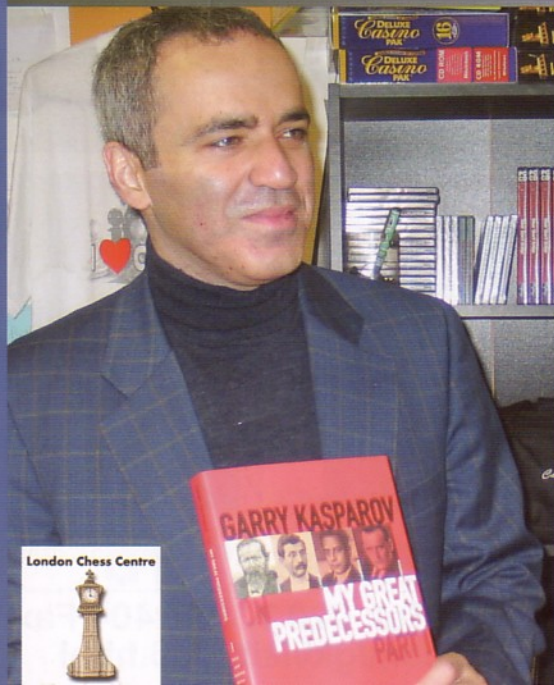


# CHESS



**Motor City hosts Chess Olympiad**



**Garry Kasparov  
visits  
London Chess Centre  
on July 24<sup>th</sup>  
for book signing  
- see inside  
for full details**

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# CHESS

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## OUR FRONT COVER

With 250 men's and women's teams and a thousand games played every day, the **Chess Olympiad** in **Turin** was truly a spectacular event.

Held in the heartland of the Italian motor industry, FIAT put on a fine promotion in an adjacent building while players availed themselves of facilities used in the preceding Winter Olympics.

Team spirit proved the decisive factor with Armenia and China surprise winners of the gold and silver medals respectively.

Favourites Russia could only come 6th, losing more individual games than ever before. England finished 19th but Mickey Adams and Nigel Short both played well, scoring 8/11.

Olympiad Photos: **Mark Huba**

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**Come to the London Chess Centre,  
369 Euston Road, London NW1  
on July 24th and meet Garry Kasparov,  
who will be talking to members of the  
public and signing copies of his  
outstanding *My Great Predecessors* series.  
See opposite for details of this  
wonderful opportunity.**

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# COLLECTOR'S CORNER by Gareth Williams

## THE RETURN OF FRANCESCH VICENT

### The History of the Birth and Expansion of Modern Chess

Title: *The Return of Francesch Vicent.*

*The History of the Birth and Expansion of Modern Chess.*

Author; Jose A Garzon.

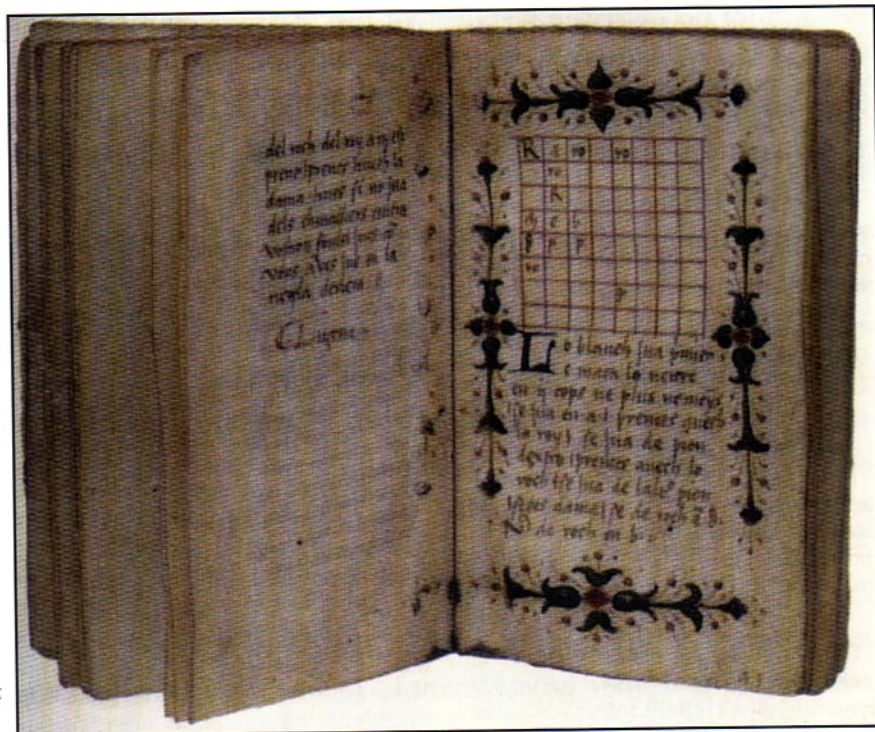
Publisher / Sponsor: UNESCO Centre of Valencia. ISBN: 84-482-4194-0.

Hard covers, size 19 x 27cm. Pages, 495. Illustrations, 64. Chess Diagrams, 300.

Languages: English or Spanish.

This attractive, high quality book is a tribute to modern publishing. *The Return of Francesch Vicent* explores the mystery of Vicent's missing treatise: the first appearance in print of the new rules of chess. Modern chess or 'New chess' refers to the changes made during the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the start of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The author Jose A.Garzon has for decades diligently researched this facet of chess history. He is generous in his praise of past and present fellow historians who have offered their



Lucena book showing his name  
courtesy of David DeLucia collection, New York



*A game of chess at the court*  
Louise of Savoy, mother of Francis I  
of France, is seen with her chess mentor  
playing against a young man  
c.1500-1505

views on the mystery of the sudden growth of the new form of chess which coincided with the latter period of the Renaissance. Included among these eminent chess historians are Howard Staunton, H.J.R.Murray, Ken Whyld, Richard Eales, Ricardo Calvo, Yuri Averbakh and Italian Alessandro Sanvito whose contributions he regards as absolutely essential. Incidentally, Anatoly Karpov provides the Prologue.

This fascinating chess mystery is a tale presented in four parts. Chapter One reviews the evidence presented by some of the early manuscripts and treatises. By comparing the chess problems from the Gottingen manuscript with similar manuscripts in New York, Paris and

elsewhere, the similarities of the problems suggest a relationship and even an identical source. These early problems are a mixture of the traditional Islamic form of chess and the new exciting format with the 'Mad Queen' and the diagonalized Bishops. They also point to having had a strong influence on the publication of Luis Ramirez Lucena's *Repeticion de amores e arte de axedrez con cliuegos departido* (circa 1497), the oldest surviving book on 'New chess', and also Pedro Damiano, who a few years later, (circa 1512) wrote the first book to be published on 'New chess' in Italy. The problems must have been obtained from the same source as the manuscripts. Could this be Francesch Vicent's missing treatise of 1495, *Libre dels jochs partitis schachs en nombre de 100*, published in Valencia?

Chapter Two concerns the discovery of the 'Holy Grail' or rather its equivalent in modern (circa 1490) chess history. In 1995 international master and Italian chess bibliophile Franco Pratesi discovered a manuscript at the Biblioteca Malatestiana of Cesena. Miraculously this manuscript appears



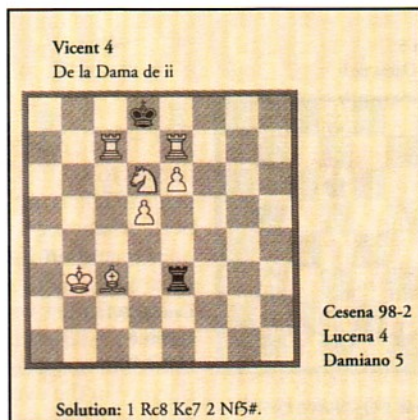
to be the preparatory work for Vicent's missing treatise. And there is a bonus. When compared with another manuscript (difficult to analyse because of its poor condition) from the nearby town of Perugia it becomes clear that it is a copy of the Cesena find, copied personally in Vicent's hand.

Because of this discovery, Vicent's 100 problems are reproduced in the centre pages of *The Return of Francesch Vicent*. Each page displays one chess diagram, shows the problem and provides the solution, there is also a simple number code indicating where the same problem appears in Lucena and Damiano.

The reason for the similarities in these publications is quite simply that Vicent is the true author of all three books! In the second edition of Damiano's book there is a clue provided by the first letter of the title, QVESTO. The letters are printed in red and black, which for centuries was assumed to be purely for decoration – but now it can be revealed that the black letters, V-S-O, concealed a not so secret message: Vicent Scriptor Operum (Vicent Authored this Work) Fascinating!



Damiano's book with the letters V S and O



Vicent problem with solution

Chapter Three is dedicated to proving beyond doubt that modern chess originated in Spain: to be precise, Valencia. There is also speculation as to the exact year that the new game was first played. In a poem *Scachs d'amor*, circa 1475, the movement of the Queen is described for the first time, the new rules are introduced and apparently the very first game is played. Then a study of watermarks in the paper used by the printer confirms 1495 as the first year of publication of Vicent's book. There is also a record of thirty copies of Vicent's book being sold in January 1496. This is the evidence that the Valencians had been looking for. A proud moment.

To quote their President from the book: "Today we know that Francesch Vicent, from Segorbe, penned the first treatise on the new form of chess published in the world, and which we know by the title of 'Llibre dels jochs partitis dels schachs en nombre de 100.'"

Chapter Four, the last chapter, is surprisingly interesting as it explores the intriguing relationship between Vicent, Lucena and

Damiano and endeavours to find out who Francesch Vicent was and what position he held in society. It is known that he came from Segorbe, a town close to Valencia, where he appears to have been a Justice of the town around 1500. It then transpires that he may have had to leave Valencia to avoid the Spanish Inquisition with its determination to convert Jews to Christianity. In 1501 Vicent was living in Italy, where there is strong circumstantial evidence of his acquaintance with Cesare and Lucrezia Borgia. The Pope's infamous daughter was the Duchess of Ferrara and during 1502-3 she and her notorious brother lived for a while in nearby



Title Page 4<sup>th</sup> edition Damiano, c.1530

Cesena. There is even a probability that Vicent, who is known to have been in Ferrara at about that time, was Lucrezia's chess mentor.

\* \* \* \*

*The Return of Francesch Vicent* represents a tremendous breakthrough in the realms of chess history. Through persistent study and generous sharing of historical research this publication provides proof that a remarkable man, Francesch Vicent, penned the first treatise on the present day rules of chess and it was published in the City of Valencia on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1495.