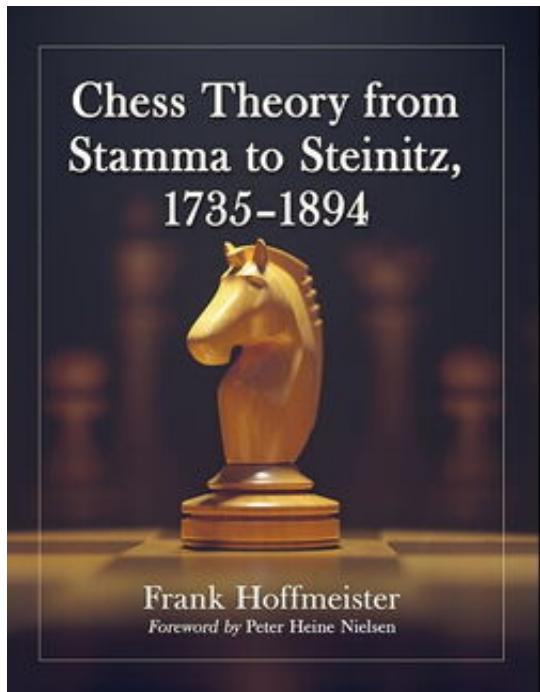


2023-04-09

Chess Theory from Stamma to Steinitz, 1735–1894



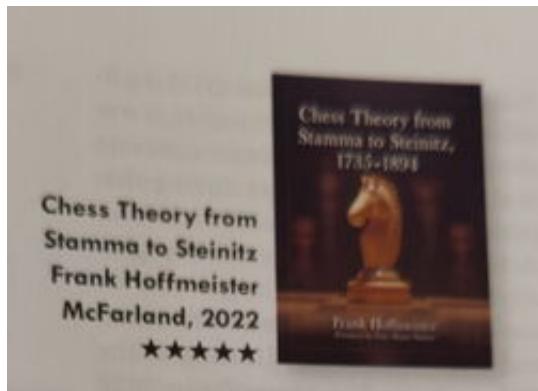
1735–1894 - frontcover

by Jean Olivier Leconte

The [McFarland publishing house](#) (USA) has a whole branch specialized in books about chess history, which is to their credit, because the target audience is rather limited. Note that the published books are always of good quality.

I recently acquired one of their latest publications, with the book of my friend Frank Hoffmeister. His book, to which I contributed very modestly, does not differ from McFarland's books. It is a book of great quality for those who are interested in the history of chess and the beginnings of the opening theory for example.

In his introduction, Frank indicates that he started writing this book in ... 2009 (!) for publication in 2022. Such a length of time does not surprise me, considering the richness of the book. Note that in the February 2023 issue of the [New In Chess magazine](#), the British Grandmaster Matthew Sadler publishes a long article about this book and gives it the maximum rating of 5 stars!



[5 stars rating in New in Chess 2023/2](#)

This book is written in English, its price is quite high, 99 USD (quality and such a book must be paid), to which you have to add postal charges from the USA. To order it, go here:

<https://mcfarlandbooks.com/product/chess-theory-from-stamma-to-steinitz-1735-1894/>

Here is what the back cover says:

Most chess biographies present the games of famous players—but not their writings. Filling that gap, this book begins with Syrian master and author of chess studies Philip Stamma, and finishes with the first world champion William Steinitz. The main novelties in opening, middlegame and endgame theory in the 160 year period are examined and biographical sketches put the contributions of more than 30 masters into context.

The author presents many new insights—for example, regarding the origins of the Ponziani Opening, the Dutch Defense and the Petroff Defense. French star La Bourdonnais used other sources for almost every part of his Nouveau Traité. Morphy's analysis of the Philidor Defense was faulty and Anderssen's play included many positional ideas. Harrwitz and Neumann published modern treatises long before Steinitz came out with his Modern Chess Instructor. Many ending themes belong to less well-known authors, such as Cozio, Chapais, van Zuylen van Nyeveldt, Sarratt, Kling and Horwitz, Berger and Salvio.



Frank Hoffmeister

A European Union official and professor of international economic law, Frank Hoffmeister was several times finalist of the German amateur chess championship. Between 2009 and 2020 he served as president of Europchess, the club of the European institutions in Brussels, and published several reviews of chess history books in the journal Schach.

He lives in Kraainem, Belgium.

See also:

- [La théorie du jeu d'échecs de Stamma à Steinitz, 1735-1894](#) (This article in french)
- [Hoffmeister, Frank](#)