

Introduction

One day, at the end of a group lesson on basic rook endgame positions that I had just given at my club, one of my students, Hocine, aged about ten, came up to ask me: «But what is the point of knowing the Lucena or Philidor positions? I never get that far. Often I lose before the ending because I didn't know the opening. Teach us the Sicilian Defence instead, it will be more useful». Of course, I tried to make him understand that if he lost it was not always, or even often, because of his shortcomings in the opening. I also explained to him that learning the endgames was essential to progress in the other phases of the game, and that the positions of Philidor or Lucena (to name but these two) should be part of the basic knowledge of any chess player, in much the same way that a musician must inevitably study the works of Mozart and Beethoven, sooner or later. However, I came to realize that I had great difficulty in making him see reason.

Meanwhile Nicolas, another of my ten-year-old students, regularly arrives at classes with a whole bunch of new names of openings that he gleaned here and there on the internet, and that he proudly displays to his club mates. They remain amazed by all these baroque-sounding opening names, and they have a deep respect for his encyclopaedic knowledge. For my part, I try to behave like a teacher by explaining to Nicolas that his intellectual curiosity is commendable, but that knowledge of the Durkin Attack, the Elephant Gambit or the Mexican Defence, as exciting as they might be, has a rather limited practical interest at the board.

Hocine and Nicolas are certainly not isolated examples. Many youngsters are convinced that knowledge of opening theory can be used to measure, like a barometer, the strength of a chess player. «If he's stronger than me, it's simply because he knows more openings!». We rarely hear a competitor – let alone a youngster – complain of losing because he does not know how to play queen endgames or because he does not master the subtleties of the pawn structure.

The opening has indeed always had a sort of fascination for chess players. One only has to observe that most competitive players, whatever their level, devote the bulk of their work to it, and for this they can count on the abundant chess literature. More has been written about the initial phase of the game than about any other area of chess, whether it is the middlegame, the endgame, the history or the strategy.

Unfortunately, very often another parallel point is clear: many players, among those who embark on competition, spend a considerable time studying the openings, but do not get their money's worth. Some of them arrive at the chessboard swamped with variations that they have memorized beyond the 20th move at times, but are completely baffled when their opponent plays a bad move that is not part of their repertoire. In fact, they have learned without really understanding.

For the last twenty years I have had the pleasure – every day that passes I am convinced that it is one – to accompany young players as they progress, whether in my club or within the French team that I’ve supervised for twelve years. Hocine, Nicolas, and many other students – both young and old – have asked me, sometimes insistently, to write down all of our work on the openings in the form of a book. It was with some reluctance at first, because I did not really see what I could add to everything that had already been written on the subject, but I did write it, and now I make it available to the public.

Another book on the openings, one might think at first. I have, however, the weakness to believe that this book will be original and that it will stand out from most of the others. At least in its approach, and above all because of the audience for which it is intended.

Its public, first of all.

Some films are forbidden to those under 16 years old. I would have wanted to say, at first, that this book was only for youngsters. However, as age is obviously not involved in progress at chess, I should really say that it is forbidden to players above a certain level. More seriously, this book is not intended to prepare masters, or even candidate masters (at least not right away), but to bring ideas and points of reference to players – young and less young alike – who engage in competitions and are not sure where to start studying openings. The primary objective of this book is just to help these players by offering a reliable and efficient repertoire that they can assimilate without spending too much time on it, and above all which emphasizes understanding over memorization. This book will also be useful for organizers and trainers of clubs who do not feel competent when they have to teach openings.

Original in its approach, next.

Those who leaf through this book hoping to find the latest fashionable novelties from the Najdorf or Grünfeld may close it. In the pages that follow there are no major theoretical lines and no 2Aa431 variations, but a collection of complete games. Far more than being able to recite the first ten moves of an opening by heart, it is important to know the typical middlegame plans that result from this opening, and it is only by studying complete games that you can discover these.

I have made the choice to select games from young players, whenever possible, rather than games from grandmasters. It is in this sense that this work will differ from most other treatises on the openings. If I have made such a choice, it is for at least two reasons:

1. What would I have to add to the games of grandmasters that have already been analysed by illustrious players and that can be found in many other publications?

2. It seems profitable, at least at first, to study the games of children and enthusiasts, with their characteristic faults, rather than those of grandmasters, albeit often free of major mistakes but sometimes a little difficult to grasp for the

layman. Obviously, it is impossible to study an opening without drawing on the experience of the best players. This is why some games from great champions will be included in the collection.

This book is designed in the form of a repertoire. It offers systems targeted specifically at White, and not an encyclopaedic survey of all the openings. Because of the density of the material, it was finally decided to do two volumes. On the same principle, a 2nd volume will thus propose a repertoire for Black against White's main moves (naturally starting with 1.e4 and 1.d4).

You will notice that many proposed openings bear the name of 'Attack'. I deliberately chose offensive variations. Playing aggressive openings allows the development of tactical vision in open positions, which can only be beneficial to progress. This is why it is natural that I recommend 1.e4 as the opening move for White. In any case, it is an essential stage on the road for any beginner. There will always be time later to eventually move on to other more strategic, and therefore more complex, openings.

At the end of each chapter a series of exercises will test that the concepts discussed have been assimilated, and it's not necessarily always a question of mating, either, but sometimes just of finding the appropriate plan. An experienced player can try to solve the positions before reading the chapter.

Evidently, it would be extravagant of me to claim that the examined openings win or even ensure a forced advantage. This book is not intended to guarantee a victory in less than 20 moves against any defence. If such miracle cures existed, they would be widely known.

On the other hand, this book should enable you to build an opening repertoire without too much effort. You can then devote more time to other sectors, in particular to tactics, which are fundamental. As a result, your progress in the other phases of the game is thus strengthened and success at the board should not delay.

Eh, yes! Even if a well-managed opening repertoire does not guarantee victory, it can greatly contribute. Hocine and Nicolas will appreciate this and will not disagree.

Now I wish you a safe and rewarding journey of initiation into the fabulous world of the openings. If, in addition to acquiring new knowledge, you will have fun, this modest book will have achieved its goal.

Vincent Moret
Nancy, February 2016

Chapter 2

The allegro opening: The Giuoco Piano and the Greco Gambit

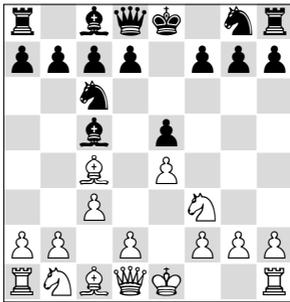
Game 9

Pauline Crabie

Sandra Swiercz

Rochefort jr 1998 (3)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5
4.c3!



The Giuoco Piano (the calm game). An opening that is misnamed, as we shall see. We will be proposing the Italian Variation for White in our repertoire. It offers good attacking possibilities, especially against poorly or unprepared players, and is perfectly suited to the style of young players who are at ease in tactical variations. In short, nothing like a 'calm game'!

The idea of 4.c3 (which might appear illogical to the layman, since it does not develop a piece and even occupies the knight's natural development square) is to control the centre with d2-d4. It is an idea found in many lines of the Spanish Opening, but the character of the position here is modified by the presence of the two bishops on c4 and

c5. In the main line these two pieces will both find themselves attacked by the opposing d-pawn!

4...♘f6

The best move, counter-attacking the e4-pawn. Any other move would allow White to realize his plan of invading the centre by 5.d4 without any hindrance.

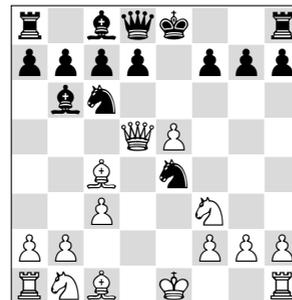
5.d4!?

At this point White can still change his plan and play the more modest 5.d3, an interesting variation that even Kasparov has vouched for by playing many times, but which will not be covered in this book. Nevertheless, if any of our readers feels that he has exhausted the d2-d4 Italian, or finds that he meets stronger and better-prepared opponents as he progresses, it could be relevant to branch off into the Italian with 4.c3 and 5.d3.

5...exd4

From now on Black will have to play with the utmost precision to avoid falling into one of the many pitfalls that this variation contains.

A first example: 5...♙b6? 6.dxe5 ♘xe4??
7.♙d5



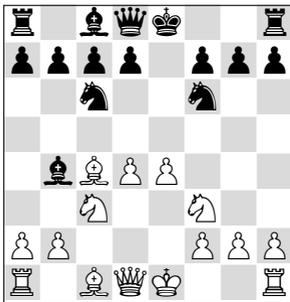
... wins a piece because of the threat of mate on f7. A common theme in the Italian.

6.cxd4 ♖b4+

Once again, Black has no choice but to move his bishop with gain of time by giving check.

6...♖b6? would be a serious error, which would allow the white centre to get going: 7.d5! ♘e7 (after 7...♘a5 8.♙d3, Black faces the unpleasant threat of b2-b4, winning the knight) 8.e5 (the white centre is a veritable steamroller that flattens everything in its path!) 8...♘g4 9.d6! ♘xf2 (9...cxd6 10.exd6 ♘c6 11.♚e2+ ♘f8 12.0-0+-) 10.♚b3! ♘xh1 (10...0-0 11.♙g5+-) 11.♙xf7+ ♘f8 12.♙g5!+-.

7.♘c3!?



The Greco Gambit (as the e4-pawn is hanging), named after the famous Italian theorist who analysed it nearly 400 years ago!

This variation, which is also sometimes called the Möller Attack (it seems to me more correct to leave the paternity to Gioachino Greco, however), is not only one of the oldest in the history of chess, but also one of the most intensively analysed. During the 20th century it has often been declared refuted, but, just like the Phoenix, it regularly rises from its ashes. Today, with the current state

of theory and helped by computers that enable us to approach the Truth with a capital T, we must admit that the Greco Gambit doesn't get a very good press, even if the prolific grandmaster Soltis was not of this opinion and devoted a passionate monograph to it some fifteen years ago.

Objectively, Black does indeed have the means to obtain equality and get out of the coming mass of complications alive. However, the path is sometimes very narrow and contains many pitfalls, especially for those who do not have great experience with this opening.

Once again, the goal is not to prepare the reader to play against grandmasters at the cutting edge of theory (when that happens, there will still be time to head for the d2-d3 Italian or even the Spanish), but instead to give him incisive and effective weapons against unprepared opponents. This is certainly the case with the Greco Gambit.

The other possible variation is 7.♙d2. But I don't recommend it, even though it is playable, because after 7...♙xd2+ 8.♘bxd2 d5!, Black destroys the white centre and easily obtains satisfactory play. Besides, we have to admit that this variation is much less exciting than the Greco Gambit.

7...♘xe4

Black has little choice and must capture the pawn.

The dangers of refusing the gambit by 7...d5 are illustrated by the famous game Steinitz-Von Bardeleben, which you can find analysed in numerous chess books, and in particular in the monumental pentalogy that Kasparov dedicated to his 'Great Predecessors'. Not wanting to produce a pale copy

of the Boss's analysis (and obviously having nothing to add to it), I will therefore only give the first few moves of the game:

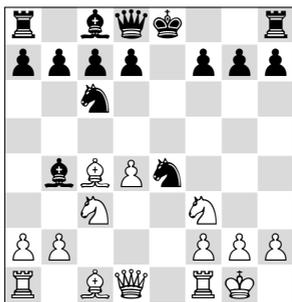
8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.0-0! ♙e6

9...♘xc3 is even worse here than in the main game: 10.bxc3 ♙xc3 11.♚b3! ♙xa1 12.♙xf7+ ♖f8 13.♙a3+ – because of the absence of Black's d-pawn, the check on a3 is immediately decisive – 13...♗e7 14.♙g8! ♜xg8 15.♗e5! and there's no defence against mate.

10.♙g5 ♙e7 11.♙xd5 ♙xd5 12.♗xd5 ♚xd5 13.♙xe7 ♗xe7 14.♞e1

White exerts dangerous pressure on the e-file, and this ultimately proved decisive after some brilliant tactical play from the first official World Chess Champion. The final combination is particularly attractive.

8.0-0



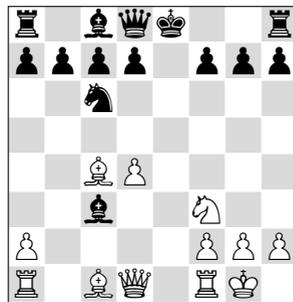
8...♗xc3?

Black stumbles into the minefield. It is best to take on c3 with the bishop, as we shall see later in this chapter.

9.bxc3 ♙xc3?

The decisive mistake in an already compromised position.

9...♙e7 would have been met by 10.d5 with a big space advantage for White, which amply compensates the pawn minus.



10.♙b3!?

10.♙a3! is probably more accurate: 10...d6 (10...♙xa1?? 11.♞e1+ is winning for White) 11.♞c1 ♙a5 12.♙a4!. White, who threatens 13.d5 and 13.♙b5, probably already has a decisive initiative.

Nevertheless, the text move has the merit of being more dangerous, more radical, and above all, in the words of our Anglo-Saxon friends, more fun.

10...♙xa1?

Black is too greedy. His last chance was to play 10...d5! 11.♙xd5 0-0 12.♙xf7+ ♖h8 13.♙xc3 ♜xf7, with an approximately equal position. This variation is the main reason that theory recommends ♙a3 on the 10th move rather than ♙b3.

Anyway, in my opinion, and on a purely pragmatic level, the move 10.♙b3 leads to a more forcing line than 10.♙a3 – which is why I recommend it – and it will bring almost 100% success when facing an unprepared opponent. I am confident that an amateur will have great difficulty finding the move ...d7-d5 at the chessboard, if he did not already know it, not to mention the two subsequent moves that lead to equality. Of course, a strong player could find it without a doubt, but he would never take the risk of going into a variation

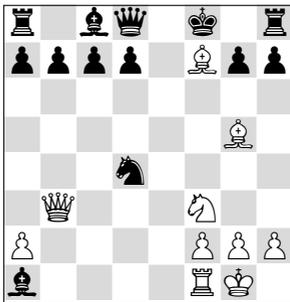
which is 100% bad should White play 10. ♖a3.

One could argue that the opponent can prepare the 10...d5 move at home, if he knows we play 10. ♖b3. This reasoning is, however, not... reasonable, since he would go into a losing position in order to play some preparation, and this whole approach is intellectually – and above all chessically – doubtful. Above all, it is pointless to take such a risk just to get an equal position at best!

After these transcendental digressions, let's get back to the game. After Black takes the a1-rook, it is now linear and one-way.

11. ♙xf7+ ♖f8 12. ♙g5 ♘e7

Be careful not to be taken aback by the tricky 12... ♘xd4.



White only has one move, but it is more than sufficient as it forces the opponent's immediate capitulation:

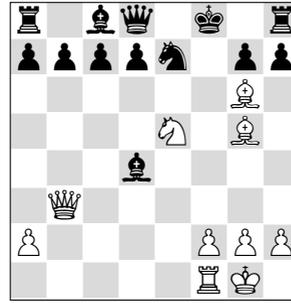
13. ♖a3+! (13. ♖b4+?? c5 14. ♖xc5+ d6–+, and White has gone astray...; 13. ♘xd4?? ♖xg5–+; 13. ♙xd8? ♘xb3⚡).

13. ♘e5!

Much stronger than trying to win the black queen with 13. ♖e1.

With the text move White plays for mate!

13... ♙xd4 14. ♙g6!



The bishop evacuates the f7-square so that the queen can threaten mate there.

14...d5 15. ♖f3+ ♙f5

Black has no other move. That is why the bishop had to go to g6 and not to any other square.

16. ♙xf5

Up to here, the entire game can be found in Greco's analysis, dating from 1625(!), and the young Pauline Crabie knew this. She only had to find the next move at the board herself, and without taking anything from her merit, it must be admitted that this was not particularly difficult.

16... ♖g8?

16... ♙xe5 17. ♙e6+ ♙f6 18. ♙xf6 ♖e8 19. ♙xg7 ♖d6 20. ♖f7+ ♖d8 21. ♙xh8+– was the main variation found in Greco's analysis... and in the game Moret-Magnier, La Bresse 1987.

17. ♙e6#

Game 10

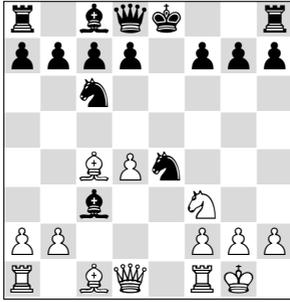
Jame Voillat

Valerie Hammer

France tt-jr 1999

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♙b4+ 7. ♘c3 ♘xe4 8.0-0 ♙xc3

This is the correct way to take on c3, as we already know.



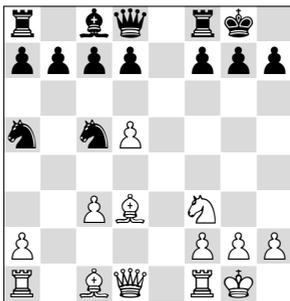
9.d5!

This is the starting point of the Möller Attack in the Greco Gambit, to be exact. On 9.bxc3?, Black obviously does not play 9...xc3?? because of 10. e1+, which wins the knight, but 9...d5! with advantage. In fact, in this variation we must remember that d5 is the move to play to hope for any advantage, and this is equally valid for both sides!

9...e5

Black tries to play the wise guy by attacking a new piece of White's. After 9...e5, White can either choose to follow the game continuation by transposition after 10.bxc3 xc4 11. d4, or play the stronger 10. d3! c5 11.bxc3

A) 11...0-0? allows

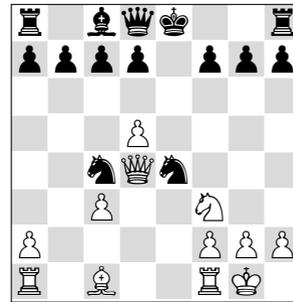


... the classic 12. xh7+! – the sacrifice of the bishop on h7 is commonly also called the Greco sacrifice, which is

very symbolic in the opening of the same name: 12...xh7 13. g5+ g8 (13...g6 14. g4+-) 14. h5+-;

B) 11...xd3 12. xd3 0-0 13. g5 and White has a very strong attack. For example: 13...g6 (13...f5 14.d6! cxd6? 15. d5+-) 14.d6! cxd6 15. e4+-.

10.bxc3 xc4 11. d4



11...cd6?

Black is trying to hang on to his loot, but this is a serious mistake.

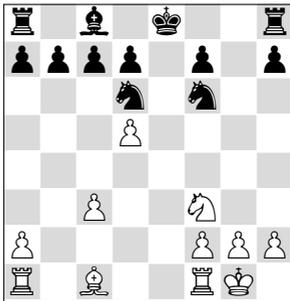
11...0-0 12. xe4 d6 is one of the theoretically recommended lines for Black (12...b5 was Karpov's choice against Dzinichashvili when he was confronted by the Greco Gambit in 1988. It's a move that consequently merits respect, even if White keeps the initiative after 13.a4!): **13. d3 f6** Stronger than 13...e8, which was played in the old game Mieses-Süchting, Vienna 1906. After 14.c4 d6 15. b2, White had good compensation for the pawn less, thanks to his space advantage and powerful b2-bishop. **14. e1 b6 15. g5** is a rare recent example of the Greco Gambit at the highest level, between two super-grandmasters with 2700+ Elos. After **15... f5 16. xf5 xf5 17.g4 f6 18. f4 d6 19. xd6**

cx d6 20. ♖d4, White had just enough activity to compensate his slight material deficit, and thus maintain equality, Gashimov-Dominguez Perez, Nice rapid 2010.

12. ♖xg7 ♖f6

12... ♖f8 allows White to create very dangerous threats on the e-file after 13. ♖e1.

13. ♖xf6 ♗xf6

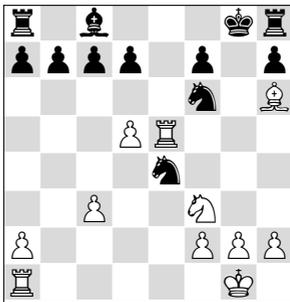


Black has placed all his hopes on this exchange of queens, but White keeps a very strong attack.

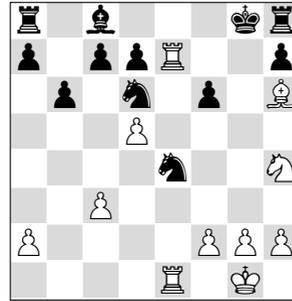
14. ♖e1+ ♗d8?

A) 14... ♗f8 was no better, but required greater precision from White: 15. ♗h6+ ♗g8 16. ♖e5 and now:

A1) 16... ♗de4

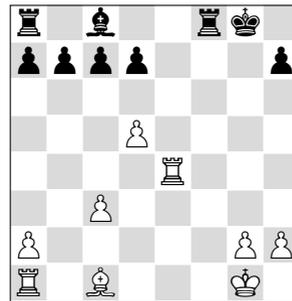


17. ♗d2! d6 18. ♗xe4 dxe5 19. ♗xf6#;
 A2) 16... ♗fe4 17. ♖e1 f6 (17... b6? 18. ♖1xe4!+-) 18. ♖e7! (18. ♖5xe4? ♗xe4 19. ♖xe4 ♗f7+-) 18... b6 19. ♗h4!.



Played to stop ... ♗f5, but above all to decisively penetrate into g6 as soon as the h7-pawn has been captured. 19... ♗b7 20. ♖g7+ ♗f8 21. ♖xh7+ ♗g8 22. ♖g7+ ♗f8 23. ♗g6+ ♗e8 24. ♗xh8+-.

B) Black absolutely had to return the piece to hope to survive: 14... ♗fe4 15. ♗d2 f5 16. f3 0-0 17. fxe4 ♗xe4 18. ♗xe4 fxe4 19. ♖xe4, but White maintains a strong initiative.



Despite the reduced material White has real attacking possibilities against the black king. There are three reasons for this:

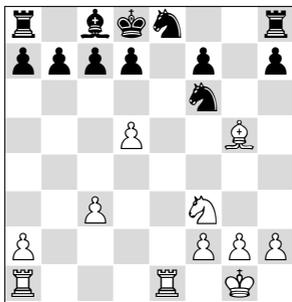
- an advance in development;
- a relative lack of protection for the black king;
- the presence of opposite-coloured bishops. The white bishop can really be very dangerous, either on the a1-h8 diagonal after c3-c4, or on h6.

White can play this position without any risk, and the most that Black can hope for is to split the point.

15. ♖g5

Even without queens White has a very strong attack.

15... ♜e8



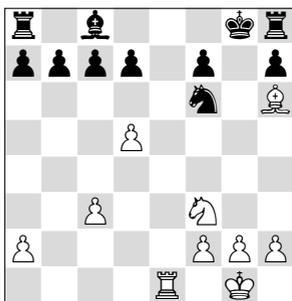
16. ♜xe8+! ♝xe8

16... ♜xe8 17. ♖xf6+ ♜e7 18. ♜e1+-.

17. ♜e1+ ♝f8

17... ♝d8 18. ♖xf6#.

18. ♖h6+ ♝g8



19. ♜e5!

It's mate, either on g5, or on e8 if the f6-knight moves.

Once again, White, who only used ten minutes on his clock for the entire game as opposed to an hour and a half for his opponent, cannot take much credit: in fact, he simply recited a game played by Greco in... 1620!

Game 11

Elise Bellaiche

Cyrielle Monpeurt

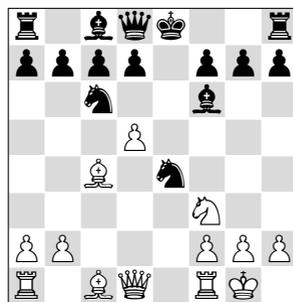
Aix-les-Bains 2007 (8)

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♜c6 3.♖c4 ♖c5 4.c3 ♜f6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♖b4+ 7.♜c3 ♜xe4

The immediate capture on c3 sometimes occurs: 7... ♖xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♜xe4 9.d5! (obviously! 9.0-0? d5!) 9... ♖a5 10.♖d3! (10.0-0!? is also possible, with the idea after 10... ♜xc4 11.♖d4! to transpose into the previous game) 10... ♜f6 (10... ♜c5 11.0-0 once again transposes into the notes to the previous game) 11.♖a3! d6 (11... ♜xd5 12.0-0 d6 13.♖b5+ c6 14.♖xd5 cxb5 15.♜fe1+ ♖e6 16.♖xb5+ ♝f8 17.♜xe6! fxe6 18.♜e1, and despite his extra exchange, Black is facing overwhelming threats) 12.♖a4+ c6 13.♖b4. White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

8.0-0 ♖xc3 9.d5 ♖f6

The main line, recommended by theory.



10. ♜e1

White has no reason to capture the c6-knight immediately. After 10.dxc6 bxc6 Black could play ...d7-d5 and White would no longer have any compensation for the pawn less.

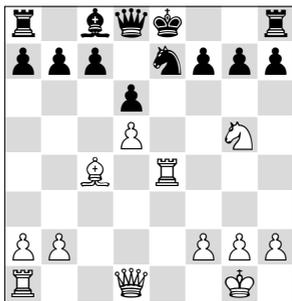
10... ♜e7 11. ♜xe4 d6

Forced, otherwise White would play 12.d6 himself and the development of the c8-bishop would become a problem.

12. ♖g5

An interesting alternative for those looking for an alternative that is less forcing – and above all less analysed – than the main line, is 12.g4!?

12... ♗xg5 13. ♖xg5



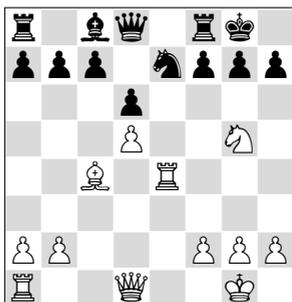
This is a critical position in the Greco Gambit (or Möller Attack) and an important crossroads for Black, who now has two major possibilities.

13... 0-0

The old continuation that leads to great complications and that we cannot analyse in great detail within the limited scope of this book.

The modern 13...h6!? will be discussed in the next game.

13... ♗f5? is wrong before castling: 14. ♖f3! (threatens both 15. ♖xf5 and 15. ♖xe7+) 14... ♗xe4 (14... ♖d7 15. ♗b5! ♖xb5 16. ♖xf5+-) 15. ♖xf7+ ♔d7 16. ♖e6+ ♔e8 17. ♖xe4 and with ♖e1 coming, Black is lost.



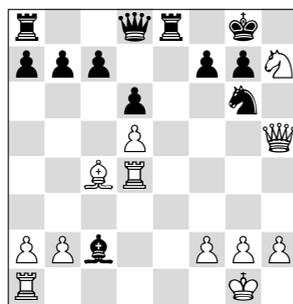
14. ♗xh7!

The only move to get any play. White cannot go back – if he gives Black the time to play 14... ♗f5, the latter would have a much better position with a pawn more.

14... ♗xh7

14... ♗f5!? 15. ♖h4! ♖e8 (15... ♗xh7? 16. ♖h5±) 16. ♖h5 ♗g6 (the menace was 17. ♗f6+!) 17. ♖d4 and now:

A) 17... ♗c2!? is the move recommended by John Nunn in his book *Secrets of Practical Chess*, and he even considers it one of the possible refutations of the Greco Gambit.



According to Nunn, Black is now threatening 18... ♖e5, followed by ... ♖c8 on ♖h3, with a winning position. Things are not so simple, however. After 18.h4! (a move ignored by the renowned English grandmaster, who nevertheless considered many options) 18... ♖e5 19. ♗g5!, White keeps good attacking possibilities and Black's defence remains difficult, especially for someone who would have to find it over the chessboard;

B) 17... ♖e5 18. ♗g5! with a position that Nunn himself considered very unclear. The wisest course for both sides is undoubtedly to take the repetition of moves after 18... ♖f6 19. ♖h7+ ♔f8 20. ♖h5 ♔g8 (20... ♔e7?? 21. ♗h7! wins

for White) 21.♖h7+. If White is not happy with a repetition, he could try f2-f4 on the 18th move (instead of ♘g5), with a very complicated position once again.

15. ♖h5+ ♘g8 16. ♖h4 f6

16...f5 gives a little more air to the black king:

17. ♖h7+ ♙f7 18. ♖h6!

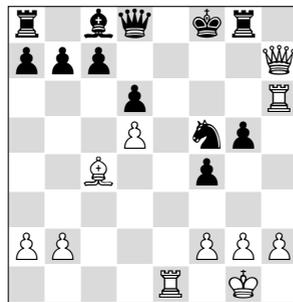


An important move to prevent 18...♗g6, while threatening the manoeuvre ♙e2-h5. **18...♖g8** The only move. Once more, Black must play very precisely to escape (18...♗d7? 19.♙e2 ♖g8 20.♙h5+ ♙f8 21.♖f6+!! and it's mate next move!) **19. ♖e1** and now:

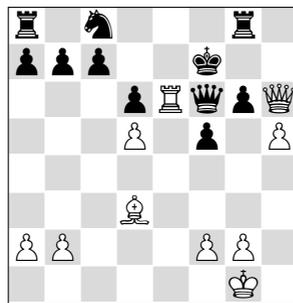
A) 19...♗d7? 20.♖ee6! ♙xe6 21.dxe6+ ♙f8 (21...♙e8 22.♖g6!+-) 22.♖f6+! ♙e8 23.♖h5+ g6 24.♖h7+-;

B) 19...♖f8 (the only serious alternative to 19...♙f8) 20.♙b5! (to stop the black king from escaping via e8, and to menace 21.♖ee6) 20...♖h8!. Black's best defence, which visibly forces White to settle for a perpetual after 21.♖xh8 gxh6 22.♖h7+ ♙f6 23.♖xe7 ♖xe7 24.♖xh6+;

C) **19...♙f8 20. ♖h3** Menacing 21.♖he3. **20...♗d7** It's very easy for Black to go astray in this jungle of possibilities at any moment. For example, 20...f4? loses because of 21.♖h4 g5 22.♖h6 ♗f5 and now:



23.♖e8+!! ♙xe8 (23...♖xe8 24.♖f6+) 24.♖xg8+ ♙e7 25.♖h7+-+. **21. ♖he3 ♗c8 22. ♗d3 g6 23. h4 ♖g7 24. ♖h8+ ♖g8 25. ♖h6+!** White doesn't take the draw, but plays for the attack! **25...♙f7 25...♖g7?** 26.♙xf5 gx5 (26...♙xf5 27.♖e8+-) 27.♖g3+-. **26. h5** with a good attacking position which we will not analyse in more depth, however, for fear of scaring the reader, who might be worried about having to remember all these variations. Just one example of how dangerous the position is for Black: 26...♖f6 27.♖e6! ♙xe6 28.♖xe6.



The black queen cannot move because of the capture on g6, which would be decisive.

In fact, more than all these variations, what you really need to remember is that White has undeniable practical chances after 14.♗xh7. There are defences for sure, but they will certainly be difficult to find at the board, especially with

limited time, for a player who will not be extremely well prepared. Moreover, even when the opponent does find these moves White can still get away with a perpetual, as we have seen.

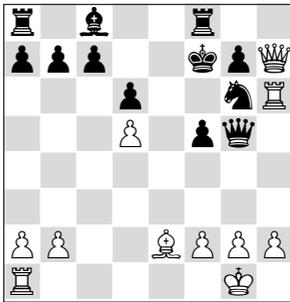
17. ♖d3

17.g4, followed by 18.♖d3, would exploit Black's previous inaccuracy and give White good prospects.

17...f5

Black finally realizes that it would have been better to advance the f-pawn two squares on the previous move.

**18. ♖e2? ♘g6? 19. ♖h7+ ♔f7
20. ♖h6 ♖g5??**



The future French junior champion crumbles under the pressure. Again, this type of defence is very difficult to play, especially for players who are not grandmasters. On move 18 White should have played 18.♖h3! and Black – 18...♖e8!. Here Black had to play 20...♘f4 21.♖h5+ ♘xh5 22.♖g6+ ♔g8 23.♖h7+ ♔f7, and White has nothing more than a perpetual.

**21. ♖xg6! ♖xg6 22. ♖h5 ♖xh5
23. ♖xh5+ ♔g8 24. ♖e1 ♖d7 25. h3
♖ae8 26. ♖xe8 ♖xe8 27. ♖f3 ♖e1+
28. ♔h2 ♖b1 29. ♖b3 b6 30. ♖c3
♖e8 31. ♖xc7 ♖xb2 32. ♖xa7
♖xf2 33. ♖xb6 ♖xa2 34. ♖xd6
♖d2 35. ♖e7 ♖b5 36. ♖e6+ ♔h8
37. ♖xf5 ♖d3 38. ♖f4 ♖d1 39. d6**

**♖g6 40. ♖h4+ ♔g8 41. ♖d8+ ♔h7
42. d7 ♖f5 43. ♖h4+ 1-0**

Game 12

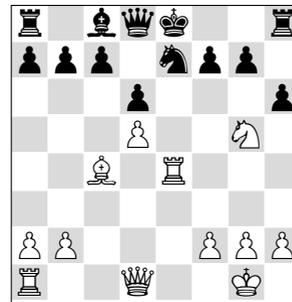
Salome Neuhauser

Tristan Hoffer

Saint-Dié 2004

**1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. c3
♘f6 5. d4 exd4 6. cxd4 ♖b4+ 7. ♘c3
♘xe4 8. 0-0 ♖xc3 9. d5 ♖f6 10. ♖e1
♘e7 11. ♖xe4 d6 12. ♖g5 ♖xg5
13. ♘xg5 h6!?**

A move found by the grandmaster Lajos Portisch in 1968, and which was thought to be the refutation of the Greco Gambit for a while.



14. ♖e2!

If White retreats the knight, it is clear that Black can castle in peace.

14.♖h5 is not entirely satisfactory, even if it was successful in the game Brion-Monpeurt, France school championships 2012. The conductor of the black pieces, then under-16 vice-champion of France and who even had 500 more Elo points than his opponent, was visibly bewildered by the move 14.♖h5: 14...g6? (he had to play 14...0-0! 15.♖ae1 ♘g6 16.♘e6 when White retains some very slight pressure, which does not fully compensate the pawn loss, however) 15.♖h4. Black can no longer castle kingside because of the weakness

on h6, and his position collapsed very quickly.

14...hxg5 15.♖e1

White will regain the piece because of the pin on the e-file.

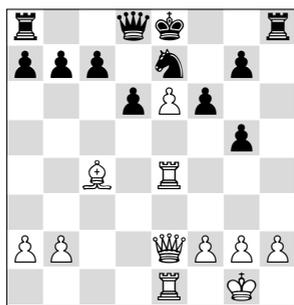
15...♗e6

Black must close the file at any cost to avoid a catastrophe.

15...0-0? 16.♖xe7 is obviously disastrous for Black.

16.dxe6 f6

The complement to the previous move, ensuring that the e-file remains closed. Thanks to the e6-pawn White has driven a wedge in the opposite position. On the other hand, if the white attack is not decisive, the e6-pawn can become weak.



17.♖e3!

White must play very energetically before Black can consolidate his position, possibly by ...c7-c6 and ...d6-d5. The idea of the text is to propose an exchange of rooks on h3, and then give the fatal check with the queen on h5.

17...c6

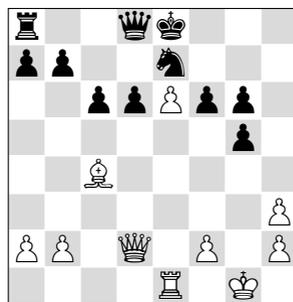
Hoping to play ...d6-d5, then ...♗d6 and eventually ...0-0-0.

18.♖h3 ♖xh3 19.gxh3 g6

There is hardly anything else to consider to prevent a check on h5, but the f6-pawn is now weakened and represents a target of attack for White.

20.♗d2

If White plays the immediate 20.♗f3, then Black wins an important tempo by 20...♗a5, attacking the e1-rook.



20...♔f8!

Probably the best defence, as suggested by John Nunn. Strangely, the king will finally find refuge on the kingside.

After 20...d5 21.♗c3, Black still has to remain very vigilant. Taking the bishop, for example, loses: 21...dxc4? 22.♗xf6+- . But 21...♘f5! is good.

21.h4 gxh4 22.♗h6+ ♔g8 23.♖e4?

Allowing Black to consolidate his position.

23.♗xh4? was no better and allowed the black king the possibility to find refuge on g7.

23.b4!, to prevent 23...♗a5, retained some chances: 23...♗f8 24.♗xh4 d5 25.♗d3. Thanks to his e6-pawn and more active pieces, White retains some small attacking possibilities that should just compensate his material deficit. In particular, he may consider the manoeuvre ♖e1-e3, with sacrificial ideas on g6. With black, a grandmaster will certainly defend the position successfully, but it will probably not be the case for an inexperienced young player.

23...g5??

Black clearly knew the variation until the 22nd move, but, as is often the case,

he blunders horribly as soon as he has to think for himself.

He had to play 23...♙f8, and White's initiative has fizzled out.

24. ♖xf6 1-0

No doubt reeling from his terrible blunder, Black resigns prematurely. But it is clear that after 24...♙f8 25.♖xg5+ ♗g7 26.♙g4 ♖xg5 27.♙xg5+ ♔h8 28.♙h5+ ♔g7 29.♙xh4, the tide has begun to turn, even if the game is still far from finished.

We conclude our exciting exploration of the Greco Gambit with this game. This game and the previous one, which dealt with the main line of the Möller Attack (9.d5), were relatively rich in analysis. As already mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the Italian with c2-c3 and d2-d4 is probably one of the most analysed openings in chess history, and we can see that some lines even go well beyond the 20th move. Obviously it is not a question of memorizing everything by heart – just remember the ideas, and in particular the main tactical themes. With these alone you will have an undeniable advantage against a less prepared opponent.

To those who would argue that it seems surprising to recommend a variation in which White has perhaps nothing better than a perpetual if Black finds good moves, I would take the liberty of answering that one must not dogmatically and rigidly accept all the truths set forth by theory, especially for youngsters.

It is true that Black has a few lines that allow him to get equality in this Giuoco Piano. However, we have seen in the first three games of this chapter that this path towards equality was

sometimes very torturous and often strewn with many pitfalls that Black can fall into at any time. How many amateur players (the audience this book addresses) know all the correct moves in this variation? Very few, I would bet. And how many would find them at the board? Even less, surely.

Again, this book is not intended to prepare masters, or even candidate masters, but just to bring ideas and reference points to players who are entering competition, and are putting together their first opening repertoire. In particular by offering them lively tactical positions where an inexperienced opponent will have every chance of going astray. When we see White's success rate with the Greco Gambit in junior tournaments, we can reasonably say that this opening achieves its goal.

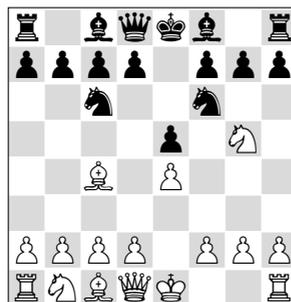
**Game 13
Paul Morphy
Amateur**

New Orleans 1858

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♘f6

The Two Knights Defence. Perhaps it would be more logical to speak of the 'Two Knights Counter-attack', since Black threatens the e4-pawn with his last move.

4.♘g5!?



A surprising move, which goes against all the basic opening principles. White neglects his development by moving a piece a second time while most of his other pieces are still in their starting blocks. However, this is justified by the fact that the attack on f7 is not easy for Black to parry.

Of course, White can play more modestly (and more classically) 4.d3, to transpose into the Giuoco Pianissimo after 4...♟c5, but in this case he loses the opportunity to play the Italian with c2-c3 and d2-d4. This is why I advise the text move, which is much more aggressive (but also more risky).

Oddly, while it is one of the openings that have been the most analysed by chess theory (together with the Greco Gambit), the Two Knights Variation with 4.♞g5 has no name as such, although in some sources it is called the Fegatello Attack. Which is somewhat inaccurate, since the real (and venerable) Fegatello normally begins with the sacrifice on f7, which is recurrent in this variation. Nevertheless, for the sake of simplicity (and also, it must be said, to preserve the rhyme with Greco and Giuoco Piano), I will use the name Fegatello for the move 4.♞g5, like some other authors, and I hope that learned theorists will not hold it against me.

The move 4.♞g5 gave rise to totally divergent opinions in the last century. Tarrasch, the German theorist from the early part of the 20th century, described it as idiotic, while Bobby Fischer considered it the outright refutation of the Two Knights Defence. To each his truth. Objectively, it is doubtless somewhere between these two extremes of opinion. Anyway, it is an active move that conceals a quite

subtle trap. A trap that will be daunting for inexperienced players. Just have a look, to be convinced, at the countless number of young players who have fallen victim to it. Young players, or even not-so-young amateurs, as was the case in this game played in a blindfold simultaneous by Paul Morphy, the American prodigy who briefly ruled the chess world in the middle of the nineteenth century.

4...d5

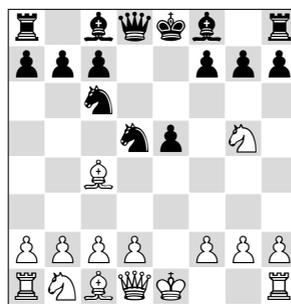
The only reasonable move to defend the f7-pawn. However, later in this chapter we will see another possibility, although it is very risky and not really that sound.

5.exd5 ♞xd5?

Here is the trap mentioned above into which Black falls so very frequently. If he could take on d5 and parry the threat to f7 so easily, the attack with 4.♞g5 would indeed be idiotic – to use the expression of Tarrasch – and would not have much sense, but this is not the case.

As we will see later in this chapter, Black must play 5...♞a5 and accept the loss of a pawn in exchange for an advantage in development.

After the capture on d5, Black is simply almost lost!



6.d4!

Stronger than the direct sacrifice 6.♘xf7!?, which is recommended in many books and commonly called the ‘Fried Liver Attack’, which sounds far less romantic than ‘Fegatello’. The immediate sacrifice on f7 is nevertheless interesting and gives White undeniable practical chances. However, after the continuation analysed by Greco (him again!) in 1620: 6...♙xf7 7.♚f3+ ♖e6 (forced, otherwise White would recover the piece with advantage) 8.♘c3 ♘e7 (the best defence) 9.d4 c6, powerful analysis engines have shown that Black can hope to survive and keep his extra piece. Even if the exact defence will be extremely hard to find at the board with the clock ticking, and moreover by an amateur (an experienced player will not play this line with black because he will know that recapturing the d5-pawn on move 4 is a mistake).

In short, a player who is comfortable with tactical variations and who likes to ‘surf’ on the razor’s edge can fearlessly embark on the ‘Fried Liver Attack’ with a little preparation. However, is it wise to venture into complications that are finally not so clear, when the text move promises a sure advantage without risk? 6.♚f3?, which we frequently encounter in young players’ games, is, however, downright bad: 6...♚xg5 7.♙xd5 ♘d4 8.♚xf7+ ♖d8 9.♙e4? (the bishop wants to continue to defend the c2- and g2-pawns, but an unpleasant surprise awaits White) 9...♙e6. Oops! The white queen has no square...

6...exd4

After 6...♘xd4? 7.c3, Black will lose one of his two knights, awkwardly aligned on the d-file.

The only possible continuation for Black is 6...♙e6. This is a recent attempt

to show that the 5...♘xd5 variation is perhaps not necessarily losing for Black. For now, too few games have been played to come to a definitive conclusion, but it is sure that after 7.♘xe6 fxe6 8.dxe5 ♘xe5 9.♚h5+ ♘g6 10.0-0, White, if not winning, has a much better position. If this is really the best that Black can hope for, perhaps it is better to give up on 5...♘xd5 altogether.

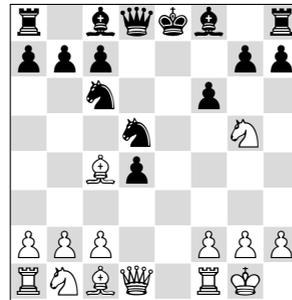
7.0-0

White is now threatening to sacrifice on f7 and get a very favourable version of the Fried Liver Attack.

7...♙e7

7...♙e6, with the idea of protecting the sensitive f7-point, does not solve Black’s problems, as can be seen in the following game.

During a training session, a young student came and asked me what to do after 7...f6, which does not allow a sacrifice on f7, of course.



Certainly, without even analysing it is easy to tell that a move such as 7...f6 cannot be a panacea, but it will be much less easy for an amateur player to find the refutation at the board. In addition, no theoretical manual will deal with a move such as 7...f6 in this position, of course, although several youngsters have nevertheless proposed it to me,

as they felt the need to prevent the sacrifice on f7. The move 7...f6 is bad, period, and that is obvious, one might be tempted to say, while dismissing this wacky suggestion out of hand.

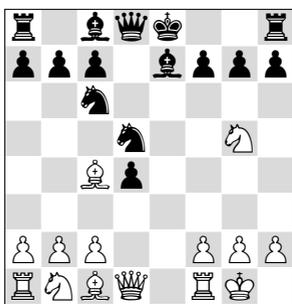
Nevertheless, one of the goals of this book is indeed to try to answer questions from amateurs (even those that may seem far-fetched!) and in particular those where we will find no trace of an answer in classical chess books.

In this case, it was not so easy to show (concretely!) that the move 7...f6 was bad: 8.♖e1+ (now this was obvious...) 8...♙e7 9.♗f3! (but this was much less so, and it is the refutation of the 7...f6 move) and now:

A) 9...♘b6? 10.♗h5+ g6 11.♙f7+ ♘d7 (11...♙f8 12.♗h6#) 12.♗h3+ f5 (12...♙d6 13.♘e4+ ♙e5 14.f4# is a nice mate in the middle of the chessboard) 13.♘e6 and the black queen is lost;

B) 9...fxg5 10.♙xd5 ♖f8 11.♗h5+ g6 12.♙xc6+ bxc6 13.♗xh7+-. The black position is in ruins, both in terms of the pawn structure (look at the contrast between White's and Black's!) and the safety of the king.

Now let's return to the position after 7...♙e7.

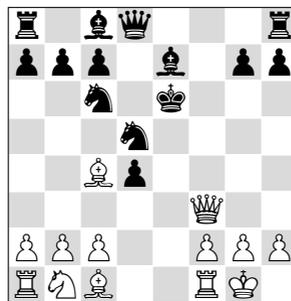


8.♘xf7!

The main theme of the Fegatello! The sacrifice is much stronger here than in the Fried Liver Attack since White has already castled and the e-file is open. Venturing onto e6 will consequently be even more problematic for the black king.

8...♙xf7 9.♗f3+ ♙e6

Suicidal, but if the king goes back White will recover the d5-knight and have a better position.



10.♘c3!!

A brilliant sacrifice, found by Morphy while blindfold, and designed to accelerate the centralization of the a1-rook.

10...dxc3 11.♖e1+ ♘e5 12.♙f4 ♙f6
13.♙xe5 ♙xe5 14.♖xe5+!

Open House!

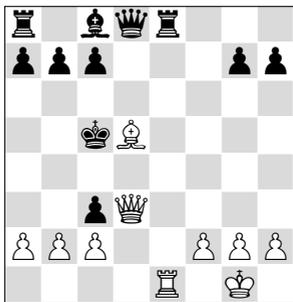
14...♙xe5 15.♖e1+ ♘d4

The black king finds itself in the open-air right in the middle of the chessboard.

16.♙xd5 ♖e8

At this point Houdini (the analysis engine, not the magician who was a contemporary of Morphy!) announces mate (and only one!) in seven moves. Morphy found it without being able to see the board, and this while playing against ten opponents simultaneously. Of course, the bishop cannot be captured: 16...♗xd5 17.♗xc3#.

17.♗d3+ ♙c5



18.b4+!

Strangely, this is the only winning move for White in this position, but of course, it is more than enough since it leads to a forced mate.

18...♙xb4

18...♙b6 19.♚d4+ ♘a6 20.♚c4+ ♙b6 (20...b5 21.♚c6#) 21.♚c5+ ♙a6 22.♚a5#.

19.♚d4+ ♘a5 20.♚xc3+ ♘a4
21.♚b3+ ♘a5 22.♚a3+ ♙b6
23.♚b1#

Game 14

Marwan Brion

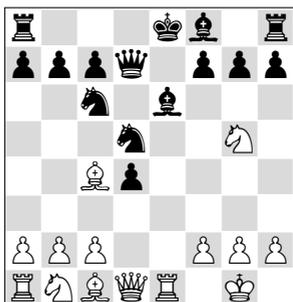
Hugo Kessler

France 2012

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♘f6
4.♘g5!? d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5? 6.d4!
exd4 7.0-0 ♙e6

To defend the sensitive f7-square and prevent the knight sacrifice, but all this is an illusion.

8.♚e1 ♚d7



If Black manages to castle queenside, then he would have a very satisfactory position, with, moreover, an extra pawn.

9.♘xf7!

In the purest Fegatello style, White sacrifices his knight on f7 anyway, just when this pawn seems to be protected three times.

9...♙xf7

Of course, the e6-bishop is pinned, and capturing with the queen would leave the d5-knight hanging.

10.♚f3+ ♘g6

Returning to the e-file would lose the d5-knight because the e6-bishop would find itself pinned.

10...♘g8 also loses: 11.♚xe6! ♚xe6 12.♙xd5+.



11.♚xe6+!

11.♙d3+?! immediately would allow the defensive move 11...♙f5.

11...♚xe6 12.♙d3+

And Black resigned.

Game 15

Ludovic Jardine

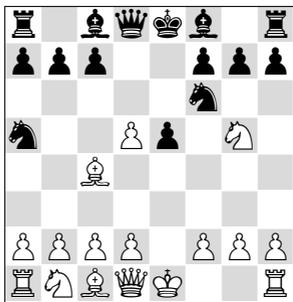
Simon Viville

France tt-jr 2005/06

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♘f6
4.♘g5!? d5 5.exd5 ♘a5!

We have seen in the previous games that the recapture on d5 was bad.

5...b5!? is interesting, and was played by Carlsen against Naiditsch in 2006, but it's not really correct after the withdrawal 6.♘f1!. Following 6...♙xd5 7.♘c3, the g2-pawn is protected, and White can therefore capture on b5 under good conditions.



6. ♘b5+

The bishop must move with check, otherwise Black will recover the d5-pawn without any problems.

6...c6

6...♘d7 7.♙e2! protects the b5-bishop and creates unpleasant threats on the e-file and against the e5-pawn.

7.dxc6 bxc6 8. ♘e2

The most accurate defensive move according to theory, and certainly the most popular, although the 8.♘d3 retreat has been rehabilitated by (among many others) Laurent Fressinet, who used it to beat Etienne Bacrot in the 2011 French Blitz Championship.

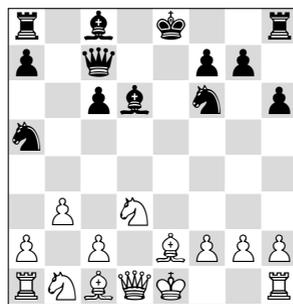
8...h6 9. ♘f3 e4 10. ♘e5 ♘d6

Black gains development tempi by attacking the knight.

11.d4 exd3 12. ♘xd3 ♙c7

Otherwise White plays 13.♘f4 and exchanges the dark-squared bishops, and Black will no longer have any real compensation.

13.b3!



A move played by Kasparov, Radjabov and Morozevich, who all three won. This must therefore be a good move. White ignores the threat to h2, which is not dangerous for now, and starts developing the queenside pieces. The c1-bishop will be well placed on b2 and the b3-pawn takes the c4-square away from the black knight.

13...♘xh2?

So far, both players have followed the line recommended by theory, but taking the h2-pawn is a serious mistake. After 13...0-0 14.♘b2, White will play h3 before castling kingside (so as to not lose the h2-pawn with check!) and will have good chances to consolidate his extra pawn, even if he must remain vigilant because of the menacing activity of the black pieces.

14.g3! ♘xg3 15.fxg3 ♙xg3+ 16. ♘f2 0-0

16...♘e4? 17.♙d4!+-.

17.♙f1?

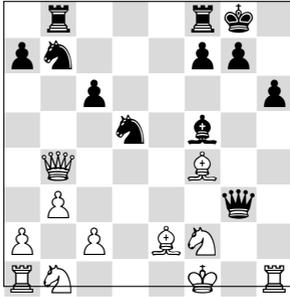
17.♙d3! ♙g2 18.♙f3 ♙g6 19.♘d2 ♘b7 20.♘c3+-.

The two black pawns are not worth White's extra piece.

17...♘f5?

17...♙e5! would give Black strong counterplay.

18.♙e1 ♘b7 19.♙b4 ♖ab8? 20.♘f4 ♘d5



21. ♖xf8+!

A small liquidating tactic that should normally win the game without too many problems.

21... ♖xf8 22. ♖xg3 ♘e3+ 23. ♖e1
 ♘xc2+ 24. ♖d2 ♘xa1 25. ♘a3 ♖d8+
 26. ♖c3 ♖e8 27. ♖d3 ♖e3 28. ♖b8
 ♖xd3 29. ♘xd3 ♘c5 30. ♖d4?
 30. ♖d1+–.

30... ♖xd3+ 31. ♖xc5 ♘xb3+!
 32. axb3 ♖xb3

Black recovers a piece, and most importantly, White has no more pawns!

33. ♖xa7 ♖xa3 34. ♖b6 ♖c3+
 35. ♖d6 ♖f8 36. ♖c5 f5 37. ♖a1
 ♖d3+ ½-½

Not really knowing how to assess this endgame, both opponents prefer to agree an immediate sharing of the point. In this position all three results are indeed still possible, even if a draw is effectively the most legitimate with perfect play by both sides.

Game 16

Nikolai Ninov 2515

Cyril Marzolo 2487

La Fère 2008 (4)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♖c4 ♘f6
 4.♘g5 ♖c5!?

The Traxler Gambit. A clever counter-attack devised by the Czech Catholic priest (and strong chess player) Karel Traxler in the late nineteenth century.



Black ignores the threat to f7 and even allows White to take the pawn in two ways: one with check, and the other with a fork of queen and rook!

In some young beginners' games, the 4... ♖c5 move may also be nothing but a blunder: developing a piece without seeing that the f7-pawn is attacked!

According to current theory the Traxler defence (or rather attack!), even when played deliberately (and therefore not the aforementioned blunder!), is considered unsound and probably refuted. However, it can be very dangerous and just as unpleasant when you do not know it at all and find yourself facing it for the first time with white.

The Traxler has given rise to some very complex analysis but it is obviously out of the question to detail and reproduce that here. It is just important to have some ideas to avoid falling into the many traps, and to know a line that gives White the advantage (there are several!).

5. ♘xf7

Taking with the bishop on f7 is also possible, and recommended in certain books, even if Black retains some compensation for the pawn after 5... ♖e7 thanks to the f-file. Obviously, if the move 4... ♖c5 is a mistake (we will never know for certain during a game,

however), the most natural is to take on f7 with the knight, naturally.

The present game is that which, among the 500 or so on Megabase where White took on f7 with the knight, opposed the two strongest players.

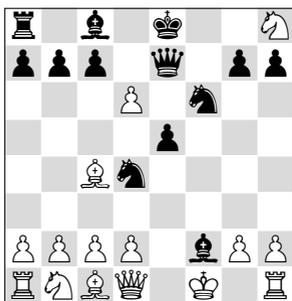
5...♙xf2+ 6.♖f1!

Chess is not checkers! We are definitely not obliged to capture. An article in New in Chess Yearbook presents this move as the outright refutation of the Traxler Gambit. 6...♗xe4? seems to give Black too strong an attack, according to the latest theoretical developments and the contributions of Fritz and friends, after 6...♗xe4+ followed by the arrival of the queen on h4.

6...♗e7 7.♗xh8 d5 8.exd5 ♗d4

At the cost of a rook – this is not insignificant! – Black has obtained a dangerous initiative. The immediate threat is 9...♙g4.

9.d6!



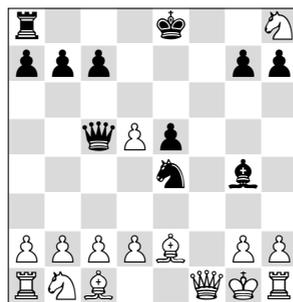
One of six (!) refutations of the Traxler proposed by Maarten de Zeeuw in his impressive presentation published in the Yearbook.

It is important to insert this move, which will prove useful for at least two reasons:

1. It will allow the knight to get out to f7 while attacking the black queen if she captures on d6.

2. It will obstruct the path of the black queen to c5 if the c7-pawn captures on d6.

A) Capturing the f2-bishop is still not possible: 9.♙xf2? ♙g4! with just one quite extraordinary example, included both for its beauty and to convince you of the usefulness of the 9.d6 move!: 10.♗f1 ♗e4+ 11.♖g1 (11.♖e3 ♗g5+ 12.♖xe4 ♙f5+ 13.♖xe5 0-0-0! 14.♖xd4 ♗f6+ 15.♖e3 ♗e8+ 16.♖f3 ♙d3+ 17.♖g3 ♗g5+ 18.♖h3 h5!, and White will be mated) 11...♗e2+ 12.♙xe2 ♗c5+.



There we are! With a black pawn on d6, this move would not be possible;

B) 9.c3? is also not good: 9...♙g4! 10.♗a4+ ♗d7! (to clear the f-file and the d8-h4 diagonal for the queen) 11.♙xf2 (11.cxd4 ♗f6! 12.dxe5 ♗f5!–+) 11...♗h4+!, winning by force:

B1) 12.♖e3 ♗g5+ 13.♖f2 ♗f5+ (13...♗f4+!) 14.♖g1 0-0-0, Mykyska-Traxler, postal game 1896, the ‘première’ for the Traxler variation!;

B2) 12.♖f1 0-0-0–+, and White is helpless against the threats on the f-file;

B3) 12.g3 ♗f6+ 13.♖e1 (13.♖g1 ♗e2+ 14.♙xe2 ♙xe2 15.♖g2 ♗f3+ 16.♖h3 ♗xh1–+) 13...♗f5! 14.cxd4 ♗e4+ 15.♖f2 ♗f3+ 16.♖e1 ♗xh1+ 17.♙f1 0-0-0 18.♗f7 ♗e4+ 19.♖f2 ♗f8!, and White will again be mated!

9...cxd6

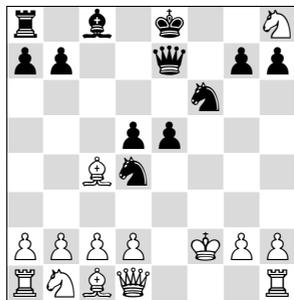
9...♖xd6? 10.♘f7 (one of the two ideas of the 9.d6 move set out in the previous note) 10...♖c5 11.d3 ♘g4 12.♖d2. Black has insufficient compensation for the sacrificed rook because 12...♙e2+ gives nothing: 13.♙xf2 ♘g4+ 14.♙e1 ♘f3+ 15.♙xe2 ♖f2+ 16.♙d1 ♘xd2 17.♙xd2+-. White has ensured his retirement with a rook and three minor pieces against the black queen.

10.♙xf2!

White can take this bishop now that the black queen no longer has access to the c5-square.

10...d5

10...♙g4 11.♖f1 ♘xc2 (11...♘e4+ 12.♙g1+-). Without the d6-pawn, Black would win by 12...♘e2+, followed by a check from the queen on c5, as in the previous note after 9.♙xf2) 12.♘c3 ♘xa1+-. The two knights in the opposing corners should emerge, but White will stay a piece ahead.



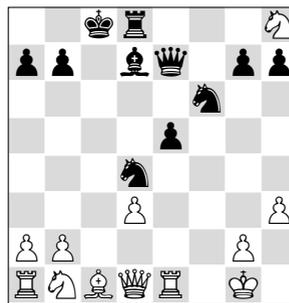
11.d3

The bishop retreat 11.♙e2!, to control the g4-square and keep the possibility of closing the f-file by ♙f3, was stronger: 11...♘e4+ 12.♙g1 ♖c5 13.♙h5+ g6 14.♙f1! ♖f8+ (14...gxh5 15.♖xh5+ ♘d7 16.♘c3+-) 15.♙f3 ♙g4 16.d3 ♘xf3 17.gxf3 ♙xf3 18.♖e1 ♙xh1+ 19.♙g1 ♖f3 20.♖f1 ♖xf1+ 21.♙xf1 ♘d6 22.♙h6!. The bishop can come to the aid of its equine teammate on h8, and White will retain an extra piece, even if the technical realization is not necessarily that straightforward.

11...dxc4?

11...♘g4+! offered Black better practical chances.

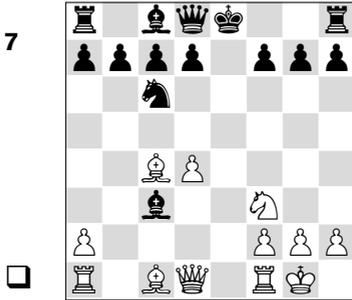
12.h3 cxd3 13.cxd3 ♙d7 14.♙e1 0-0-0 15.♙g1



The white king is now safe and Black will have no real compensation for the exchange less (after collecting the h8-knight).

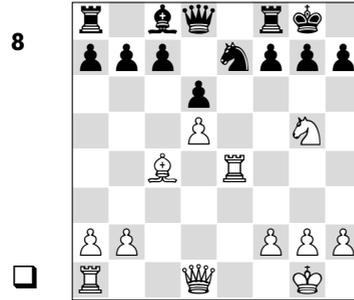
15...♙xh8 16.♙e3 ♖d6 17.♘d2 ♙c6 18.♘c4 ♖d5 19.♖d2 b6 20.♙ac1 ♙b7 21.♙xd4 ♖xd4+ 22.♖f2 1-0

Your move!



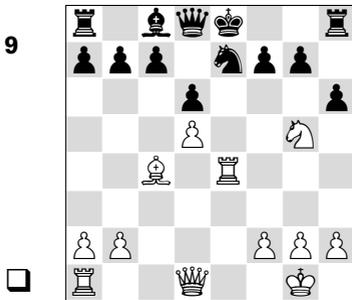
The a1-rook is attacked. How should White react?

(solution on page 156)

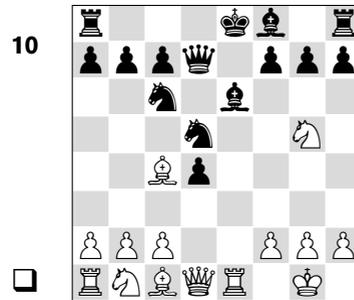


Black has just castled kingside. What is the most aggressive continuation for White?

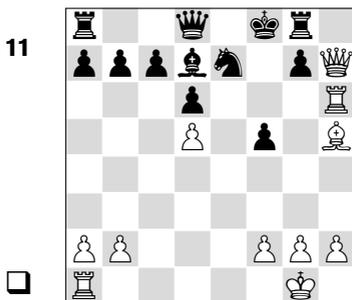
(solution on page 156)



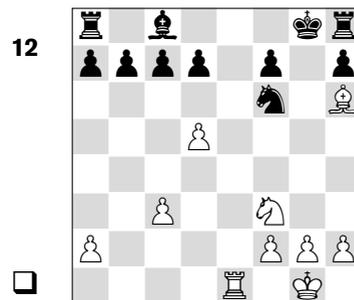
The g5-knight is attacked. What should White do? *(solution on page 157)*



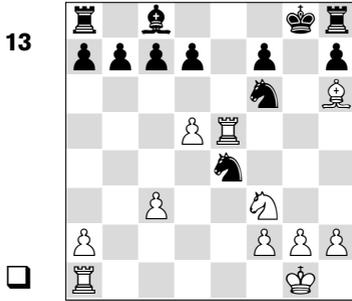
Black is ready to castle queenside and he would then have a good position. How should White continue? *(solution on page 157)*



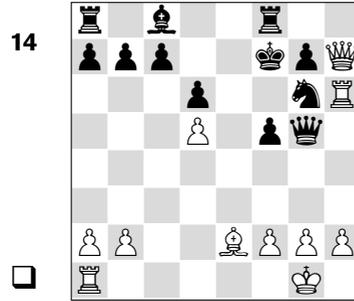
White to play and mate in two moves. *(solution on page 157)*



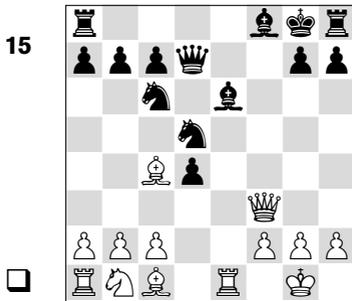
The e8-square is protected. How can White mate in two moves? *(solution on page 157)*



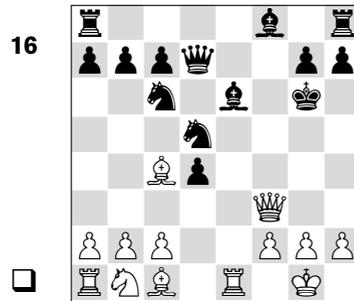
Compared to the previous diagram Black has two knights, but White mates anyway. How? (solution on page 158)



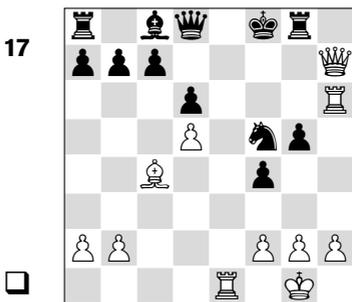
White to play and win. (solution on page 158)



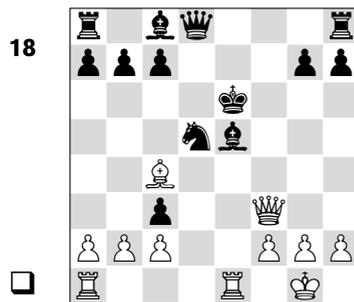
White to play and win. (solution on page 158)



The same position as in the previous diagram, but with the black king on g6 instead of e8. The same answer? (solution on page 158)



How does White continue his attack? (solution on page 159)



The black king has ventured onto e6. How does White conduct the execution? (solution on page 159)