

Abbildung 1
Schachspiel. Meisterstück von H. Lachmann. Gedruckt in der Deutschen Fachschule für Drechsler und Bildhauer zu Leipzig. 1896.



Chess in Artwork



Jon Crumiller



CCI New Jersey
May 23, 2014
v3.1

Chess in Artwork

You've seen chess sets in paintings and other historical artworks...



Francis R Cotes (1726-1770)
"Portrait Of William Earle Welby"
England
1769



...but do these artworks contain any useful information for us?

Chess in Artwork

Another example:



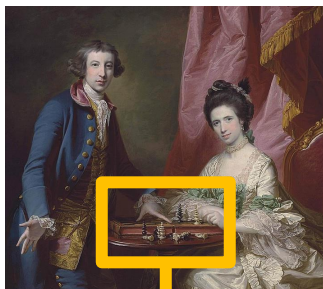
P H Andreis
"Cavaliers Playing Chess"
Belgium
1880

French Régence Pattern

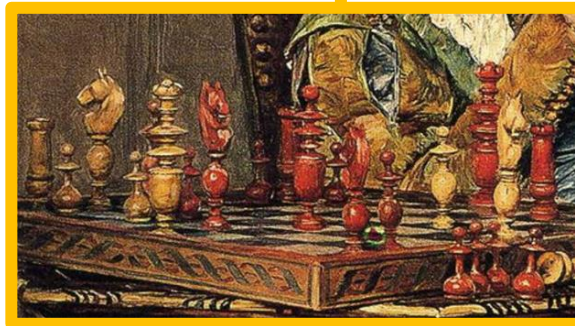


Chess in Artwork

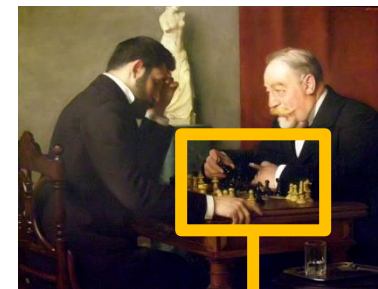
Each historical artwork with an identifiable chess set provides a data point with up to 3 elements: location, dating, and set pattern.



England
1769
Old English



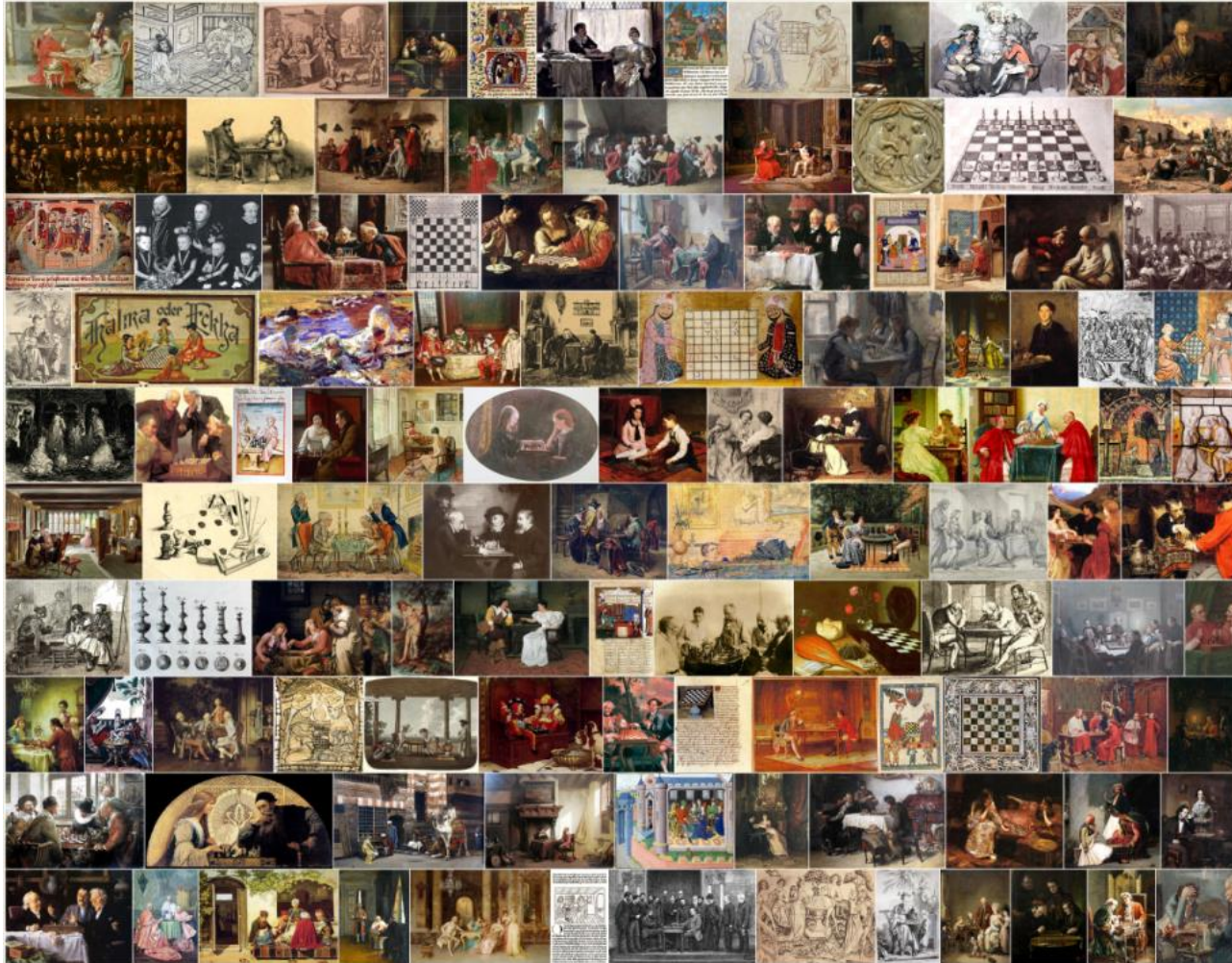
Belgium
1880
French Régence



Slovakia
1898
Austrian Coffeehouse

Chess in Artwork

Now let's take it a step further.



Introducing the
Chess in Artwork
online spreadsheet

Current inventory:

- 650 artworks
- 1,000 years
- 42 countries
- 30 identifiable chess set patterns

Chess in Artwork

The spreadsheet is available online in two formats:
[1] Google Doc or [2] Excel spreadsheet (for download)

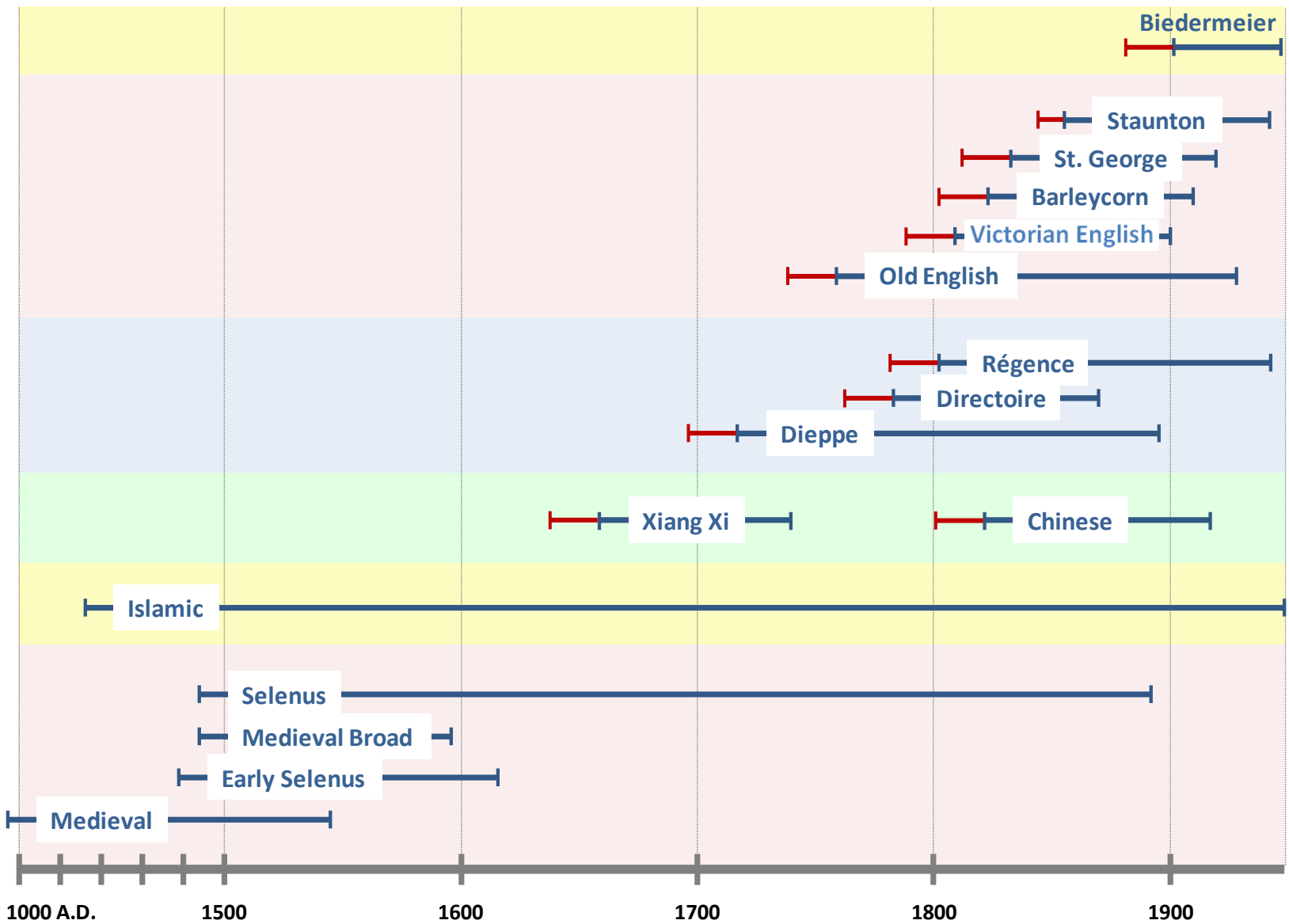
Century	Date Start	Date End	Artist-Source	Country	Set Pattern	Artwork	Set	Board	Pseudo Title
10	955	1020	Abul Qasim Fidurausi	Persia	Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	Folio Shahnama
10	955	1026	Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi de Tus	Persia	Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	Shah-nama
10	955	1026	Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi de Tus	Persia	Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	Tahmuras Defeats the Divs
10	955	1026	Firdawsi	Persia		Artwork	Set	Board	Krishna and Radha playing chaturanga
11	1000	1100	Basilica of San Savino at Piacenza	Italy	Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	
11	1020	1099		Italy	Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	Sol en mosque basilique de San Savino a
12	1120	1199		Cambodia	Islamic	Artwork	Set	Board	Medieval chess in Augkor Cambodia
12	1120	1199		France		Artwork	Set	Board	Une partie dechecs jouee vitrail de Chartres
13	1200	1300	Al Andalus	Spain	Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	Noblemen and their servants playing chess
13	1200	1300	Benedictine Abbey in Bavaria Beuron	Bavaria	Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	
13	1220	1299			Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	Croises jouant aux echecs
13	1220	1299			Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	Jeu dechecs sous une tente
13	1220	1299		France		Artwork		Board	Lancelot porter un echiquier magique a Reine
13	1220	1299				Artwork	Set	Board	Playing Chess
13	1220	1299			Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	Playing Chess 2
13	1220	1299		Lebanon		Artwork	Set	Board	William of Tyre
13	1220	1299	Le Codex Buranus	Italy	Medieval	Artwork	Set	Board	
13	1220	1299	Walters Manuscript	Armenia		Artwork	Set	Board	Book of Hours St Stephen

Chess in Artwork

Is there anything we can discover from having identified specific chess set patterns in historical artworks?

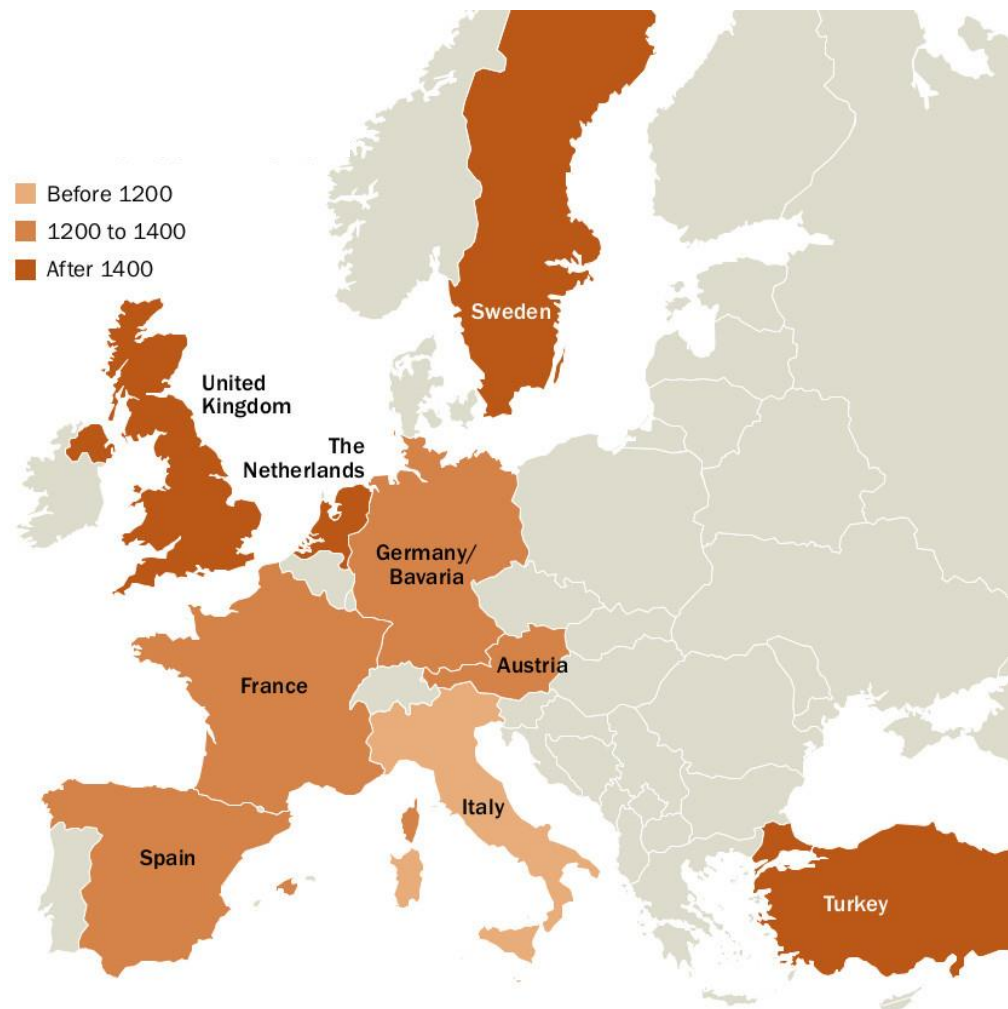
- 1** *Chess set pattern usage over time*
- 2** *Geographic dispersion of chess sets*
- 3** *Relevant questions about historical chess set usage*

Chess Set Pattern Usage Over Time



Geographic Dispersion of Chess Sets

Patterns of chess set usage can also be studied.

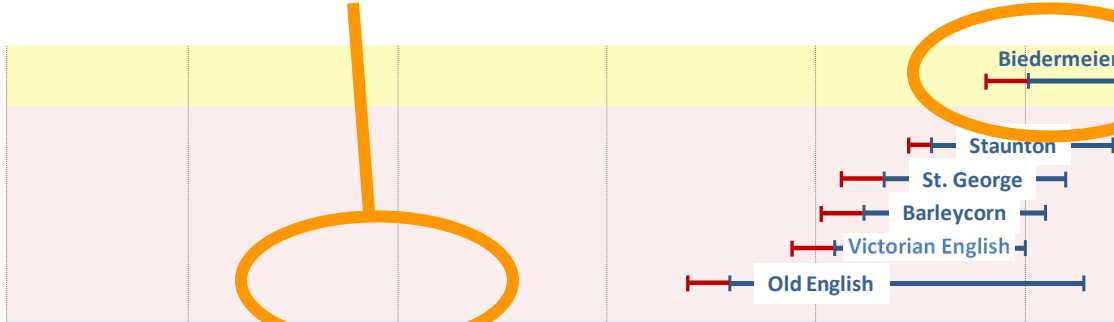


Migration of the Medieval Chess Pattern based on its appearance in artwork

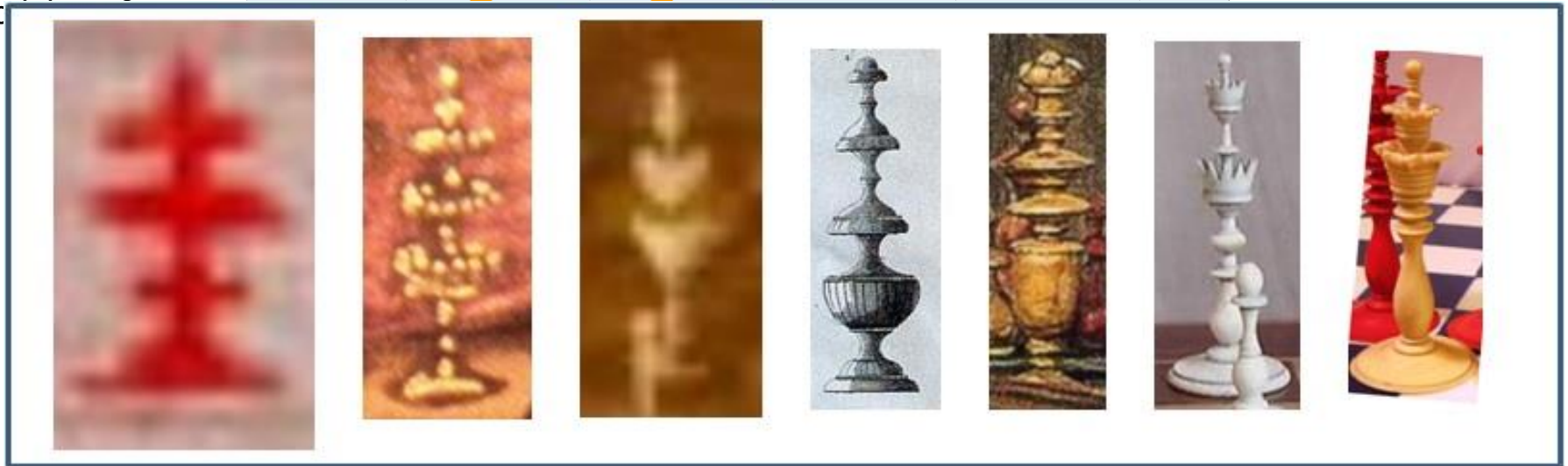
Relevant Questions

Why are there “chess gaps” in the artistic record?

Where and when did chess



Biedermeier sets are supposedly early-to-mid 19th century. Why don't they show up in artwork until the early 20th century?



Do the 2-tiered & 3-tiered Kings and Queens seen in different patterns over the centuries – e.g. Medieval, Early Selenus, Selenus, German Playing, Directoire/Regence, Spike, Calvert Early, and other patterns – constitute a chronological progression?

Chess in Artwork

There are several caveats worth mentioning.

An artist can paint or draw a stylized version of a chess set (“artistic license”)



An artist can produce a scene from another country or location



An artist can produce a scene from an earlier time period



There is a time lag until a chess set pattern first appears in artwork



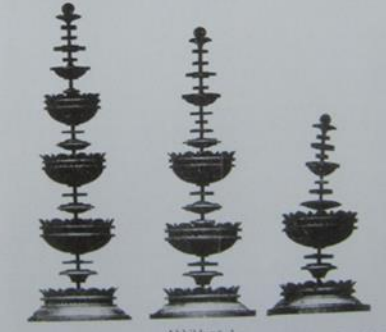
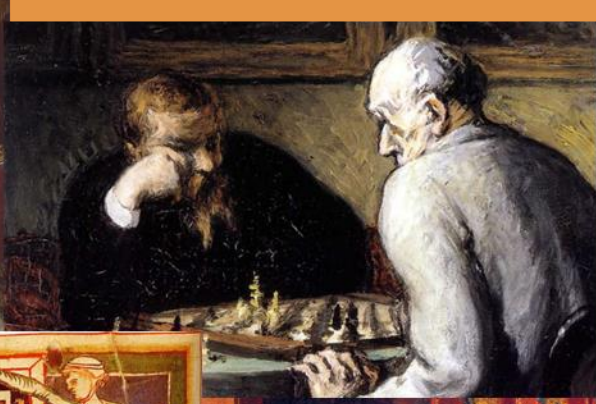


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