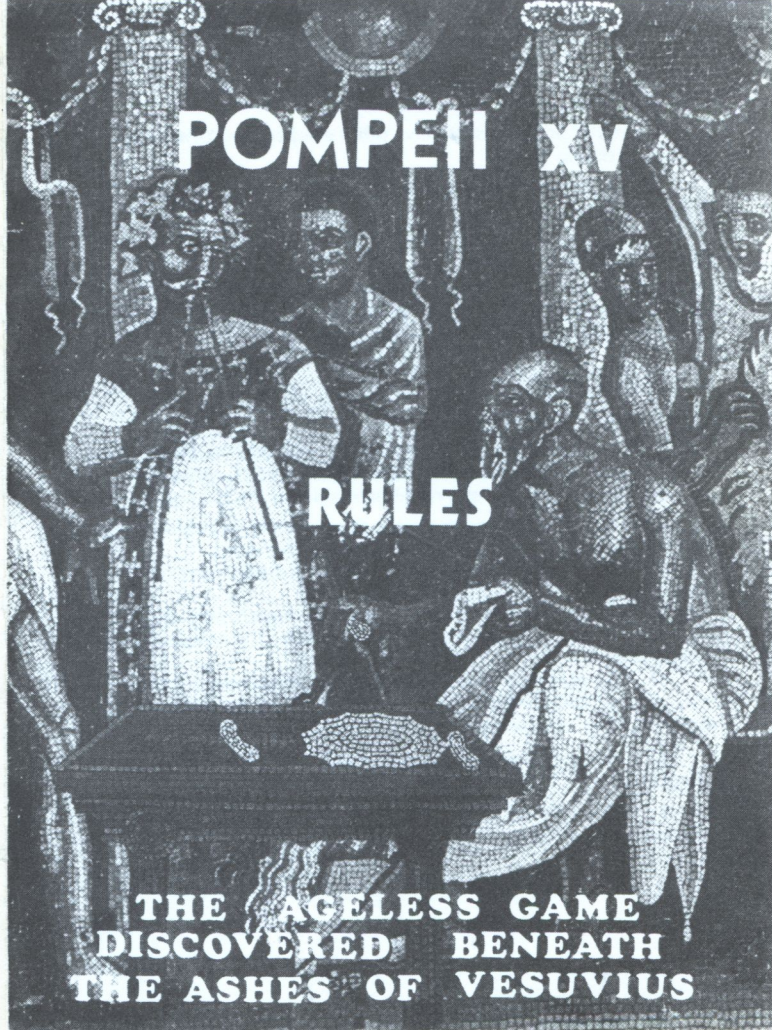
Further examples have since been found in Athens and Herculaneum which was also buried by Vesuvius in AD.79. This indicates that the game must have enjoyed a degree of popularity throughout the Mediterranean.

No record of the original rules has survived. Research into the game and computer analysis of the probabilities indicate that the rules set out here must approximate very closely, if not identically, to the way the game was played in Ancient Rome.

Most games rely on the throw of dice or the draw of a card to determine play. This imposes rigid limitations to the number of possibilities. Pompeii XV is different in that it is the counters themselves which are thrown and the way in which they fall determines the way in which they can be played. On the first throw alone there are over 30,000 different possibilities. To play the game through gives several billion possible permutations of play. From all these there are only eleven ways in which the counters can be placed on the board to achieve the perfect score.

Compiled from archaeological material by R. C. Bell. See 'Games & Puzzles' No 65. October 1977

R. C. Bell



POMPEII XV

RULES

THE AGELESS GAME
DISCOVERED BENEATH
THE ASHES OF VESUVIUS