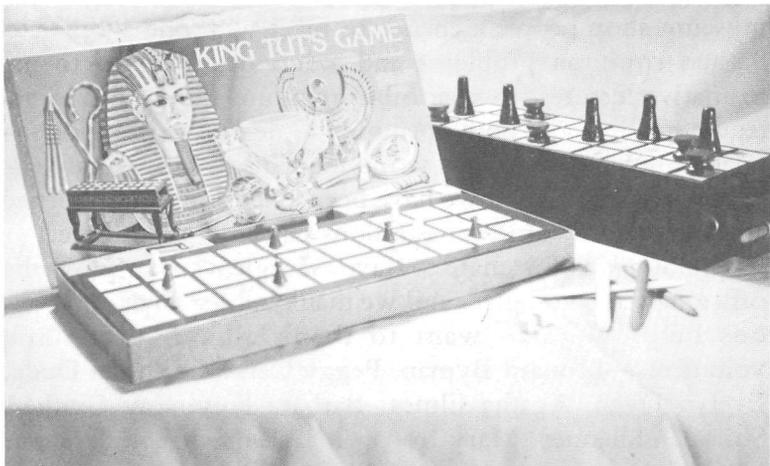


## THE GAME OF *SENET*

**A**N EXHIBIT that has been on display in the Institute Museum since it opened nearly fifty years ago is the board and pieces for *senet*. While it had always been recognized that these were the implements used in a game, reconstructions of the rules were rather fanciful; one version on the market is just an adaptation of a modern Arab game to the ancient materials.

It was Peter Piccione, graduate student in Egyptology at the Institute, who correlated several religious texts (one describing the afterlife as a journey by water and others which employ the game of *senet* as an allegory) with the symbols surviving on the game boards. He discovered that the tour the playing pieces make around the board stands for the soul's passage through the underworld, and has been able to reconstruct the



“King Tut’s Game” and Mr. Piccione’s meticulously crafted reconstruction of a *senet* set

probable rules by which King Tutankhamun himself played the game (one of the treasures from the royal tomb is a *senet* set).

Mr. Piccione's game resembles a combination of elements of modern Parcheesi, backgammon, and Monopoly, and takes about an hour to play. It has the additional dimension, though, to believers, of the representation of the spiritual journey, and playing the game may actually help the devout to join the Sun god in the sky after death.

The modern version of *senet*, manufactured by the Cadaco Game Company, is sold under the name "King Tut's Game," and is available for \$5.00 at the Suq. A deluxe version, more closely resembling the precious materials of the original, is expected to be ready soon as well.