

3.4 MODERN CHESS IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND ITS COEXISTENCE WITH MEDIEVAL CHESS. STUDY OF THE MAIN DOCUMENTS FROM THE KEY PERIOD (1450-1530)

When expressing a view about the origin of modern chess, and hence, about the place and time of this great revolution, the main historians have surprisingly developed and cultivated their own ideas (beliefs) without carrying out an adequate overall study of all the documents from the key-period of the birth of modern chess, coexistence with the old chess, spreading of the new form of playing, and complete abandonment of the old chess—middle of the 15th century and the first decades of the 16th century.

We think that together with the exposition of one's own ideas it is necessary a deep study of other people's, a reasonable undertaking that all too often is lacking, and above all a thorough review of the technical documents, without which it is impossible to give any just opinion about the origin of modern chess. This is precisely what we are going to do in the following pages, trying to shed some needed light on a matter we deem much more controversial than what the technical documents, manuscripts and books reveal. Maybe the lack of complete and thorough studies has benefited some countries like Italy, so rich in technical documents on the noble game, and to a lesser extent France. These documents may have been taken in much consideration when attributing the paternity of modern chess. In the analysis we present below, we have especially delve in the treatises with material on modern chess (marked with the symbol ♔) and the close connections and dependences established among them:

1. **MS in Latin of the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emmanuel of Rome, no. 273**, from the middle of the 15th century. It is a collection of medieval problems from the *Civis Bononiae*. It contains 288 chess problems, 48 of merels, and 76 of tables [backgammon]. The manuscript was called "R" by Murray.

2. MS in Latin of the *Biblioteca Vaticana* of Rome, no. 254, called “Barberino”. It has been made in the middle of the 15th century too, with a material similar to the previous one: 288 problems of medieval chess, 76 of tables and 48 of merels.
3. MS of *Von der Lasa*, called “L” by Murray, from the second half of the 15th century, and again with material in common with the previous ones of the CB: 288 chess problems, 80 of tables and 48 of merels.
4. A paper quarto MS Codex XIX. 7.37 of the *Biblioteca Nazionale* of Florence, from the second half of the 15th century. Its importance for the History of chess lies in the fact that new problems have been added, by another hand, to the traditional collection of the CB. The added problems are 45 in total (27 completely original and 18 versions of already known ones). It is worth mentioning that a more recent hand has added the sentence “Libro de belli partiti al giuoco de scacchi composto per un valenthuomo spagnolo”; the last five words were subsequently crossed out. Since some of the added problems appear in Lucena (and in Vicent), as well as in the El Escorial MS, we have to think in a Spanish medieval source of problems now lost. The collections with these new problems are necessarily from a later date, and therefore, from the second half of the 15th century. Originally, according to Murray’s description, it contained 333 problems of medieval chess (16 have been lost), 80 problems of tables (8 are missing nowadays) and 48 problems of merels (of which 4 have been lost).
5. Parchment Codex R.9.3 (L.143) of the *Biblioteca Estense* of Modena. Murray thought it was lost, but it was discovered and described by Professor Chicco⁸⁴. It has also been recently studied by Pérez de Arriaga⁸⁵ who considers that Lucena used

84. CHICCO, Adriano “The Tractatus Scachorum of the Estense Library, Modena” *British Chess Magazine*, vol. LXX, issue 3 (March 1950), pp. 82-85.

85. Op. cit.

for his book a manuscript similar to this one. An argument in favour of this idea is the presence in the Estense treatise of Lucena's problem 40, whose only known presentation appeared in the MS of the British Museum (problem 64) to which we will refer below. However, in the MS of Modena Lucena's problem 138 is not present, despite it appearing in the MS O.II.3 from El Escorial (Esc. 81), whose author has not known the Spanish printed books, so he must have taken the composition from a CB.

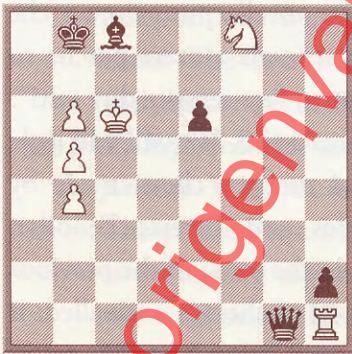
The manuscript contains 533 problems of medieval chess (diagram 481 is blank), 80 of tables and 48 of merels. To the collection from the CB of 288, new problems in Latin have been added—with the translation into Italian on the margin—in the stretch 289 to 480. Then there is a last section on chess with the text in Italian (problems 482-534). There are new problems, but also many known ones. Its structure reveals the presence of several manuscripts that were arranged in a single one, hence the existence of many repeated problems. It has the date 1454.

2 6. **Latin MS in parchment, signature XIX.II.87, of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence**, called "il Piccolo" by Von der Lasa, probably from the second half of the 15th century. It contains 172 problems, of which only 41 come from the Bonus Socius. The problem Picc. 20 comes in Lucena's treatise (Luc. 12) and is one of Vicent's problems (Vicent 13) transcribed in Valencian in the Cesena MS. This proves that even the old chess material used in Salamanca, whatever the medieval source may have been, comes from Valencia. This certainty, as we will see, has unexpected consequences.

2 7. **MS of the British Museum, signature Add. 9351, dated on 1466**. Murray already pointed out the correspondence of this manuscript with the Modena MS (no 5). The title *Tractatus partitorum schachorum, tabullarum, et merelleorum*, overlaps with that of number 5. The problem Add. 64, which does not have medieval forerunners, appears in Mod. 479, i.e. in the second section on chess also in Latin (Mod. 289-480), thus confirming that the compiler worked with a new source in

Latin common to the one used in the MS Add. 9351. It contains 44 problems of tables, 53 of merels, and 72 problems of old chess. It is believed that the author was from Bologna.

8. *Trattato degli scacchi* of Gilio de Zelati, at the Biblioteca Reale of Turin, sig. MS vari 128. Zelati's beautifully-made treatise has been studied by Chicco⁸⁶, Caputto⁸⁷ and Sanvito⁸⁸. The codex contains 26 folios in parchment, with 23 medieval problems. The author, Gilio de Zelati, states he is from Faenza and dedicates his work to the first Duke of Ferrara, Borso d'Este (1431-1471). Professor Chicco dated the treatise between 1450 and 1470. In our opinion the date can be pinned down even more in to period 1460-1471, since there are some compositions added in the CB of Florence, and also in accordance to Borso d'Este's own biography, as well as the annotation made by Zelati himself regarding problem 7, where he says that on one occasion it had been shown to him by the two best Florentine players, disciples of Magnolino⁸⁹. It was precisely in 1471 that Borso d'Este was proclaimed Duke of Ferrara by Pope Paul II.



Zelati (circa 1460-1471)

Problem 22

Mate in 5 with the rook, unsound

86. CHICCO, Adriano *Contributi alla storia dei problemi di scacchi (Gilio de Zelati e Ercole del Rio)* (Ediciones de L'Italia Scacchistica, 1950).

87. CAPUTTO, Zoilo R. *El arte del estudio de ajedrez* (Madrid: Ediciones Eseeve, 1992), pp. 109-112.


88. SANVITO, Alessandro "Il trattato problemistico de Gilio de Zelati" *L'Italia Scacchistica* (July 1997), pp. 268-270.

89. There is a letter quoted by Chicco addressed to Borso d'Este on the 28th of April 1454, where Zanobi Magnolino's chess skill is mentioned.

We have already indicated that the 23 compositions are played according to the old rules, although Chicco pointed out the originality of 8 of them (1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 23). Problem 22 baffled Caputto for he believed that Zelati set it up in modern style.


Zelati paints the black queen (green in the original) reversed, calling her *donna novella*. Caputto thought it was modern style. Zelati made unsound the old composition that was already in the CB of Florence⁹⁰, problem 331.



It is true that Zelati introduces a very subtle change to turn the stipulation unsound, but it has nothing to do with modern chess—otherwise the bishop itself would invalidate the classic solution. What Zelati means by reversing the piece and calling it *novella* is to highlight the fact that it has just been promoted, and therefore it still has the right to make a leap on the first move. Thus, after 1 Nd7 Ka8 2 b7 Ka7 3 b6 Ka6 4 Ne5 Fe1! (leaping, since the fers has just been promoted; instead ...Ff2 leads to mate, 5 Ra1). In fact, the author himself makes clear this circumstance, where all the charm of the problem lies: “Nota una falacia che se quella regina che sta qua in 1, fosse dona novella pure allora e che non havesse ancora tratto el non sepotria vinzere perche tu sae che ledone novella el primo tratto fare sempre duy salti”.



 **9. MS *Scachs d'amor*, Valencia, circa 1475.** We will add little now to the original document of modern chess, made by Francí Castellví, Narcís Vinyoles and Bernat Fenollar. Despite not being truly a treatise, in the sense of the previous ones, its importance for the History of chess is unrivalled: it has the first description of the queen move, the first set of rules of modern chess, and the first game entirely played according to the new rules. The fact that the poets reiterate time and again that the new form of playing is novel, makes

90. In fact the position is very old, for it already appeared in the Arabic MS of 1257 and in the Codex of Alfonso X (1283).


superfluous any more attempts to find the origin of modern chess. There is no trace of old chess, inferred nevertheless when naming the great revolution of the rules.


 10. MS of Paris, 24274 (fonds de Sorbonne, 1426), from the Bibliothèque Richelieu. It is a work from the late 15th century. It contains a French version of the Cessolis and a collection of 197 problems of medieval chess in Latin. Most of them come from the BS, but 60 problems, according to Murray, do not appear in the classic medieval sources.

  11. *Llibre dels jochs partits del schachs en nombre de 100, ordenat e compost per mi Francesch Vicent*. Valencia, 15 May 1495. Quarto in gothic type. Printed by Lope de Roca and Pere Trincher. The first treatise on chess published in the world is the work of the man from Segorbe. It represented the accolade of the new form of playing, *el ajedrez de la dama*, which already had 20 years of practice in Valencia—maybe because of this it is printed in Valencian. **The modern era of chess started with the spreading of modern chess all throughout the world, since Vicent's treatise was virtually devoted to modern chess.** We now know that 79 compositions were set up according to the rules of modern chess. The book's odyssey of five centuries has concluded with its complete discovery in the Cesena MS.

  12. *Repetición de amores y arte de ajedrez con CL juegos de partido*. Without date but probably from Salamanca, 1497. The printers must have been Hutz and Lope Sanz. There is an intriguing mystery surrounding the author to which we will refer below. He says he is the son of the prothonotary of Kings Ferdinand and Isabella, Juan Ramírez de Lucena. It contains 150 problems, although there are several classification criteria, because of the captions of the problems in the work—74 were played according to the new rules and 76 were set up following the old style. As we will see later **the original idea (the first printing project) was basically a literal translation of Vicent's treatise excluding the mates in 2.** This idea was later modified, opting for a treatise that involved a regression from the Valencian book, for 50

medieval problems were added. All the problems of modern chess from Lucena's treatise came in Vicent's with the exception of Luc. 68, which probably was a version of Vicent 20. In all likelihood this is not a case of plagiarism, but something simpler—the projects had a shared impulse. The medieval manuscript used is the same one as in Valencia—the Cesena MS confirms so. This is why Lucena's originality might be found partially in the rules or opening theory.

-  13. *Le Jeu des Eschés de la Dame, moralise*, MS Add. 15820 of the British Museum, late 15th century. Although it is not a chess treatise at all, we have included this anonymous literary work because it mentions the new form of playing (*de la dame enrageé*). Many authors, Murray among them, consider it to have been made in the late 15th century. It is part of the moralizing texts about chess. The author does not seem a chess player at all, but someone who has known the new chess, is impressed by the game, and goes on to include a chaotic game in his allegorical text. The game has no technical value at all, the opponents being *The Enemy* (White) and *the Queen* (Black): 1 e4 e5 2 Qh5 g6 3 Bc4 gh5 4 missing move d5 5 d3 dc4 6 Bg5 Qg5 7 Nf3 Qc1 8 Ke2 Qc2 8 Ke3 Qd3#. One would say that the author has recently become aware of the new form of playing—he does not even seem a chess amateur because of the huge mistakes there are in the game. Granting it is indeed a text from the late 15th century and not from the early 16th, for us it is but the proof, of which there should be more, that any traveller who had been to Spain for the last 20 years, in particular to the Valencia area, would have learnt the new form of playing. In fact, the famous ship that left Valencia in 1492 with Jews, among them Isaac Abrabanel and his family, could have exported the new chess not only to France, but to Italy in particular. This document is at any rate an individual and isolated example of someone who has known the new form of playing—it is enough to look at the French technical documents of the time. In fact the first technical text made in France is the Göttingen MS.

 14. MS O.II.3 of the Real Biblioteca of the El Escorial Monastery (fos. 103r to 118v.), without date, but probably from around 1500-1505. It is preceded by several Latin MSS. It contains 89 problems, of which in almost all the cases the modern ones are pointed out. Although there are more problems that can be played in the modern style, there are 16 problems truly of modern chess (see Annex). We already saw that one of them is a help-problem (Esc. 79). There are two different handwritings, and in a very unusual way, problems copied by two people are intermingled. Only one of the of the two authors, the one who starts the work, makes notes relative to the paternity of the problems (*este juego me acaeció*), many of which come from real games (the first opposite-coloured bishops ending, the theme of the fortress in the ending of rook and pawn against queen, etc.). The old form of playing is called *al partido*. The author points out that very few games are played in the modern style. From the language used it seems of Castilian origin, which would explain that modern chess is not as established as in Aragon. Four problems have many terms in Italian (Esc. 35, 37, 38 and 43). This would indicate that the author has at hand one of the late collections of CB. **As in the two Spanish printed treatises, the two ways of playing coexist, so that the problems of old and new chess appear combined and not separated in two blocks as will happen in later documents.**

Given its vital importance for the History of chess, we sent a query to the Director of the Real Biblioteca of the San Lorenzo de El Escorial Monastery, José Luis del Valle, who had already been very kind when we visited the Monastery. In the letter we emphasized the question relative to the dating of the manuscript. Because of its eloquence and clarity, we transcribe his reply below:

“I have just revised again the MS O.II.3 in its entirety. The texts in Latin of the Codex contain works by authors from the 13th to 15th centuries, but they are copies from the 15th century. None has a handwriting close in any aspect to the

Castilian text on chess. On the other hand, it is difficult to give an accurate date. The mysterious 1500 (fo. 103v) that seems to be found in the final notes by another hand does not seem conclusive⁹¹. I think we have to put up with what Father Zarco says, that it is handwriting from the 16th century; although given the dates of the other works, it can be from the beginning of the 16th century.

Regarding the watermark, which is to be found indeed in several folios, I think it can correspond to no. 3547 of the facsimile edition of C.M. Briquet, *Les filigranes...*, (Amsterdam, 1968), vol. I, p. 229 (see the image of the watermark in vol. III, no. 3547). The paper is of Italian origin and the known dates of use of this watermark are between 1420 and 1474. This would support an early date in the 16th century.”

It is worth mentioning the adequate use Mr del Valle makes of the study of the watermark to support the dating of the manuscript—he never uses it as the only or main criteria. This very same principle was convincingly conveyed to me by an expert in the field, Francisco M. Gimeno, Professor of Historiographical Sciences and Techniques at the University of Valencia. This means that the watermark may be very useful to confirm a dating⁹² (or to challenge it), but it is very questionable to use it as the main argument—a proof of this is the treatise from El Escorial. Judging from the watermark and its use (1420-1474), as well as the presence in the manuscript of texts from the 15th century, it would be the oldest work on modern chess known. But from the handwriting, Father Zarco’s opinion, and using the watermarks as well but with the reservations pointed out, José Luis del Valle thinks it plausible an early date in the 16th

91. Ricardo Calvo in his brief study of the manuscript thought that it was indeed the date of making of the treatise, but we have to rule out this possibility, although the manuscript has been made at the beginning of the 16th century. Cf. CALVO, Ricardo “Un nuevo manuscrito de ajedrez del siglo XV” *Jaque*, issue 173 (1985), pp. 252-253.

92. As it is the case of *Scachs d’amor*, where the dates in use of the watermark converge with the rest of the criteria, all of them, linked to the poem and its making.


century for the making of the manuscript. And indeed the technical material seems to prove him right. In the annex we transcribe an interesting paragraph where the author seems to indicate that in his time in Italy only old chess was played.

15. MS 775 (L. 27) of the Biblioteca Comunale Augusta of Perugia, circa 1502-1506. Unjustly appraised and little or partially studied, in our investigation it regains all its splendour. Its importance for the History of chess is decisive. We have no doubts about its author being Francesch Vicent, an idea already hinted at by Alessandro Sanvito. This impressive and advanced treatise has been conceived with didactic purposes, probably arising from the classes that *il maestro Francesco* gave Lucrezia Borgia. It contains 72 compositions (in 65 diagrams), giving absolute preference to modern chess: 46 positions, many of which are real prodigies, are set up according to the new rules; 11 are neuter; and 15 are played in the old style (most of them being exercises). The codex comprises 196 leaves of which the first 165 have chess diagrams. From diagram 66 (leave 33), which is a carefully numbered board, the diagrams are blank, awaiting the main section of problems according to the number of moves, which never got to be transcribed. On folio 164v, in what would be the final technical part on chess, the initial position of draughts appears, followed (165r to 166r) by three positions which we deem are referring to the game of *cercar la liebre* [fox and geese], shifted from the linear board of merels to the chessboard. The merels section, in Latin, is presented from 167v to 193. There are in total 49 problems with the text of the solution more or less complete and 7 blank diagrams.

The manuscript does not have a section on tables and its technical part on chess has nothing to do with everything described hitherto. Its originality, therefore, lends it a special charm.

This second treatise by Francesch Vicent, in our opinion, is also the first technical display of modern chess in Italy. It

also presents in a pioneer way the first draughts position known in the world, something which is logic, knowing the provenance of the author. The manuscript contained clues that could have determined its origin—Vicent's problem 100, Lucena's 150, Damiano's 72, appear, as well as material derived from other compositions present in the treatises; there are terms in Spanish too. Sanvito's original dating 1502-1503 is the most likely, as we have argued in this work.


 **16. A paper quarto MS 166.74, *Ludi Varii*, of the Biblioteca Malatestiana of Cesena, circa 1502-1512⁹³.** Discovered in 1995 by Pratesi, it completely dislocates the History of chess. It contains all the previous material in a different presentation, and is the work of the same author, obviously a Spaniard. We do not have any doubt about him being Francesch Vicent.

Apparently its structure was going to be similar to the one designed for the Perugia MS. This extraordinary gem of modern chess begins with the four positions of draughts and fox and geese (leaves 3 and 4), a significant fact. The new treatise, with some changes to which we have already referred is unfolded between leaves 5 and 33, and presents 58 diagrams with 63 problems⁹⁴, all of them but two present in the previous manuscript. Perugia's 11 problems which do not appear here have been moved to the traditional collection of problems arranged according to the number of moves required for mate—to the group of mate in 10 or more moves, to be more precise. From leave 89 to 96 Damiano's 16 *primores* appear. We think we have proved they were not original: either they came in Vicent's book, or more likely,

⁹³. We believe, although we do not have an absolute certainty, that indeed the manuscript was the material used to edit Damiano's book. Accordingly, the dating could comprise a shorter period 1501-1510. Nevertheless we have not wanted to rule out the other possibility. The existence of a Damiano's edition of 1502 would have to be considered too—a matter we discuss in Chapter Four.

⁹⁴. There are two positions with the legend *tria partita* and one with *duo partita*.


they had been made subsequently and were part of the draft of Damiano's book, not yet published. From leave 97 to 297 the problems appear, strictly speaking, classified according to the number of moves required for the mate. There are 357 problems, some of them repeated. The merels section is presented in a somewhat chaotic way if we compare it to Perugia, and intermingled with some chess diagrams⁹⁵. There are in total 48 diagrams filled in, but only 11 of them have all or part of the solution. One would say that it is the same material as in the Perugia MS, i.e. the classic *Civis Bononiae*. **This remarkable work is in our opinion the most important treatise in the History of chess, for at long last Francesch Vicent's complete book appears in it, as well as his second treatise, no less sublime, much connected to the first one and to the reform chess underwent in the late 15th century.** The first position known about draughts also appears in it—it has a special value for the author. He links it to modern chess. It also probably contains the draft that was used to make Damiano's book, since Damiano's 16 subtleties and 72 problems are presented, selected and marked by the author. **It is a real monument to modern chess for as well as containing positions that can be played in the two forms, 156 are of modern chess⁹⁶ as it is explicitly pointed out in them.**


 17. MS Göttingen (signature: Codex M5. Philos. 85), of the Library of the University of Göttingen, circa 1505-1515. It is written in Latin, but with the names of the pieces in French. As we saw, it contains 12 rules and 30 problems that appear in Lucena's book. We do not have any doubt that it is from a later date than the Salamancan treatise, from which it derives. Our hypothesis is that it was indeed made by



95. All of them blank except four (Ces. 345 and 346) where three medieval compositions appear, as well as the famous problem of the knight's tour on half the board we have already referred to.

96. 46 from Perugia, 79 from Vicent's book, the 16 *primores* and 15 new ones (see annex).

someone from Lucena's family, and that it was really dedicated to a prince, Francis I, who succeeded to the throne of France in 1515. All the material gathered in it, as we have seen, is of modern chess.

 **18. MS of the Biblioteca Riccardi of Florence (signature O.III.30, 2871).** According to Murray it is written by several hands, from the 15th and 16th centuries. Initially it contained 48 problems. One of them is lost, and another one has the diagram in blank (Ricc. 47). Ricc. 48 derives from the CB of Florence 306, from which we have been able to deduce that the author had a collection of medieval chess problems of the later ones.

 **19. Paper MS de scacchi from the Correr Museum of Venice (MSS Morrosini-Grimaldi 139).** It is listed in Sanvito's Italian bibliography (MS 72) and was discovered by Italian historian Adriano Chicco, who described it⁹⁷. Sanvito considers it to be from the 16th century. There are 28 problems in the old style. It is supposed⁹⁸ to be a fragment of the work *De Ludis*, which the Franciscan Luca da Santo Sepulcro would have dedicated to Isabella d'Este (1474-1539). This last fact is very important, since Isabella was the sister of Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara from 1505, who married Lucrezia Borgia. This would imply that years after the making of Zelati's treatise in a region as progressive as Ferrara, medieval chess was still practiced at the beginning of the 16th century, probably coexisting after Vicent's arrival with the new form of playing.

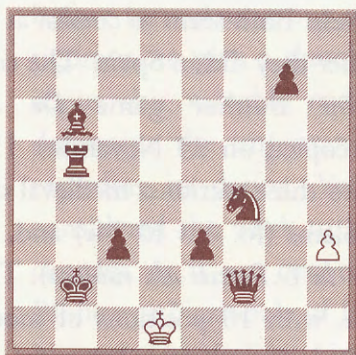
  **20. MS Civis Bononiae Leon, early 16th century.** It was called so by Murray in honour of the owner of the manuscript, L.A. Leon, from London. The manuscript contained 106 problems. One of them—the last one⁹⁹, Leon 64—is a

⁹⁷ CHICCO, Adriano "Un manuscrit inconnu" *Le Monde des échecs* (September 1946), p. 268.

⁹⁸ CAPUTTO, Zoilo R. Op. cit., p. 110.

⁹⁹ Murray, op. cit., pp. 644-645, indicates that out of the 186 initial leaves, 66 had been lost, hence the place of the problem of modern chess in the new pagination.

problem of modern chess, and moreover a real gem of great complexity. This fact has hardly been noted by the scholars of the History of chess.




Leon 64


Mate in IX, with the g7-pawn

The position, the last one of the Leon MS, is completely spurious to it and it seems evident that someone passed it on to the author at the last minute. The syntax of the solution is clearly different from the rest of the manuscript and unusual in medieval problems. Fortunately we were able to find the same composition, with minimal changes, in the manuscripts whose authorship we attribute to Vicent (Ces. 26-1 and Per. 44). In fact, the Leon MS does not prescribe the genuine and demanding condition that gives the problem its brilliance: *R^a mato dale 3 p^a* (Per. 44). Whoever studies the manuscripts as we have done will soon realize the sense this composition has in them, where it is totally contextualized. The thematic idea—to give mate with the pawns, allowing Black to promote a queen and bringing her into the game—has been developed through several problems, also linked, as we will see, to It. 298 and evidently to Vicent's and Lucena's treatises. **In this composition we find the real author of the problems of a same thematic group.** Here the sublime idea (Vicent 98/Luc. 148 connected to Per. 39/Ces. 22-1 and 295-2; Per. 38/Ces. 22-2 and 295-1=It. 298) reaches its peak by giving the mate with the three pawns consecutively.

The inescapable conclusion is that the Leon MS is from a later date than the Vicent MSS where this gem comes from.

 **21. Codex 791 of the Biblioteca Casanatense of Rome.** It is dated and has the name of the author: Rome, 30 June 1511, Joannes Chachi de Terni (Umbria). It is an important manuscript because it corresponds to the period of transition from medieval to modern chess. Both seem to coexist at that time in Italy, as 15 years earlier they did in Spain. The codex starts with a treatise on another game *De ludo Arithmomachia*, which was copied on 23 November 1511. The chess part is divided into three sections: medieval chess (fo. 1 to 62), unsound problems (fo. 62v to 74r) and, last, modern chess problems (*De la D.Partiti ala rabiosa*). There are 158 problems in Italian, with 10 positions of modern chess (Cas. 12 and Cas. 150 to Cas. 158). We have already recorded that Chachi has known the modern and old chess material of the Spanish treatises. He wrote his work some months before Damiano's book was published at the same city—Rome. It is evident that Damiano's work was being made at the same time.

It is striking that unlike what happens in Spain the old problems and the modern ones are presented separately, without mixing them up.

 **22. MS It. of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence (XIX.7.51), early 16th century.** It is probably from the same time that the previous one, or maybe somewhat earlier, but as we will see, at any rate it is from a later date than the Perugia and Cesena manuscripts, works from which it clearly derives.

The codex contains 212 leaves and its importance for the History of chess lies in the fact that it contains problems in both old and modern style. It therefore corresponds to the period of transition between the two forms of playing in Italy, although in the manuscript there is no indication about the two forms of playing, which have to be inferred. This is a significant fact that we have verified personally.

The problems *a la rabiosa* come first, folios 1r to 25r and 28r to 29v (53 problems), with the only but decisive exception of a last problem of modern chess, It. 298, which

appears right after the old chess problems (fo. 149v), which are in total 197, fos. 51r to 149r, from the collection of the *Bonus Socius*. We also find the classic sections on merels—24 problems without the solution—and tables—10 in total. Before formulating our own opinion it is necessary, to be rigorous, to give a sketch of what historians have written about this valuable codex. The most salient feature to determine the importance of the manuscript is the one regarding its dating. Von der Lasa, Murray, and Chicco considered the work to be from the beginning of the 16th century, as it was recorded in the old catalogues of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence, as we will see.

Nevertheless Italian historians Pratesi¹⁰⁰ and Sanvito¹⁰¹ have recently modified the traditional dating that enjoyed a general consensus, for a very risky dating around 1475—incidentally the date of making of the MS *Scachs d'amor*. Among the arguments they have advanced the main one has been the presence in it of watermark 2445 of Briquet's repertoire. Another of the arguments used by Sanvito is that the work, contrary to what is usual for its content, has been composed by a single author and at the same time. In spite of everything, we are surprised at the scantiness of judgements provided by these two researchers regarding the fundamental question: the chess technical content.

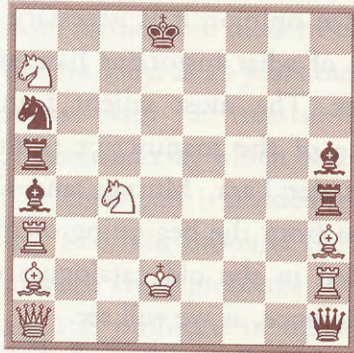
The assertion that the author seems to be more familiar with the new form of playing than with the old one is arguable, since it cannot be denied that the old problems "are taken" from a source, as they appear there, in this case of the *Bonus Socius* group. Regarding the problems of modern chess, most of them are extremely easy, with

100. PRATESI, Franco "Nuovi con vecchi, ma precocissimi" *Torre & Cavallo* (Rome, 1996) pp. 46-47.

101. SANVITO, Alessandro *L'arte degli scacchi* (Milan: Ediciones Silvestre Bonnard, 2000) pp. 42-43.

SANVITO, Alessandro "La recepción del ajedrez moderno en la Italia del Renacimiento" *L'Italia Scacchistica* issue 1172 (November-December 2004), pp. 406-411.

positions where symmetry seems to be more important than difficulty. The example of It. 8 will suffice to understand this point:



It. 8, mate in 2

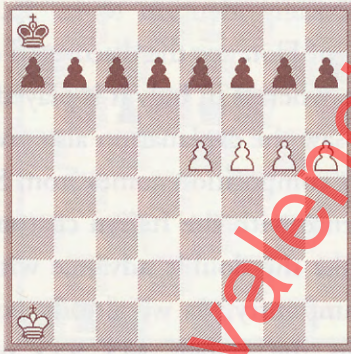
Solution: 1 Qf6 Ke8 (1...Kc7 2 Qb6#) 2 Nd6#

The solution's simplicity languishes when compared to the geometrical motif. Moreover, the illegality of the position, with two bishops on squares of the same colour, as well as the amount of useless and unnecessary pieces is striking. This happens in many of the modern chess compositions of the codex—most are mates in few moves (22 mates in 2 and 16 mates in 3).

Our first consideration about the technical part concerns the very arrangement of the problems. **The significant fact that the problems of modern and old chess are not intermingled, indicates that the two forms of playing are known, but their coexistence is no longer so clear**¹⁰² (hence their separation in different sections). **To sum it up, this arrangement of the material is necessarily from a later date.** In both Vicent's and Lucena's book, as well as in the Perugia, Cesena and Escorial

102. A possibility to consider, strange as it may seem, is that modern chess has hardly coexisted with the old one in Italy, and that the "battle for hegemony" has taken place almost exclusively in Spain. Studying the matter without affectation we see that the true documents of the transition, with the two forms of playing intermingled, are all of them of Spanish origin (treatises 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 in our list). This idea would be strengthened by the quick edition of Damiano's book, exclusively devoted to modern chess. In fact something similar has happened in the implementation of the king's leap, and its evolution, and the Italian use of castling.

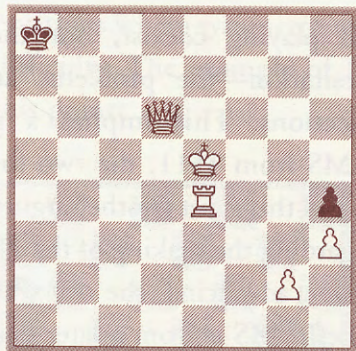
MSS, the two forms of playing coexist, but they are intermingled without hesitation—the problems are not presented in separate sections. This implies a greater antiquity. In the Chachi MS from 1511, the two forms of playing are also separated, and this is yet another argument in favour of the proximity regarding the making of the Florence MS. For us, as we have been advancing, the overwhelming argument entailing that the It. MS is from a later date than the Perugia codex by a Spanish author, is the presence of three compositions¹⁰³ with great complexity, totally out of place with regard to the rest of the work. Two of them are present and contextualized in the Perugia and Cesena MSS. The third one is recreated repeatedly in the El Escorial MS.



It. 19

Preceded by several mates in 2, this very remarkable composition of modern chess appears, remembered by any player in a more schematic form. It is presented in a pioneer way in the Perugia MS, where there are all kind of traces of its creative process (Per. 34 and 35, Per. 26 and 27).

¹⁰³. A fourth composition, It. 20, presented right next to It. 19 has also a remarkable level of difficulty, as well as—and this is the important thing—a clear derivation from the theme presented in problems Luc. 99, 117 and 138 (mate has to be given with two pawns separated by two files and with the help of two pieces), and hence in the Cesena MS (the task of the knight in Luc. 99 is simply carried out by a bishop). Luc. 81 also appears (It. 47).



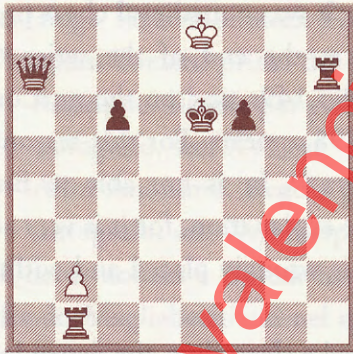
It. 55

This complex composition¹⁰⁴, which requires many years of practice of modern chess, is presented as we saw repeatedly in the El Escorial MS. With the nice sequence of passing the g2 pawn by giving a discovered check, it appears twice: Esc. 83 and 87, the latter practically identical to It. 55. It is striking that in the solution of Florence the discovered check has to be given in two steps, whereas in Italy it is played with *passar bataglia*. We already saw the explanation also given in Esc. 83, indicating that this composition comes from Spain. This problem makes no sense with the Italian custom, for it would be enough to make the double advance with the pawn for it to pass with impunity. As we already pointed out, in problem 58 from the Italian MS 955 of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France this is precisely emphasized—the problem is necessarily set up “all’uso di Spagna”.

We already showed that the privilege of taking en passant is maintained at any rate in Spain—it is an absolute right—in the first times of modern chess. This means that after any double pawn advance this right is kept. This doubly explains the Spanish way of playing in problem It. 55, for like in Esc. 83 when the discovered check is delivered with the pawn, this

104. Murray places a black bishop on g5, which is unnecessary; moreover, we have not found it in the diagram from the manuscript.

does not made a double advance, but a single one, and on the next move the pawn definitely passes, as the letters confirm. **In brief, there is no doubt that this composition comes from Spain and implies several years of practice of modern chess.** On the other hand, in our personal study of the manuscript we have noticed that the composition appears (fo. 28r) separated from the rest of the problems of modern chess, and after five blank diagrams, although it is transcribed in the same handwriting. Right after it (fo. 28v) the problem with the knight's tour on half the board appears—the moves being marked with numbers—, together with two new problems of modern chess. The location suggests that it has been taken from a different source.



It. 298

This very remarkable and complex position, with all the attributes of modern chess, is the improved version of Luc. 148 (Vicent 98), and is therefore from a later date than the Spanish treatises. In Francesch Vicent's second treatise—which the Perugia MS constitutes according to us—both versions appear, the latter with the legends *similis* and *optime*, leaving no margin to interpretation: it is the same idea which has been improved and whose process is marked.

Yet another composition with the same theme is presented, Per. 39, as a snippet of the same creative path. Even Per. 30 is a new attempt, maybe an unsuccessful one, of the same idea, partially used in Luc. 83. Anyone studying with a little care our analysis of the Perugia and Cesena MSS clearly perceives

that this composition originates there. **The making of the Perugia MS establishes the *terminus post quem* to date the codex of Florence.**

Another important circumstance of this composition is that it appears outside the modern problems¹⁰⁵, at the end of the *Bonus Socius* problems, and the logical thing to think is that the author, for it is written in the same handwriting, has known this composition at the same time of making his work. This idea is reinforced by the fact that it is the only problem *alla rabiosa* without the text—although with the letters—of the solution.

Knowing that there were blank diagrams in the modern chess section, and that therefore it should have been inserted there, **makes us think that the compiler did not understand the position—he believed that it was a medieval chess problem** and so he placed it just at the end of the series of old problems. This ends on folio 149r, and on the next one the splendid composition It. 298 appears. For this reason, even with the help of the letters¹⁰⁶, he is not able to find the solution. This has to be the explanation, for it is very strange that the best composition is wrongly placed and without its wonderful solution.

The technical arguments make clear, thus, the dependence of this work on other previous ones and its making at the end of the 16th century. **In any case the date given by Sanvito and Pratesi, around 1475, as we have just seen from the appearance and difficulty of these three compositions, would push back the origin of modern chess to the middle**

105. In fact, as we saw, there is no indication at all in the manuscript referring to the two forms of playing. This suggests that the period of coexistence of the two forms of playing has already been superseded. This same idea is strengthened by the fact that the problems of modern and medieval chess are not intermingled—they are presented in two separated groups.

106. This idea is reinforced because the letter “g” which had been initially placed on the right square, b4—where the rook is sacrificed in order to bring the new queen into play—has eventually been amended and placed on b1, which makes us think that copyist considers that the pawn promotes to fers.

of the 15th century, an impossible fact, that would imply that the new form of playing would have remained silent for half a century. What happens is precisely the opposite: the strength of modern chess, its beauty, are such that in a few years it eradicates the old form of playing—this is proved at least in Spain, but it will also happen in Italy after the publication of Damiano's book.

Regarding the paper and the handwriting of the manuscript, a matter that of course we discuss, it is very relevant the information provided by Dr Paola Pirolo, curator of the Manuscripts and Rare Books Section of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence, where the codex is kept. From it we pick up the most relevant aspects:

“Il manoscritto composto da 212 fogli è così citato nel catalogo della biblioteca Gaddiana compilato da Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti prima del 1756:

- Anonimo. Regole per giocare a scacci, a filo e a sbaraglino, autografo, sec. XVI exe.
- Altro Anónimo. Regole per giocare a scacchi e alle carte, autografo, sec. XVII incip.

Questa notizia è ripresa in modo idéntico nel catalogo del fondo Magliabechiano nel quale i manoscritti della famiglia Gaddi confluirono quando furono compartí dal granduca (...) Il catalogo è compilato dal medesimo Targioni Tozzetti che della Magliabechiana era bibliotecario. Le notizie però sembrano non essere estate, cominciando dal titolo che pare solo estrapolato dal contenuto, anche perchè il ms. ha perso la costola (e qualche guardia?) durante un restauro risalente ai primi del 1900. Quanto alla data la scrittura sembra essere per la maggior parte tardo quattrocentesca, meno una carta che precedono il testo e dal f. 186r a 212 che sembrano poter risalire al secolo sucesivo”.

After quoting Sanvito's abovementioned 2000 work, and the dating the Milanese researcher gives there, she speaks about the watermark present in the manuscript “tutte toscane e tutte in uso nella seconda metà el 400 in toscana (Briquet 5543, 2448-49, 6650)”.

Therefore, several handwritings can be appreciated in the treatise. This we have verified when comparing the handwriting of the solutions with the one appearing in the diagrams themselves, which is clearly different. The different handwriting¹⁰⁷ in the diagrams uses in the representation of the knight the same abbreviation appearing in the 1512 Guarinus MS.

Before starting the chess technical part, on a leave without numbering and by another hand, there is a perpetual calendar in 16th century handwriting. October 1545 is given as an example; as the interest of the calendar lies in its verifiability, it is reasonable to think that the example can be corroborated, so the year 1545 does seem relevant to us. The same scribe appears at the end of the manuscript (leaves 211 and 212) describing card games. Probably by the same copyist is the transcription of the two exercises¹⁰⁸ appearing on leave 186, precisely the one mentioned by Dr Paola Pirolo. It is thus very strange, if it is a later writing, that it appears nevertheless in three very different sections of the manuscript.

On the other hand, it is not two but three watermarks, and very different ones, that appear in the paper. This in itself is already an argument challenging the empiric dating stemming from the study of the watermarks, if the true value of the watermarks to which we have referred in the description of the El Escorial MS is perverted, and dates present in other documents are used to establish in a not favourable context the dating of another document with a similar mark.

Briquet's watermark 5543 is part of the group 5540-5545, whose motif is a *Greek cross inscribed in a circle*. Briquet

107. The handwriting used in the diagrams is much rounder. Some letters, like "d" or "f" are very different. In the diagrams the superscript sign is used for the abbreviations of the letters, something which does not appear in the text of the solutions.

108. K 3 and CB 249, both present in the Cesena MS: Ces. 14-1 and 345-1.

considers that the group has to be studied as a whole. Its limit dates are Ferrara, 1404 (watermark 5540) and Lucques, 1496-99 (watermark 5544).


Another watermark present has the motif of *inverted scales in a circle with rectangular plates*, which conforms Briquet's group of watermarks 2445-2468. Although most appear in documents from the 15th century, its limit dates are determined by watermark 2456 (Rome, 1508-10).

Watermark 6650, *Flower with the shape of a tulip*, forms a group with very similar variations, according to Briquet—6644-6652, most from the middle of the 15th century, but with border dates as Florence 1442-47 (watermark 6650) and Siena, 1552-54 (watermark 6651).



I am very much afraid that, confronted with a such a picture, we cannot give a foremost value to the watermarks in the manuscript. On the contrary, their variety suggests that the work has been made with remains of paper, probably stocked for years.

The conclusion is that the most valuable argument we have is the technical one, from which it is inferred that the work is undoubtedly from a later date than the Perugia manuscript, on which it depends and from which it takes two compositions. In this last instance, it includes another composition that unequivocally comes from Spain, and it can only be set up according to the Spanish rules current during the 15th and 16th centuries.

23. *Liber de partitis scacorum*, MS of the Cleveland Public Library. It is dated and has the name of the author: 4 January 1512, written by Paulus Guarinus, from Forli. It is a collection of 77 problems from the CB and, therefore, all of medieval chess. It is surprising that a humanist like Guarinus at such a later date as 1512—with Damiano's book on the brink of going to press—does not know modern chess. This is something we have to have present in our deliberations. Everything seems to indicate that before 1510 modern chess was not very widespread in Italy. It is practiced in very specific areas such as the Dukedom of Ferrara.

 24. MS of the Biblioteca Buoncompagni of Rome 8 (no 3).


The handwriting is from the 16th century. It contains 16 problems (fos. 65-72) from the classic collection of the CB.


  25. *Questo libro e da imparare giocare a Scachi et de le partite* (Rome, 1512), 62 pages, by *Damiano portugese*. It

is the first book on chess printed in Italy and it contains only modern chess. It is a short but excellent manual to introduce modern chess, for it contains 7 opening rules (3 devoted to the game at odds), 16 subtleties (forerunners of modern studies) and 72 problems. It also devotes 7 pages to the *Arte de iocare alla mente*. Its clear, terse and straightforward style increase its pedagogical value, which explains the extraordinary success it enjoyed in Italy. Only during the 16th century 8 editions appeared (1512, 1518, 1524, four without date and 1564). The book holds an intriguing mystery which has substantially increased in recent times. The original material is probably limited to blind chess and the opening rules at most, for both the subtleties and the problems come in Francesch Vicent's book or his entourage—we have no doubt about it. But the mystery is not limited to the content of the book: the author himself undoubtedly hides behind the pseudonym *Damiano*. It is surprising that for centuries the name of the author has been accepted without reservations, when it is but a first name. As we have pointed out, Dagoberto Markl has recently questioned the book's authorship, advancing the name of its real author.


Positions inherited from Vicent's book, bilingual edition in Spanish and Italian, by an enigmatic Portuguese (?) author... these are too many hidden clues for Damiano's celebrated work. One would have to add to them the never-confirmed indications of a 1502 edition, to complete the fantastic picture. However, **Damiano's great mystery, for us, is yet another bigger one.** In our hypothesis, which we advance here, in the title pages of the 1512 and 1518 editions ciphered messages were inserted about the identity of the real author, who was still alive, by bringing the

spurious word QVESTO, abandoned from the third edition on. This kind of hieroglyphics delighted (converted) Jews when they had to hide their identity.

 26. MS f. allem. 107, of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, circa 1530-1540. It contains 90 leaves that start with a schematic and peculiar translation of Damiano's book into German (although the Portuguese author is never mentioned) and 14 opening rules with the legend "Lucenes". The author does not apparently know the new rules of the Parisian MS owned by David DeLucia, whereas he does know the material from Göttingen. The presence of castling (rules IV and X) and of the *Fegatello* (rule XIII) indicates that maybe the author has lived for a while in Italy. The repeated transcription of Lucena's name in a text so close to the Göttingen MS clearly connects the latter with the Salamancan treatise, and with Lucena's own name. Maybe the author has used an anonymous edition of Damiano—this would explain the lack of any mention to him. We already showed in Chapter One that the making of this manuscript can be from an earlier date than the more complete Paris/DeLucia MS, but this is not a certainty.

 27. Paris/DeLucia MS, circa 1530-1550. As the previous one, this is a treatise wholly devoted to modern chess, with a structure identical, though, to the Göttingen MS. It contains 20 opening rules and 28 problems (the same as Göttingen, except for Gött. 9 and 30). It also includes complete games, in the rules, of quite elaboration, revealing many years of practice with modern chess. It is therefore the most complete of the manuscript works linked with Lucena's work—perhaps it is a late work. The language used is Old French and Provençal, although the copyist is probably an Italian. The interesting presence of Lucena's name in the transition between the rules and the problems settles any doubts about the precedence of openings. A different matter is to be able to establish the connection with Lucena, which seems clearly to exist with the Salamancan work. It is strange that Lucena's complete name

again does not appear, now in a document addressed to the private sphere. But even stranger is that after half a century only the rules and not the problems undergo some additions. This indicates that the several compilers are not problemists but practical players. We have already expressed our opinion about Lucena's true contribution surely being limited to the opening theory (specifically to rules 1 and 9 to 12 of the Salamancan treatise as well as the new ones appearing in the manuscripts).

-  28. *Sensuit leux partis des eschez: Composez nouvellement Pour recrer tous nobles cuuers et pour eviter oysiutee a ceulx qui ont vouleste: disir et affection de le scauoir et aprendre et est appelle ce Liure le ieu des princes et damoiselles. Nouuellement imprime a Paris.* It was printed by Denis Janot *the Young* between 1530 and 1540. The apparently only copy of this little book is kept at Vienna's Imperial Library. It contains 21 problems of old chess, mostly derived from the CB. The fact that a medieval chess treatise is printed at such a late date puts into question the true dissemination of modern chess in France during the first third of the 16th century. There is no need for us to say how this leaves this country's pretended paternity of modern chess.

CONCLUSIONS

The most beautiful page of the History of chess—a golden and immortal episode—was doubtless the birth and subsequent expansion of modern chess. Partly because the conclusive proofs were reluctant to appear, and also because of national interests, sometimes impudent—it is true that there is too much at stake, but this should promote even more, if possible, decorum—the History of chess actually touched lightly on the study of the advent of a reform that changed forever the face of the board. In such a way that we can say that the new game, although it shares with the previous one the setting (the board) and the number of

characters (32), is a completely different game. To a certain extent, Arabic-medieval chess can be considered as a forerunner of contemporary chess, a predecessor rather than the same reality¹⁰⁹ having evolved.

As we have said somewhere else, the temple of modern chess was built on the shifting sands of the ancestral home that holds the origin of the modern rules. Five centuries of practice made it sublime and fascinating, but its original weakness made it ever more vulnerable. With all and that, the task was not easy at all.

A thorough and overall study of all the technical documents of the key-period (1450-1530) of the birth, expansion and consolidation of modern chess becomes necessary. The readers of these pages will be able to form their own opinion, rebuffing so much information, slant, superficial, and generally little inclined to reach the field of proofs, that so often appears in the specialized literature.

From our study it is inescapably inferred that modern chess has originated in Spain, from where it spread to Italy and France at the beginning of the 16th century.

109. In the year 2002, at Segorbe, we organized under the auspices of Segorbe's Local Authority, the *I Festival de Ajedrez Antiguo*, in Memory of Francesch Vicent. This unique tournament was played under the medieval rules previous to the reform—we prepare them for the occasion. We saw again, going back to the past, the chess that Fenollar, Vinyoles, Castellví and Vicent himself revolutionized. The presence of experienced chess players, with the chessboard as testing bench, confirmed something we already knew—it is indeed an essentially different game to the one we practice nowadays. It is another game; in fact, it is not chess as we understand it today. Clever, attractive, colourful, but very different! Perhaps because the board was not modified—this was the destiny probably awaiting chess had it not been for the Valencian reform—and because apparently not many changes were made—creation of the modern queen and bishop, promotion of the pawn to queen, and king's leap, from which castling would evolve—one would say that it was a modernized continuation of the game. Much time, research and effort have been invested to try and unravel the time and place that saw the invention of old chess. But what is it worth if we compare it to the greatest event in the History of chess, so great it definitively shapes today's chess? Any efforts we make become necessary, although they leave us exhausted. We are at the proper time to eradicate theories that have sprung even with the decisive proofs, which we present in this work, already apparent.

The first documents of modern chess are all of them Spanish (works 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 in our study; the last two are the Perugia and Cesena MSS, in our opinion excellent works undoubtedly by Francesch Vicent).

Work 17 (Göttingen MS), as we saw, necessarily comes from Lucena's 1497 book, and is the first technical document of modern chess in France.

Strictly speaking, the first Italian treatises on modern chess¹¹⁰ are works 21 (Casnatense MS of 1511) and 22 (MS It. of Florence). The latter has no date, but is probably from the same time. The possibility that it was a work from the 15th century, made even around 1475, has to be completely ruled out. I refer in particular to the technical proofs, relative to the problems themselves, which we have presented. To the six pioneer works on modern chess of Spanish origin, we have to add the first four printed books in the world on draughts, all of them Spanish, all of them gravitating around Valencia, for as Govert Westerveld has accurately pointed out in many occasions, draughts are tributary of, and has a shared origin with modern chess. The genuine proof of this connection is offered by the Cesena and Perugia MSS where, in 1502-1503, the initial position of draughts is presented, added to chess positions. They are very dear to their author, who is—we have no doubts about this—the Valencian master Francesch Vicent. This link is not broken yet in Timoneda's book on *marro de punta*.

We note how far from being muddled this picture is. The eternal question regarding the origin of modern chess is resolved.

It is also necessary to record that Spain¹¹¹ is the only country where there is no regression, i.e. in Spain there are no longer any

110. We already saw that the Leon MS (work 20) must be from a later date and only contains one position of modern chess, undoubtedly from the entourage in which the Perugia and Cesena MSS have been made.

111. The Spanish origin of modern chess was already defended by the great historian T. Von der Lasa, who even got right the date of the birth of the powerful queen, around 1475.

compilations only of medieval chess, once the new form of playing is established. This happens neither in France nor in Italy, as works 18, 19, 20, 23, 24 and 28 of our study show. They are devoted exclusively to old chess in the middle of the 16th century, which suggests that the practice of modern chess is limited to certain regions, maybe even to specific chess circles. It has not been generally established yet.

Another relevant question is connected with the two Italian works with modern chess supposedly made at the time of coexistence of the two forms of playing. Both in the MS It. of Florence and in the MS Casanatense, the problems of old chess and the ones of modern chess are not intermingled—they are presented in separate sections. The first conclusion to be extracted by whoever studies this period in detail is that they are later works because of their very structure. However, the certainty of a Spanish origin of the Perugia and Cesena MSS, where the two forms of playing coexists and are mixed up¹¹², suggests that **in Italy the battle for the establishment of modern chess, waged in coexistence with the old chess, has hardly taken place**, partly because of Damiano's revolutionary book. Something similar happens with castling—the time of its establishment in Italy is alien to the evolution of the *king's leap* (present already in *Scachs d'amor* in 1475). As we have seen, it is established in opposition to the Spanish fourth stage: the best possible form of leap, which is the transposition (Rf1 and then, the move does not necessarily have to be consecutive, Kg1). This persuasive argument also indicates the Spanish origin of modern chess.

The greatest outrage in all this, to which we put an end in these lines, is the one suffered by Francesch Vicent. His spirit throbs in, lives in, feeds most of the pioneer works on modern chess: 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25 and 27 of our study. He is the champion of modern chess. Especially remarkable is his

112. This also happens in the Spanish treatises from the 15th century, and only in them: Vicent, Lucena and the El Escorial MS.

seemingly proven task in the expansion of modern chess in Italy, with the making of the Perugia and Cesena treatises, as well as the paternity, not only in the contents, of Damiano's (?) treatise.

Without any doubt the role of Italy is decisive for the expansion, cultivation and greatness of modern chess, particularly during the 16th and 17th centuries, in a tough but fair fight with the Spanish school. Had the new form of playing not been accepted and spread in Italy, proposing for instance a counterreformation¹¹³, the History of chess would have been very different.

113. This is what has actually happened in draughts—although being originally from Spain, the historical form of playing has been limited almost completely to Spain and some countries under its influence, whereas in international competition the Polish version, in which a 100-square board is used, has eventually gained ground.