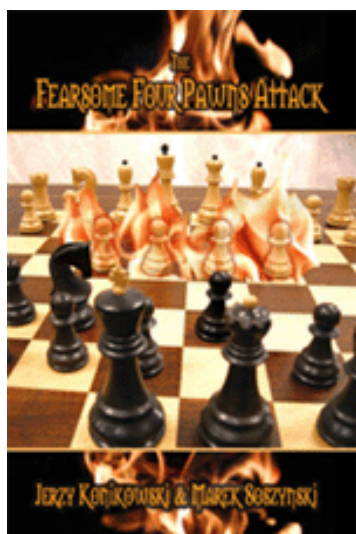




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

**Reviewed this month:**

Dangerous Weapons: The Sicilian
by John Emms & Richard Palliser

Starting Out: Sicilian Scheveningen
by Craig Pritchett

The Modern Morra Gambit
by Hannes Langrock

Chess Explained: The Taimanov Sicilian
by James Rizzitano

Sicilian Psychosis

This month we'll look at a number of recent publications about the ever-popular Sicilian Defense. We have specialized monographs on the Scheveningen and Taimanov, as well as the second volume of *Dangerous Weapons* from Everyman Chess. The latter is likely to become a very popular and exciting series. Another rousing release is from first-time author Hannes Langrock, who looks at the Smith-Morra Gambit for White, and gives Sicilian players something to seriously worry about.

Dangerous Weapons: The Sicilian by John Emms & Richard Palliser, Everyman Chess 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 304pp., \$23.95

Rating Chart

♦ – A poor book.

♦♦ – Not very good.

♦♦♦ – A useful book.

♦♦♦♦ – A good book.

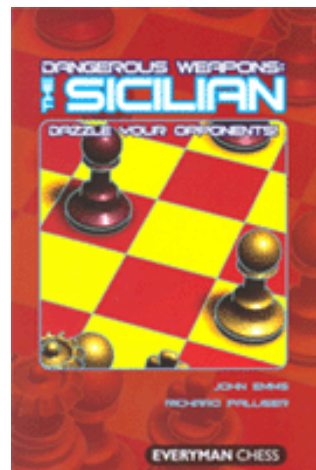
♦♦♦♦♦ – An excellent book.

Last [month](#) we acquainted ourselves with the first book in this series on the [Nimzo-Indian](#). This volume covers fourteen variations from the open Sicilian.

In the preface, Emms describes what constitutes a “dangerous weapon”:

For the purpose of choosing opening variations for this series, usually a Dangerous Weapon fits into one or more of these overlapping categories:

- 1) Moves that create complex, original positions full of razor-sharp tactics and rich positional ideas where creative, attacking play is rewarded; moves which are new, rare or very fresh, leaving plenty of scope for research.*
- 2) Moves that are highly ambitious; ones which aim for total domination.*
- 3) Moves that have been previously ignored, discarded or discredited by theory, perhaps unfairly so or maybe for the wrong reasons.*
- 4) Moves that are visually shocking; moves which seem to contradict the laws of the game.*



The material is divided as follows:

- Preface (4 pages)
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 A Swedish Speciality: The Gå-På (16 pages)
- 2 Taking a Break from Refuting the Dragon (20 pages)
- 3 Vallejo's Viable Löwenthal (44 pages)
- 4 Danger in the Taimanov (27 pages)
- 5 Silent but Violent (20 pages)
- 6 The Koblenks-Goletiani Kan (14 pages)
- 7 Take my Pawns! (21 pages)
- 8 Taking the Sting out of the Open Sicilian (17 pages)
- 9 Karklins against the Najdorf (17 pages)
- 10 Baklan and Epishin's Sozin Antidote (19 pages)
- 11 The Prins Variation (23 pages)
- 12 The O'Kelly Variation: Not Just a One-Trick Pony (28 pages)
- 13 A Cure for Indecision (10 pages)
- 14 Surprising The Sveshnikov (17 pages)

Ideas are offered for both sides, from the obscure 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 d5!?, to the more normal 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Be3 Bg7 7 Be2 0-0 8 Qd2!?. From my own experience, I can attest that the latter is truly dangerous, as I ended up in severe trouble whenever I've faced it as Black.

Generally, the recommended lines are relatively rare, but they all carry a punch that can knock out an unsuspecting opponent. The presentation of each section begins with a short introduction, along with an annotated game or two. Then follows a section called “Looking a Little Deeper,” where the authors delve into more detail with analysis, game fragments and prose.

Here is a game from chapter five, with some select comments:

J.Pinski-H.Teske

Koszalin 1999

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 e6 5.Nc3 Qc7 6.Be2 a6
7.Be3 Nf6 8.a3!?**



**8...d6 9.f4 Be7 10.g4! b5
11.g5 Nd7 12.0-0!? Bb7
13.f5! Nc5?**

After this seemingly natural move things quickly go downhill for Black. The only good way to defend against the threat to e6 is with 13...Nxd4 14 Qxd4 0-0. Now 15 f6 is certainly enticing, while White was doing well

after 15 Rf2 d5 16 exd5 Bc5 17 Qd2 Bxe3 18 Qxe3 exd5 19 Rd1 Qd6 20 Qd4 in Z.Efimenko-O.Pedersen, Cappelle la Grande 2003 (15...Rfe8!?, planning 16 f6 Bf8, looks more resilient).

14.fxe6 fxe6 15.Bg4!



This is very strong, although it's still surprising just how quickly Black's position collapses.

15...Nxd4 16.Qxd4 e5 17.Qd1

Now castling either side is illegal! Black's next move loses, but we well past the stage of suggesting good alternatives. 17...Bf8 18

Rxf8+ Bxf8 19 Qf3 followed by Rf1 is horrible for Black, for example 19...Qf7 20 Qh3 Nxe4 21 Rf1 Qe7 22 Bd7+!

17...Nxe4? 18.Nd5! Qc6 19.Be6! Nc5

Or 19...Rf8 20 Qh5+ g6 21 Qxh7.


20.Rf7 Nxe6

20...Bd8 21 Qh5 g6 22 Rxh7! would have been a pretty finish.

21.Rxe7+ Kd8 22.Rxe6 Re8 23.Qg4 1-0

White wins after 23...Qxd5 24.Bb6+ Kd7 25.Rxe5+, or 23...Rxe6 24.Qxe6 Qxd5 25.Bb6 mate.

I enjoy this new series a great deal. The ideas are well-presented and well-analyzed and thus can be well-recommended. Also worth mentioning is the fact that some of the ideas are not mentioned in specialized monographs. For instance, there are two ideas against the Taimanov Sicilian that are not in Rizzitano's book reviewed below.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Dangerous Weapons: The Sicilian*

by John Emms & Richard Palliser

Starting Out: Sicilian Scheveningen by Craig Pritchett, Everyman Chess 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 192pp., \$23.95

There have been remarkably few books written about the Sicilian Scheveningen. Aside from Pedersen's rather slim volume *Easy Guide to the Sicilian Scheveningen*, the only other title I can recall is Kasparov and Nikitin's monograph from the early 1980s. The reason the Scheveningen has waned is the strength of the Keres Attack: 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 g4. Therefore, Black has tried various other move orders such as 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 e6 and 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 d6 followed by ...Nf6.



The author, Scottish international master Craig Pritchett, wrote a volume on the Scheveningen back in the late 1970s and it is evident that he knows his topic well. Looking at Pritchett's own games, he now uses various move orders to arrive at the Scheveningen setup, while in his

earlier games he always allowed the Keres Attack, even though very few of his opponents took up the challenge.

Here is one of Pritchett's games:

Suradiradja, Herman (2345) - Pritchett, Craig (2410)

Decin 1976

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be2 a6 7.0-0 Qc7 8.f4 Be7 9.Kh1 0-0 10.Be3 Nc6 11.Bf3 Bd7 12.Qe1 Rac8 13.Qg3 b5 14.e5 Ne8 15.Ne4?

White is now getting himself into trouble.

15...d5 16.Nxc6 Qxc6 17.Nf6+

Retreating the knight will cost White in the c2-pawn, so White tries to stir trouble in another fashion.

17...Nxf6 18.exf6 Bxf6 19.c3 b4! 20.cxb4 Bxb2 21.Rad1 Qc7 22.Qf2 Bf6 23.f5 exf5 24.Bxd5 Be6 25.Bb6 Qc2 26.Rd2 Qa4 27.Bc5 Rfd8 28.Qf3 h6 29.h3 Bg5 30.Bb3 Qb5 31.Rxd8+ Rxd8 32.Bc2 g6 33.a4 Qc4 34.Bd1 Rd2 35.Rg1 Bd5 36.Qg3 Bf4 37.Qe1 Kh7?!



In his usual time trouble, Pritchett plays a decent move, but even better is both 37...Qd3 and 37...Qc3, threatening 38...Qxh3+ mate.

38.Be3 Rxd1 Once again sufficient, but even better is 38...Rd3, but given White's next move, the text move is possibly best... **0-1**


The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography and Acknowledgements (1 page)
- Introduction (4 pages)
- **6 Be2 and the Modern Scheveningen**
- 1 The Main Line with 9...Bd7 (34 pages)
- 2 The Main Line without 9...Bd7 (57 pages)
- **Aggressive White Set-ups**
- 3 Set-ups with Be3 and 0-0-0 (24 pages)
- 4 The Keres Attack (30 pages)
- 5 6 f4 and the Sozin, 6 Bc4 (21 pages)

- **Other Set-ups**
- 6 6 g3 and Rare 6th Moves (11 pages)
- Index of Variations (5 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

Each chapter begins with a short introduction, and then the theory is fleshed out in more depth, followed by 45 illustrative games. The book is well-written and the games are well-annotated. You cannot help but increase your overall understanding of chess and it saves time by pointing you in the right direction through the maze of variations.

However, in going through the book, it is quickly evident that many sidelines are completely ignored, even fairly substantial ones. For example, against both the Keres Attack and the English Attack, Pritchett only presents one line of play, when there are a handful of alternatives that offer Black an interesting game. Of course, with the volume of material available and the intended audience of the book it is impossible to cover everything, but it often seems as if there is not enough meat on the bone. There is almost enough of a repertoire provided for a player to pick up the opening, but *not* quite. This can be a problem if you don't like his recommendations, but otherwise this book is a good read.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Starting Out: Sicilian Scheveningen*
by Craig Pritchett

The Modern Morra Gambit by Hannes Langrock, Russell Enterprises
2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 334pp., \$26.95

The Morra Gambit, or as it is known in the U.S., the Smith-Morra Gambit, arises after 1 e4 c5 2 d4 cxd4 3 c3!?. Now Black can choose to accept it with 3...dxc3 or decline it with 3...Nf6. From my own experience, most players will find it exceedingly difficult to play against this sharp opening, because they won't know the theory.

The majority of miniatures in this opening have White as the winner, not Black. However, any database search will bring up dozens of examples of the following trap: 1 e4 c5 2 d4 cxd4 3 c3 dxc3





4 Nxc3 Nc6 5 Nf3 e6 6 Bc4 Nf6 7 0-0 Qc7 8 Qe2 Ng4 9 h3?? Nd4!.. Yet, a read through chapter eight will ensure that White does not fall so quickly.

It is puzzling as to why so few players choose the Morra gambit as white, because if Black does not adopt a passive position that requires patience and very careful play, the game can end very rapidly in White's favor. So it is the perfect weapon

against active-minded and aggressive players, as many Sicilian players tend to be, but not as useful against passive-minded plodders.

As we can see from the contents, White carries the biggest task with regards to theoretical knowledge:

- Foreword, Acknowledgements, Bibliography (2 pages)
- Introduction (16 pages)
- 1 The ...Qc7-System (39 pages)
- 2 The ...Bd7-System (19 pages)
- 3 An Early ...d6 and ...Nf6 (17 pages)
- 4 The Classical Main Line (13 pages)
- 5 The ...Nge7-System (48 pages)
- 6 The Early Development of Black's Dark-Squared Bishop (25 pages)
- 7 The Fianchetto Variation (18 pages)
- 8 The Siberian Variation (18 pages)
- 9 The Chicago Defense (27 pages)
- 10 Sidelines (54 pages)
- 11 The Morra Gambit Declined (25 pages)
- Appendix A - The Delayed Morra Gambit (2 pages)
- Appendix B - Solutions (2 pages)
- Index of Variations (6 pages)

This is a lot of coverage for a relatively undistinguished opening, but you never get the feeling that any of it is wasted. The presentation is clear and neatly organized and there is plenty of original analysis. My only minor point of criticism is that although the mainline may end at move twenty, in some cases another thirty moves follows without comment, when just a little punctuation would have improved this book ever so slightly.

Langrock starts off with a truly inspiring introduction, where he explains how he chose to present the material:

“I attached great importance to remaining appropriately objective, which may sound natural, but remaining objective has

been an elusive goal for many authors when writing about gambits.

My criteria for choosing the stem games followed four parameters:

1. Quality (which was the critical move or variation)
2. Quantity (which move or variation was played most often)
3. The strength of the players
4. The course of the game (a spectacular attacking game is more instructional than a quick draw)."

Such an attitude commands respect because so many authors fail to be completely objective in their zeal to promote a particular opening, especially gambits. Therefore, players will often have unrealistic expectations about what they can achieve. He then moves on to show a number of splendid games. Here is one with select notes:

F.Roselli - N. Tereschenko

corr 1972

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.Nxc3 Nc6 5.Nf3 d6 6.Bc4 e6 7.0-0 a6 8.Qe2! Be7 9.Rd1 Qc7 10.Bf4! Ne5 11.Bxe5! dxe5 12.Bb5+!?



12...Kf8

12...axb5 is analyzed in the theoretical section. White's attack more than compensates for the piece. Here is one illustrative line: 13.Nxb5 Qa5 14.Rac1 Nf6 15.Nc7+ Kf8 16.Nxa8 Qxa8, and now White wins by means of a tactical motif that is typical of the ...Qc7-system: 17.Qc4 Bd7

18.Rxd7!+-.

13.Rac1 axb5 14.Nxb5 Qa5 15.Rc7 b6 16.Nxe5 f6?

Allowing a nice finish. Still, his position was beyond salvation. For example the desirable 16...Ba6 fails to 17.Qh5 g6 18.Rxe7! Nxe7 19.Qh6+ Kg8 20.Nd7 f6 21.Nxf6+ Kf7 22.Nh5! and Black resigned in T.Jansen-G.Hadley, Email 1998.

17.Rd8+! Bxd8 18.Rf7+ Ke8 19.Nd6# 1-0

The introduction continues with such topics as: the Practical Point of View, Psychological Aspects, Strategies, the Target Group, Typical Tactical Motifs, the Pawn Advance e4-e5, the Knight Sacrifice on d5, and the Piece Sacrifice on b5; and it concludes with some tactical exercises. After all this, you cannot help but feel inspired to take on the task of working your way through the rest of the book. Langrock gives a balanced presentation of how to approach the opening and why you should be brave enough to use it against stronger players.

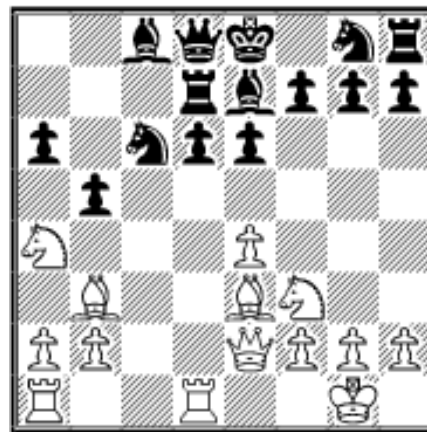
Each chapter starts with an overview of the critical lines, followed by the selection of main games with the theory weaved into the notes, and ends with a brief conclusion that ties everything together. The theoretical material is presented in a very structured and easy-to-understand manner, even though there is a massive amount of analysis, some quoted from IMs Josef Palkövi and Janos Flesch, and a stunning amount of new ideas and improvements from the author. The games are also prefaced by descriptive headlines such as: 10.Bf4! Takes Control, The Prophylactic 17.a3!: the Last Word in this Critical Line, or 10.Nd5?! - White Should Resist the Temptation, etc. However, it would have been easier to navigate the material if the author had presented the worst alternative first and the best alternative last.

Let's see another example from the book, with select analysis:

B.Boschma-V.Grigoriev

corr 1996

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.Nxc3 e6 5.Nf3 d6 6.Bc4 a6 7.0-0 b5 8.Bb3 Nc6 9.Qe2 Be7 10.Rd1 Ra7 11.Be3 Rd7 12.Na4!



The most dangerous and objectively the strongest continuation; White emerges from the immense complications with an advantage, even against Black's best defense.

12...bxa4

Rejecting the sacrifice doesn't solve Black's problems:

12...Rb7 13.Nc5 Rb8 Black's rook has gone for a stroll ...Ra7-d7-b7-b8, while White has improved his position. 14.e5! d5 15.Rac1 Na5 16.Nd2! Nxb3 (16...Nh6 17.Bxh6 gxh6 18.Qg4 Bxc5 19.Rxc5 Qg5 20.Qd4 Rg8 21.g3 Qg4 22.f4 +/-; 16...Bf8!? 17.Qg4 Ne7 18.Bg5 with the initiative) 17.Ndxb3 with the initiative.

13.Bxa4 Bb7 14.Rac1

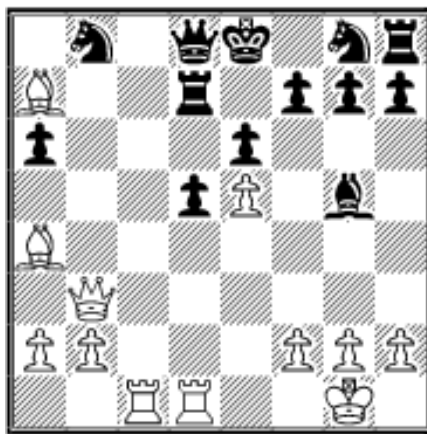
This is the first critical junction of the 12.Na4!-variation. Black has two choices to look after the c6-knight.

14...Nb8

14...Qa8 15.Qc4! is the most powerful continuation 15...Nb8! 16.e5! d5 17.Qg4 Bf8, covering g7 and preparing ...Ne7. Negele's notes it's very difficult to break Black's defense: 18.Rc7! is the correct way to lead the attack: 18...Nc6! 19.Rxd7 Kxd7 20.Rxd5+ Kc7! 21.Rd1 Nge7 22.Rc1 Nf5 (22...h5 23.Qc4 with an attack) 23.Nd4 Nfxd4 24.Qxd4 Be7 25.Qb6+ Kd7 26.Rd1+ Kc8 27.Rd6 Bd8 28.Qc5 Be7 29.Bxc6 Bxd6 30.Bxb7+ Kb8 (30...Kxb7? 31.exd6 +/-) 31.Qxd6+ Kxb7 32.Qd7+ Kb8 33.Qxf7 +/-.

15.e5! Bxf3 16.Qxf3 d5 17.Ba7! Bg5?

The tougher 17...Nh6 is strongly met with 18.Bxb8 (18.Qb3?! 0-0 19.Bxb8 Qxb8 20.Bxd7 Qxe5 21.Bc8 was somewhat better for White, G.Compagnone-D.Hamblin, corr 1999, but it is difficult to play.) 18...Qxb8 19.Rxd5! exd5 20.Bxd7+ Kxd7 21.Qxd5+ Bd6 22.Qc6+ Ke6 23.exd6 and now the mainline runs 23...Qb5 24.Qc3 Re8 25.h3! f6 26.Qc7 Nf7 27.Rc6! Rd8 28.Qe7+ Kf5 29.Rc7 Qd5 30.Qxf7 Qxf7 31.Rxf7 +/-.


18.Qb3!

This is an important improvement; after which White's position is just winning. Palkövi deeply analyzed 18.Bxb8?! and concludes that White is clearly better, but after 18...Bxc1! 19.Bd6 Bxb2! 20.Rxd5! he overlooked 20...Bxe5!, when Black is near to equalizing 21.Rxe5 (21.Bxe5 exd5 22.Bxg7 Qa5! unclear)

21...Ne7 22.Qb7 Qc8 23.Bxd7+ Qxd7 24.Qxa6 0-0 +/-=equal and the a-pawn only gives White a symbolic edge.

18...Bxc1 19.Rxc1 Ne7 20.Bb6 0-0 21.Bxd8 Rxd8 22.g3 +/- (and the game is quoted without any further comments to its conclusion at move 40) **1-0**

I find this to be a very exciting, thorough and inspiring book. It is clearly a must-buy for Morra devotees and players of the black side should consider it as well, since they might otherwise get into trouble without it. Facing a properly prepared Morra Gambit player can be extremely uncomfortable, because you have to exert extreme caution to avoid getting slaughtered. So go get this book in a hurry.

My assessment of this book: 

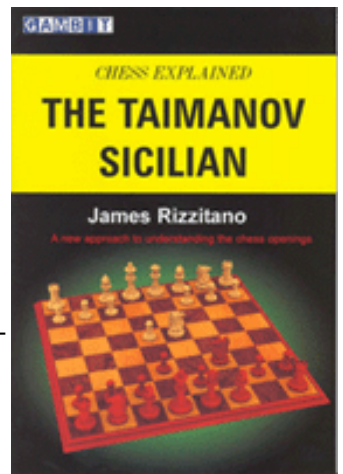
[Order](#) *The Modern Morra Gambit*

by Hannes Langrock

Chess Explained: The Taimanov Sicilian by James Rizzitano, Gambit Publications 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 111pp., \$19.95

The Taimanov Sicilian arises after 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 and it has been the life-long opening choice of international master James Rizzitano. He explains why in the introduction:

“The Taimanov gives Black considerable flexibility with both his pawn structure and piece deployments - Black’s set-up has a lot of counter-punching potential and White must always be wary of a timely ...d5 pawn-break.



The Taimanov has relatively less opening theory than certain lines of the Sicilian Defence such as the Dragon, Najdorf and Sveshnikov variations - depending upon one’s perspective, this can be either an advantage or a disadvantage. Most club and tournament players do not have time to learn an opening that requires memorization of a telephone-book sized manual. The Taimanov Sicilian is a quality opening without the quantity of variations.

Sicilian Defence lines where Black plays ...e6 on the second move severely limit White’s Anti-Sicilian options - for example, there are no Bb5(+) lines to worry about.”

This is not a standard reference work, but rather a helpful guide that allows the reader to gain an understanding of the opening, so that one

can find the right moves during play without having to memorize variations. As with other books in this series, it offers:

- 25 instructive games discussed in detail
- Chapter introductions and conclusions that emphasize key points
- Full indexes of games and variations
- Extensive verbal explanations of plans and maneuvers

The material is divided as follows:

- Symbols, Dedication, Acknowledgements, Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (3 pages)
- 1 Probing Bishop and Maroczy Bind Variations: 5 Nb5 (16 pages)
- 2 Taimanov Introduction: 5 Nc3 a6 (16 pages)
- 3 White's Sixth-Move Alternatives: 5 Nc3 Qc7 (15 pages)
- 4 Flexible Variation: 5 Nc3 Qc7 6 Be2 (11 pages)
- 5 Sharp Variation: 5 Nc3 Qc7 6 Be3 (21 pages)
- 6 Paulsen Main Line: 5 Nc3 Qc7 6 Be3 a6 7 Be2 (22 pages)
- List of Games, Index of Variations (3 pages)

Each chapter begins with a short introduction to the variations and the games, followed by the games themselves, all of which are thoroughly annotated. The most recent games are from 2005, one of which features the author in a loss against Shabalov, though not necessarily a deserved one.

Let's have a brief look at a game by Taimanov that spans slightly more than three pages in the book:

Nataf, Igor (2485) - Taimanov, Mark (2490)
Cannes Generations 1998

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 Nge7
7.Nb3 d6 8.Qd2 Ng6 9.a4**

White decides to restrain Black's queenside expansion - an alternative plan is to castle queenside and play in the centre with 9 0-0-0 b5 10 f4 Bb7 11 Qf2 (the white queen vacates the d-file and lines up powerfully with the bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal) 11...Be7 12 e5! (White alters the central pawn structure to lock in Black's light-squared bishop) 12...d5 13 Bb6 Qb8 14 h4! and White has a strong initiative on the kingside. This variation illustrates some of the key issues surrounding the ...Nge7-g6 manoeuvre - although Black's knight is not subject to attack by a white e5 pawn advance, the g6-knight does not generate any pressure on White's centre. The net result is that the traditional Sicilian Defence plan of queenside expansion via ...b5-b4 does

not have as much bite because Black is not threatening to win White's e4-pawn. Another problem for Black is that he has expended an extra tempo to develop the knight to the g6-square rather than the f6-square rather than the f6-square - he is then vulnerable to an additional loss of time because in many positions the g6-knight is a tempting target for a tempo-gaining white h-pawn advance.

9...b6 10.f4 Be7 11.g3

White prepares to advance his h-pawn.

11...0-0 12.h4 Re8

Black clears a potential retreat-square for his knight.

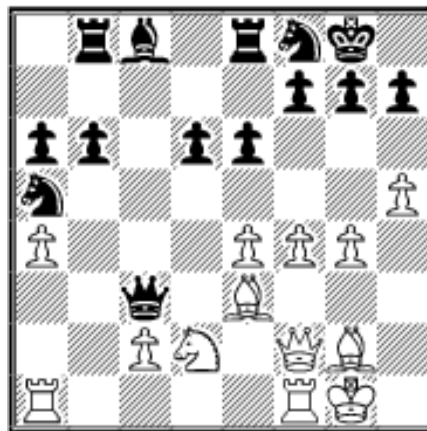
13.Qf2 Rb8 14.Bg2

The straight-forward advance 14 h5 Nf8 15 h6 g6 16 Bg2 Qc7 17 0-0 gives White an edge because of his more fluid development and kingside attacking prospects.

14...Na5 15.Nd2?

Every tempo is crucial in a sharp position and this retreat is too passive. White should get on with it and play for a kingside attack with 15 Nxa5 bxa5 16 h5 Nf8 17 0-0-0 Qc7 (17...Bf6? 18 e5 is crushing) 18 h6 g6 (Black's prospects for generating pressure along the b-file are an illusion after 18...Qb7 19 b3) 19 Rhf1 and White's position is preferable because of his more active pieces and kingside attacking prospects.

15...Bf6 16.0-0 Qc7 17.h5 Bxc3 18.bxc3 Nf8 19.g4 Qxc3?!



One of the most important questions to answer in any chess position is this: "Which is my worst-placed piece, and what can I do to improve its position?" Here the answer is Black's f8-knight, and the solution is to play 19...Nd7! to bring the wayward piece back into the game. White's doubled c-pawns are not going anywhere - capturing one of them only gives White the opportunity to activate his pieces.

20.e5 Nc4 21.Nxc4 Qxc4 22.exd6 Nd7 23.h6 Bb7!

Taimanov hurries to exchange light-squared bishops - then his knight will have a potential outpost on d5.

24.Bxb7 Rxb7 25.hxg7 Nf6!

Taimanov demonstrates an important defensive idea here - he leaves White's g7-pawn alone because it is actually functioning as a shield for Black's king.

26.Rfd1?

White should protect his g4-pawn and activate his bishop via 26 Qf3 Nd5 27 Rad1 Rd7 28 Bd4, with prospects for counterplay.

26...Nxc4 27.Qf3 Nxe3 28.Qxb7

The lesser evil was 28 Qxe3 Qc6 29 Rd2 f6 with an edge for Black because of White's scattered pawns.

28...Nxd1 29.Rxd1 Qxc2 30.Qf3 Rd8

White has a passed d-pawn, but his king is exposed and his remaining pawns are all vulnerable.


31.d7 Qxa4 32.Qd3 Qxf4 33.Rd2 Qg5+ 34.Kh2 Qh5+ 35.Kg3 Qg6+ 36.Kf4

No relief is offered by 36 Qxg6 hxg6 37 Kf4 f6! and White's remaining pawns drop off as in the game continuation.

36...Qxd3 37.Rxd3 f6 38.Rd6 Kxg7 39.Rxe6 Rxd7 40.Rxb6 Ra7 0-1

Three extra pawns is [sic] enough!

Rizzitano does a very good job of presenting the material and offers numerous improvements over existing theory. All the major lines are covered, but many minor lines were sacrificed to stay within the limitations of the series. Upon reading this book, players of either color can be confident that they have a good fundamental understanding of the opening and that their theoretical knowledge is up-to-date and then some. You will not find a better introduction to the Taimanov Sicilian.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Chess Explained:*
The Taimanov Sicilian
by James Rizzitano



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