



C O L U M N I S T S

Over the Horizons

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Something Old, Something New

Which is the oldest chess opening? Some will say the Italian Game, “Giuoco Piano” in the old Italian sources. But it isn’t. What will be your next guess? The Damiano Defense, perhaps, or the King’s Gambit?

The probable answer can be found in *El regreso de Francesch Vicent*, published in November 2005, by the Spanish chess historian José Antonio Garzón. The book mainly tries to reconstruct the first printed chess book, *Libre dels jochs partits dels schachs en nombre de 100* (Valencia 1495) by Francesch Vicent. The last known copy of Vicent’s work went lost in 1811, when French troops occupied the Benedictine monastery of Mont-serrat. But one chapter of Garzón’s new book also discusses the old Catalan manuscript containing the poem *Schachs d’amor*, which describes the following chess game:

Castellví – Vinales
Scandinavian Defense

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd8 4 Bc4 Nf6 5 Nf3 Bg4 6 h3 Bxf3 7 Qxf3 e6 8 Qxb7 Nbd7 9 Nb5



9...Rc8 10 Nxa7 Nb6 11 Nxc8 Nxc8
12 d4 Nd6 13 Bb5+ Nxb5 14
Qxb5+ Nd7 15 d5 exd5 16 Be3
Bd6 17 Rd1 Qf6 18 Rxd5 Qg6 19
Bf4 Bxf4 20 Qxd7+ Kf8 21 Qd8
mate.

Most authors considered the Göttingen Manuscript to be older, but now José Antonio Garzón examined the water-mark of the Catalan manuscript and discovered

that *Schachs d’amor* must be dated between 1474 and 1478. This practically means that Castellví – Vinales is the oldest game of modern chess (we are speaking of the version with “our” queen and bishop moves, not Arabian chess). There merely remains a small chance for the Göttingen Manuscript to keep its record. It is generally believed that it

originated about 1500-1505, only Fritz Clemens Görschen in *Schach-Echo* (1975) boldly goes back to 1471-75.

During the nineteenth century, the “Queen’s Pawn vs. King’s Pawn” Opening or “Centre Counter Gambit”, as Jaenisch called it, wasn’t regarded as a standard opening, but now and then even prominent players used 1...d5. Anderssen lost with it against Morphy. William Norwood Potter wrote “that the defence is at least playable between strong players; and perhaps, were it more often adopted, its claim as a regular opening might become recognized.” Before “the Scandinavians” took over, Joseph Henry Blackburne had already played it in more than 20 games, with a positive result. Some sources say that the merit of the Scandinavians was to move the queen to a5 instead of d8, but, while you *can* find Qa5 in earlier games by Anderssen and Blackburne (just one example: Weiss – Blackburne, New York 1889: 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 d4 Qxd5 4 Nc3 Qa5 5 Nf3 c6), Ludvig and Gustaf Collijn from Sweden still used the old-fashioned 2...Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd8 in their eight games of the Nordic Congress 1897, scoring 2-6.

Years later, however, we see Gustaf Collijn playing the modern move order 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 d4 c6 against Hallgarten (Ostende B tournament, 1906), and, after 1...d5, Carl Schlechter comments in *Deutsche Schachzeitung* 1906, p. 306: “This defense could be named, ‘Nordic Defense’ or ‘Scandinavian Defense,’ because the Nordic players [did so much] for the exploration of this opening.” This was probably the earliest mention of the name “Scandinavian Defense” (as pointed out in *Kaissiber* 7 by Peter Anderberg, Harmstorf).

John Lutes in his “Scandinavian Defense” (1992) says: “The entire defense, in all its ramifications, was repeatedly played and analyzed by Gustaf Nyholm, Gustaf Collijn, Ludvig Collijn, Fritz Englund, Karl Berndtsson and Erhard Björklund, as well as many others. These Scandinavian masters completely reshaped the defense into an exciting and interesting asymmetrical opening.” Apparently the Finnish player Erhard Björklund was the reason to choose the name “Scandinavian Defense,” instead of “Swedish Defense.”



The February column, [A Queen on Wheels](#), recommended the little-known line 8...Nbd7!? for Black. Here I'll mainly look at the readers' reactions. However, I'll take the opportunity to make the picture more complete, by discussing early alternatives ignored in the first article.

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5

2...Nf6 3 c4 e6 became popular at the end of the 1980s. However, this so-called "Icelandic Gambit" has a history. I prefer the name "Palme Gambit," after the Austrian Rudolf Palme, who pioneered the typical motifs of the gambit in the 1950s (cf. *Kaissiber* 1). There are even older examples, although less convincing than Palme's games: Hruby – Auspitzer, Vienna 1889, was in *Deutsches Wochenschach* 1889, p. 391. So when the "Icelandic Gambit" finally got its name in 1989, it was already 100 years old. And, in *Deutsche Schachzeitung* 1913, we find a short comment by Carl Schlechter: "3...e6 also comes into consideration."

3 Nc3 Qa5 4 d4

Against 4 Bc4 Nf6 5 d3 c6 6 Bd2 Bg4 7 f3 Bf5 8 Nd5 Qd8 9 Nxf6 gxf6 [\[5\]](#) **Björn Holzhauer** warns that Black could end in a situation considered as unfavorable by Matthias Wahls [\[4\]](#): 10 Ne2; for example, 10...Qb6 11 Ng3 Bg6 12 f4 f5 (Holzhauer). I admit that my article [\[5\]](#) somewhat underestimated the strategy of delaying Nf3. Wahls even formulates a rule that Black should postpone the development Nf6, until White has himself played Nf3. Never-theless, I am inclined to share Mieses' old point of view, that Black doesn't have to fear a set-up involving d2-d3. In the line above, Black could vary with 9...exf6!?



After 10 Ne2 Bc5 11 Ng3 Be6!, Black has a solid position.

4...Nf6

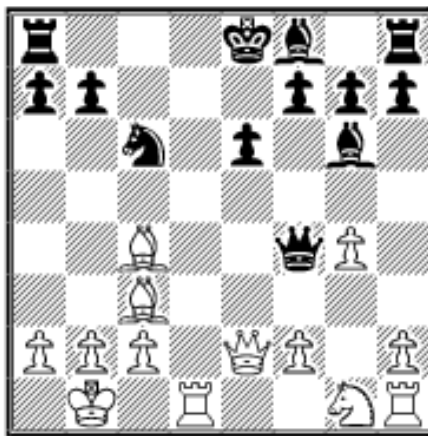
Playing the defense in the style of Jacques Mieses. Other interpretations are possible. Even Anderssen's 4...e5 has never met a convincing refutation: 5 Nf3 (or 5 dxe5 Bb4 6 Bd2 Qxe5+ [\[2\]](#) 7 Be2 Bg4 +=) 5...Bb4 6 Bd2 Bg4 7 Be2

exd4 8 Nxd4 Qe5 9 Ncb5 Bxe2 10 Qxe2 Bxd2+ 11 Kxd2 Qxe2+ 12 Kxe2 (Tarrasch – Mieses, Göteborg 1920) 12...Kd8, and Mieses [\[1\]](#) wrote, perhaps a bit optimistic, that he didn't see an advantageous continuation for White.

Matthias Wahls [\[4\]](#) prefers the modern continuation 4...c6. One of his main lines: 5 Bc4 Bf5 6 Bd2 e6 7 d5 cxd5 8 Nxd5 Qd8 9 Qe2 Nf6 10 Nxf6+ Qxf6 11 0-0-0 Nc6 12 g4 Bg6 (see p. 111 in [\[4\]](#), by another move order)

(a) 13 f4 0-0-0 14 Nf3 Bd6!! 15 f5?! exf5 16 Bg5 Bf4+! 17. Bxf4 Rxd1+ 18 Rxd1 fxg4 19 Qd2 Rd8 20 Bd3 gxf3 21 Bg5 Rxd3! 22 cxd3 Qe6 23 a3 Ne5 –/+, a splendid piece of analysis by Wahls [\[4\]](#).

(b) However, Black seems to face serious problems after 13 Bc3 Qf4+ 14 Kb1, as **Björn Holzhauer** (Switzerland) indicated in his e-mail:



(b1) 14...Qe4? 15 Qxe4 Bxe4 16 f3 Bg6 17 Ne2 e5 18 f4 f6 19 f5 Bf7 20 Bxf7+ Kxf7 21 Rd7+ Ke8 22 Rxb7 h5 23 g5 Ne7 24 gxf6 gxf6 25 Ng3 Nd5 26 Ne4 Be7 27 Rd1 Rg8 28 a4 Nxc3+ 29 Nxc3 a5 30 Rdd7 Bd8 31 Rh7 Ra6 32 Ne4 Kf8 33 Rbd7 Rg1+ 34 Ka2 Kg8 35 Rxh5 Ra8 36 Rd3 Be7 37 Rhh3 Rc8 38 Rhg3+ Rxg3 39 Rxg3+ Kf7 40 Rc3 Rh8 41 h3 Rh4 42 Rc4 Rxh3 43 c3 Rf3 44 b4 axb4 45 cxb4 Rxf5 46 a5 Rh5 47 b5 f5 48 Nc3 f4 49 a6 f3 50 Ne4 Rh8 51 b6 Ra8 52 a7 Bd8 53 Rc8 1-0, Schinkowski – Holzhauer, Verbandsliga Mitte Schleswig-Holstein, 2004.

(b2) 14...h5 15 g5! (instead of 15 gxh5 Rxh5 unclear, Wahls [\[4\]](#)) 15...Be4 16 f3 Bf5 17 g6 Bxg6 18 Nh3 Qc7 19 Ng5 Bf5 20 Rd5 Bxc2+ 21 Kxc2 Be7 22 Nxe6 fxe6 23 Qxe6 Nb4+ 24 Bxb4 Qxc4+ 25 Kb1

Qxb4 1-0, Holzhauer – N. N., corr. 2004.

Björn Holzhauer: “In this line John Emms [3] recommends 14...h5 15 g5 h4, but 16 Bb5, instead of his suggestion 16 Bd5, seems to refute this line. 14...a6 may be playable. I didn’t find a refutation – but I am not convinced.”

5 Nf3

On 5 Bc4 (Duras), the reply 5...Nc6 is attributed an “!” by Mieses [1], but **Ludger Keitlinghaus** (Prague) regards the move as slightly dubious. In one of his games he achieved a strong attack after 6 Nge2 Bg4 7 f3 Be6 8 Bb5 Bd5 9 b4!. However, according to Keitlinghaus, Black should have played 8...0-0-0 9 Bxc6 bxc6 10 Bd2 Bf5! (else 11 b3 followed by Na4), with about equal chances.

Another set-up analyzed in *Kaissiber* #6 [5] was 5 Bd2, a move introduced by Leonhardt: 5...Bg4 6 f3 Bf5 7 g4 Bg6 8 f4 e6 9 Qe2 Be7 (Leonhardt – Mieses, Karlsbad 1907). Here **Björn Holzhauer** comments that 10 f5! is rather dangerous for Black (instead of the often played, but harmless 10 Bg2): “I analyzed this after a correspondence game with Kevin White (England). Perhaps the wild 9...Nc6 is worth a try, although 10 Nb5!? Bb4 11 f5 a6 12 c3!? doesn’t look too reliable.”

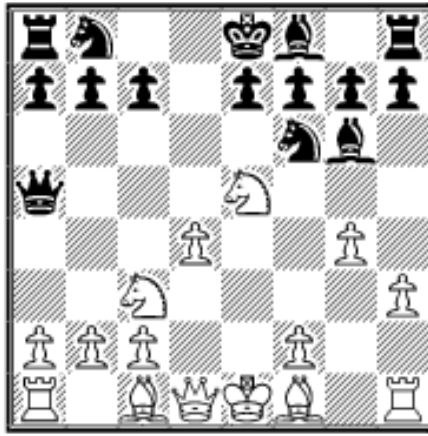


A fascinating variation. After 12...Qxb5 13 fxg6 hxg6 14 g5, the immediate 14...Nxd4 fails: 15 Qxb5+ axb5 16 cxd4 Bxd2+ 17 Kxd2 Ne4+ 18 Ke3 Ng3 19 Bxb5+ c6 20 Bc4 Nxh1 21 Nf3 Ng3 22 hxg3 +/- . But 14...Nd5!? 15 cxb4 Nxd4 comes into question, e.g. 16 Qxb5+ (or 16 Qe4 Qb6 17 Nf3 Nxf3+ 18 Qxf3 Nxb4 19 Qc3 Rh4! resp. 19 Qe4 a5 +=) 16...axb5 17 Bd3 Nb3 18 Rb1 Nxd2 19 Kxd2

Rxa2 20 Bxb5+ c6 21 Bc4 Ra4. White still has an advantage; nevertheless, a draw seems to be the most probable result, since White’s remaining pawns are not impressive.

Björn Holzhauer continues: “Faced with this idea (9...Be7 10 f5!), GM Eric Prié hinted at 6...Bd7 or 7...Bd7, which he has already played in practice. Another alternative, 5...Qb6 6 Nf3 Bg4 7 h3 Bxf3 8 Qxf3 e6 9 0-0-0 Nbd7 10 d5 e5 11 g4 h6 12 h4 0-0-0 13 Bh3 Kb8 14 g5 hxg5 15 hxg5 Ne8 happened in one of my correspondence games, again with an uncom-fortable situation for Black.”

5...Bg4 6 h3 Bh5 7 g4 Bg6 8 Ne5



8...Nbd7!?

This knight move, instead of the more common 8...e6, was discussed in detail in [A Queen on Wheels](#).

Now a new move by **Ludger Keitlinghaus** makes life a bit harder for Black, as we will see below.

Tartakower's line 8...c6 9 h4 Ne4, given as playable in the February [article](#), can no longer be trusted.

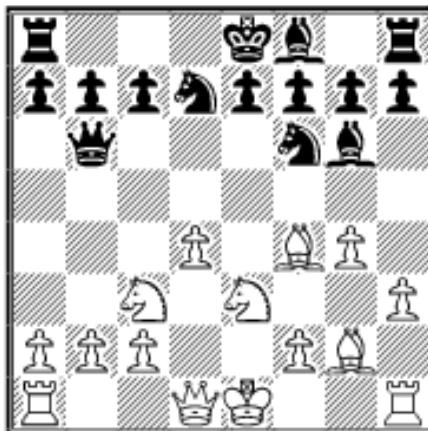
After 10 Qf3 Nxc3 11 bxc3 Nd7 12 Nxd7 Kxd7 13 Rb1 Kc8 14 Bg2 Qxa2 15 Rb2 Qe6+ (so far my analysis in [5]) **Björn Holzhauer** found a clear refutation: 16 Be3 ("why should White exchange queens by means of 16 Qe3?") 16...Qc4 (16...f6 17 d5) 17 Kd2 h5 18 g5 e5 19 Rhb1 b6 20 Qxc6+ Qxc6 21 Bxc6 Rb8 22 d5 +- (Holzhauer).

9 Nc4 Qa6 10 Bf4 Qe6+! 11 Ne3

For the two important alternatives: 11 Qe2 and 11 Ne5 see [A Queen on Wheels](#).

11...Qb6 12 Nb5!

Here Khalifman had recommended 12 Bg2 in his recent book [7], as two readers, **Björn Holzhauer** (Switzerland) and **John Anderson** (Great Britain) kindly informed me. The work [Opening for White according to Anand, 1 e4](#) (Sofia 2004), presents Khalifman as its author on the front page, but inside it reads: "Copyright (c) 2004 by Alexander Khalifman and Sergei Soloviov."



Khalifman/Soloviov write:

"12...Qxb2. Black's queen is finally in action, but it is too late. After 13 Ncd5 Nxd5 14 Nxd5, Black's position is very difficult; for example, 14...0-0-0 15 Rb1 +/-, and if 15...Qxc2, then 16 Nxe7+! Bxe7 17 Bxb7+ Kb8 18 Be4+, and White wins."

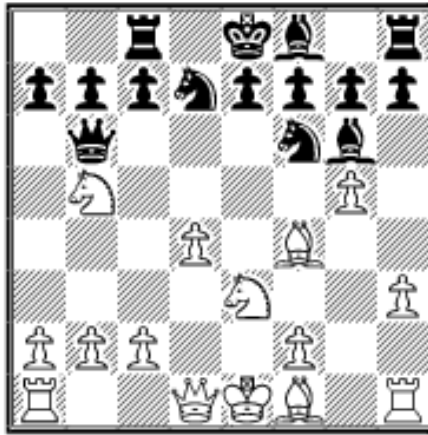
Instead of the serious mistake

12...Qxb2?, Black should continue

12...e6 13 Nc4 Qa6 14 Qe2 0-0-0 15 0-0-0 Bb4, which is roughly equal. The computer found a more original alternative: 12...c6 13 Qd2 e6 14

Nc4 Qb4!? 15 a3 Qxc4 16 Bf1 Bd3!; for example, 17 Qxd3 Qxd3 18 Bxd3 h6 19 0-0-0 Be7 20 Kb1 Nd5.

12...Rc8 13 g5

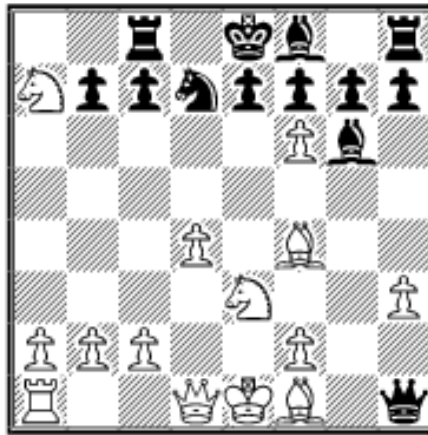


13...Be4

13...e5 14 dxe5 Ne4 is hardly correct: 15 Qg4 Qc6 16 Rd1 Bc5 17 f3 a6 18 a4! 0-0 19 Qxd7 Qb6 20 a5! Qxa5+ 21 Nc3 etc. (+-)

My February [column](#) recommended 13...Qc6?, with the following continuation: 14 Rg1 e5 15 dxe5 Ne4 16 c3 Bc5 17 h4 Rd8 18 Nd4 Bxd4 19 cxd4 Qb6 20 Nc4 Qb4+ 21

Bd2 Nxd2 22 Qxd2 Qe7 23 Be2 +=. But **Ludger Keitlinghaus** (Prague) detected a hidden refutation of Black's queen move: 14 Nxa7! Qxh1 15 gxf6!, intending 16 Qe2 and 0-0-0. White's threats are terribly strong:



(a) 15...Rb8 16 Qe2 Be4 17 Qc4 exf6 18 0-0-0 Qf3 19 Bxc7 Ra8 20 Bg3 +-.

(b) 15...Rd8 16 Nb5 Nxf6 17 Nxc7+ Kd7 18 c3 Rc8 19 Qa4+ Kd8 20 Qa5 etc.

(c) 15...Ra8 16 Nb5 Rc8 17 Qe2 Nxf6 18 f3 Bh5 19 Nxc7+ Rxc7 20 Bxc7 Qxf3 21 Qxf3 Bxf3 22 Bb5+ Bc6 23 Bxc6+ bxc6 24 a4 +-

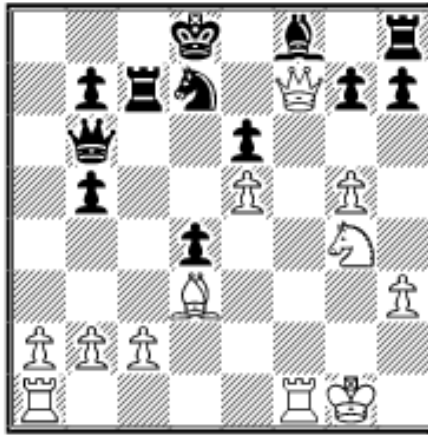
(analysis).

(d) 15...e5 16 dxe5 Rd8, but again 17 Qd5! +- (Keitlinghaus) wins easily.

In *Kaissiber* 23, I recommended 13...Bh5 14 Be2! Qxb5 15 Bxb5 Bxd1 16 Rxd1 c6 17 Bc4 (the ending 17 gxf6 cxb5 appears less dangerous for Black) 17...Nh5 18 Bh2 e6 19 c3 g6. With his pair of bishops, White certainly has the better chances. Although this last line seems playable for Black, the aggressive text move could be an improvement. The position remains complex and poses more practical problems for White.

14 f3 Nd5 15 fxe4 Nxf4 16 Qf3

Equally critical is 16 Qg4 a6 17 Qxf4 (now after 17 Nc4, Black has 17...Qe6 18 Qxf4 axb5 19 Ne3 h6 with counterplay) 17...axb5 18 e5 (18 Be2 e5 19 dxe5 Bc5 20 Nd5 Qa5+ 21 c3 c6 22 Rf1 0-0, unclear) 18...e6 19 Bd3 c5 20 0-0 cxd4 21 Ng4 Kd8 22 Qxf7 Rc7:



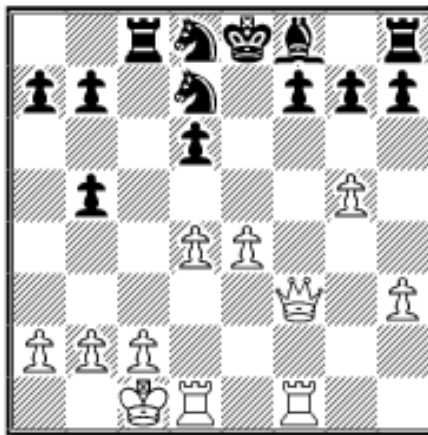
At first sight, White has an overwhelming position, but Black's resources should not be underestimated. For example, 23 a4 Nf6 24 Nh6!? Rxf7 (or Nd5) 25 Nxf7+ Kc7 26 gxf6 Rg8 27 Bxh7 gxf6+ 28 Bxg8 bxa4 29 exf6 d3+ 30 Kg2 Qxb2, unclear.

16...Ne6 17 0-0-0

Or 17 Nc4?! Nxd4 =.

17...c6 18 Nc4 Qxb5 19 Nd6+ exd6 20 Bxb5 cxb5 21 Rhf1 Nd8 +=

21...Nxg5? 22 Qf5 f6 23 e5 g6 24 Qg4 h5 25 Qg2 fxe5 26 h4! +-.



We have reached a critical situation (after **21...Nd8**). Three pieces are substantial compensation for the queen, but here Black's minor pieces lack coordination. Nevertheless, I'd prefer the present line to the passive variation arising after 13...Bh5, above. It isn't easy for White to keep his grip on the position; for example, 22 h4 Be7 23 Qg4 Rc7, and Black should be able to achieve further improvements

(Nb6, Nc4).

Sources:

- [1] J. Mieses: *Die skandinavische Partie*, Berlin 1920.
- [2] R. Harman, S. Taulbut: *Winning with the Scandinavian*, London 1993
- [3] J. Emms: *The Scandinavian*, Brighton 1997
- [4] M. Wahls: *Modernes Skandinavisch*, Nettetal 1997
- [5] St. Bücker: "Großmeister Jacques Mieses war mit c6 nicht zufrieden," in *Kaissiber* 6 (1998), pp. 24-63. The Scandinavian with Nc6 and/or Bg4, intending an early e7-e5.
- [6] St. Bücker: "Skandinavisch á la Mieses: Alte Quellen und neue Ideen," in *Kaissiber* 7 (1998), pp. 26-32. The same topic, readers' reactions and new ideas.

[7] A. Khalifman: *Opening for White according to Anand 1. e4*, vol. 3, Sofia 2004.

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