

2008-06-18

Photo report on our Venice meeting by Michael Negele

Caissa in La Serenissima (The Most Illustrious)



This year's springtime meeting of the Ken Whyld Association on 23 to 25 May in Venice was certainly a unique experience for the participants (see our [group photo](#)). This city has the strangest and most wonderful townscape of the (Old) World, not only because of the numerous works of art and its more than 1200 years of history but also because of its geographic location.



Location of our venue and lodging Casa "Cardinale Piazza"

The idea for this third regional KWA meeting ([2006 Copenhagen](#); [2007 London](#)) was born during the visit of the chess Olympiad 2006 in Turin, and it was a special pleasure for me that Alessandro Sanvito and Antonio Rosino were able to keep to their – at that time rather vague – promise. But without the active support of our young Bozen friend Luca D'Ambrosio and of the tireless Romano Bellucci who was worried about our Obligated to Tradition till the last day, this event wouldn't have been so successful from my point of view.

This time really everything went well together:

The weather was incredibly kind to us: While the whole of Italy suffered from downpours you could enjoy two magnificent summer days at the east coast of the Adriatic Sea. For the first time we had succeeded in putting up all participants at the same place, the plain but very clean and quiet Casa "Cardinale Piazza" in the Palazzi Contarini-Minel ([picture series 1](#) / 10 pictures) where the lectures and – till long after midnight – chess duels took place.

More about that later on ...



Photo of the venue (leaflet)

- moreover a [tourist information](#) (jpg-file)

On Friday afternoon 13 participants (partly with their families) and 2 guests arrived at the venue. Miquel Artigas from Sabadell (Spain) whose sister lives in Venice gave us a great surprise by his appearance. Unfortunately Rolf Glenk had to withdraw his participation at short notice, the great Italy lover has most regretted that himself. Certainly our friend from Forchheim had already prepared a small "presentation gift" for the participants.



On the Isle of Murano

After a trip (missed by me) to the Isle of Murano [including a tour of the Basilica dei SS Maria e Donato with a chessboard mosaic ([picture series 2](#) / 6 pictures – from Sunday)] Alessandro Sanvito started the official part with his lecture on the Pacioli manuscript ([gallery 3](#) / 15 pictures) which was offered by the Aboca Museum, Sansepolcro (AR) in different (de luxe) editions as reprint and facsimile.



Alessandro Sanvito giving his lecture



At least the museum had delegated for two days an employee (Paolo Cambrai; picture on the left) to our meeting who accepted all our questions, among other things about an English edition of the facsimile.

Unfortunately I was not granted to follow the first minutes of Alessandro's talk as Luca D'Ambrosio and Romano Bellucci wanted to tell me before about the "terrible mishap" during the production of our bibliography of commemorative publications. The problem caused by carelessness of the printery (Some pages and particularly the cover had been spoiled by printer's ink.) turned out to be less tragically though, at least a partial edition of nearly 500 faultless copies could be handed over. (See also our corresponding page [Publications](#))



The audience : (in front) Luca D'Ambrosio, Romano Bellucci and Francesco Gibellato

Now I would like to express again my extraordinary thanks to Romano Bellucci who took this failure (which he was in no way to blame for) very much to heart. The financial sacrifices alone which our friend from Venice selflessly took upon himself to make our book possible, but also for more than 25 years his

nice magazine *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate*, show his great idealism. Many sincere thanks to a real chess friend!



— The first issue of *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate* - Volume 1, Numero 1 , 1981



— Introduction of the first issue



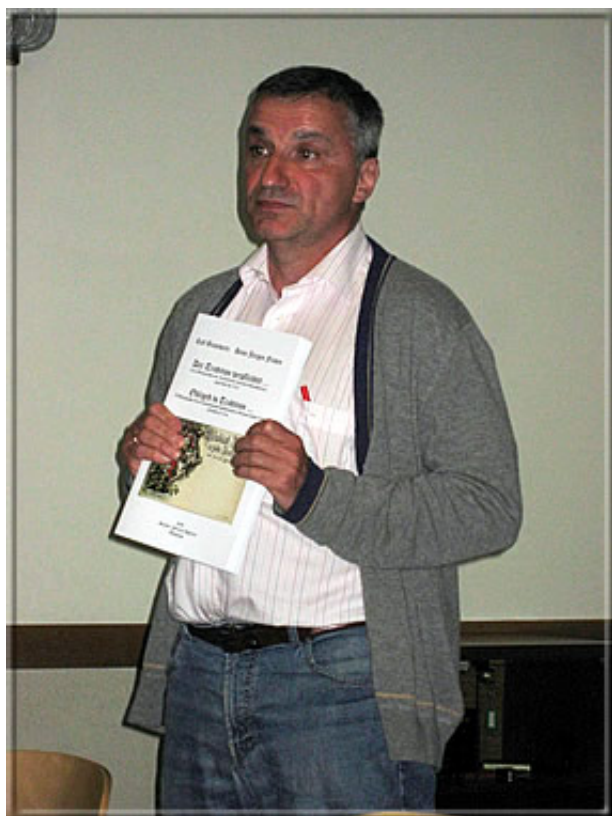
— Historical Venice postcard on the back page of this issue



— An additional historical postcard



After this short "excitement" I could still concentrate on Alessandro's explanations before I could present the first independent book of the Ken Whyld Association. I am very proud of the result, and I would like to thank very much all persons involved, above all the authors Ralf Binnewirtz and Hans-Jürgen Fresen who both were not able to come to Venice, but also the translator, Johannes Fischer and his proofreader, Len Skinner as well as Egbert Meissenburg for his willing support. Many others were helpful, here I may refer to my introduction to this actually "impossible" compilation.

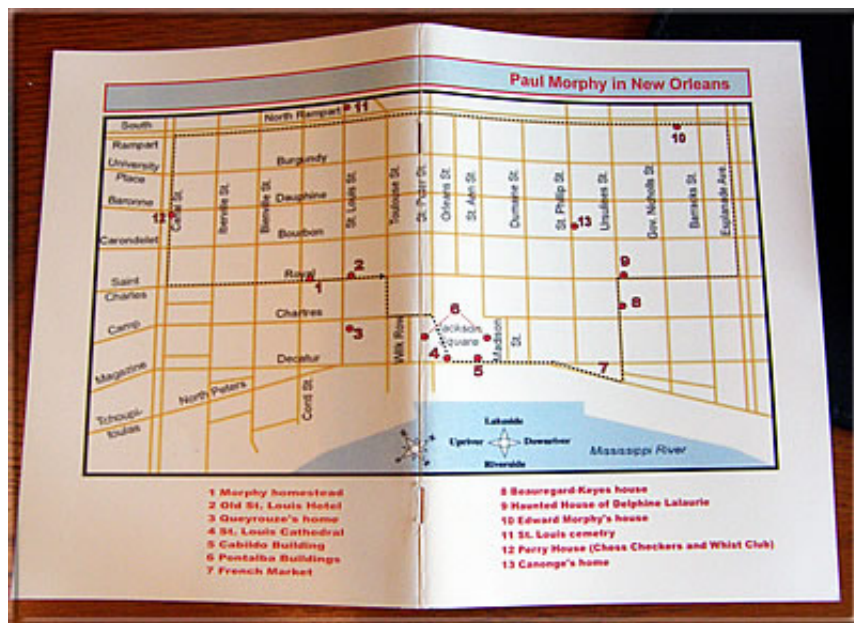


Just published: ***Obliged to Tradition ... A Bibliography of the Commemorative Publications of German Chess Clubs Founded by 1914***

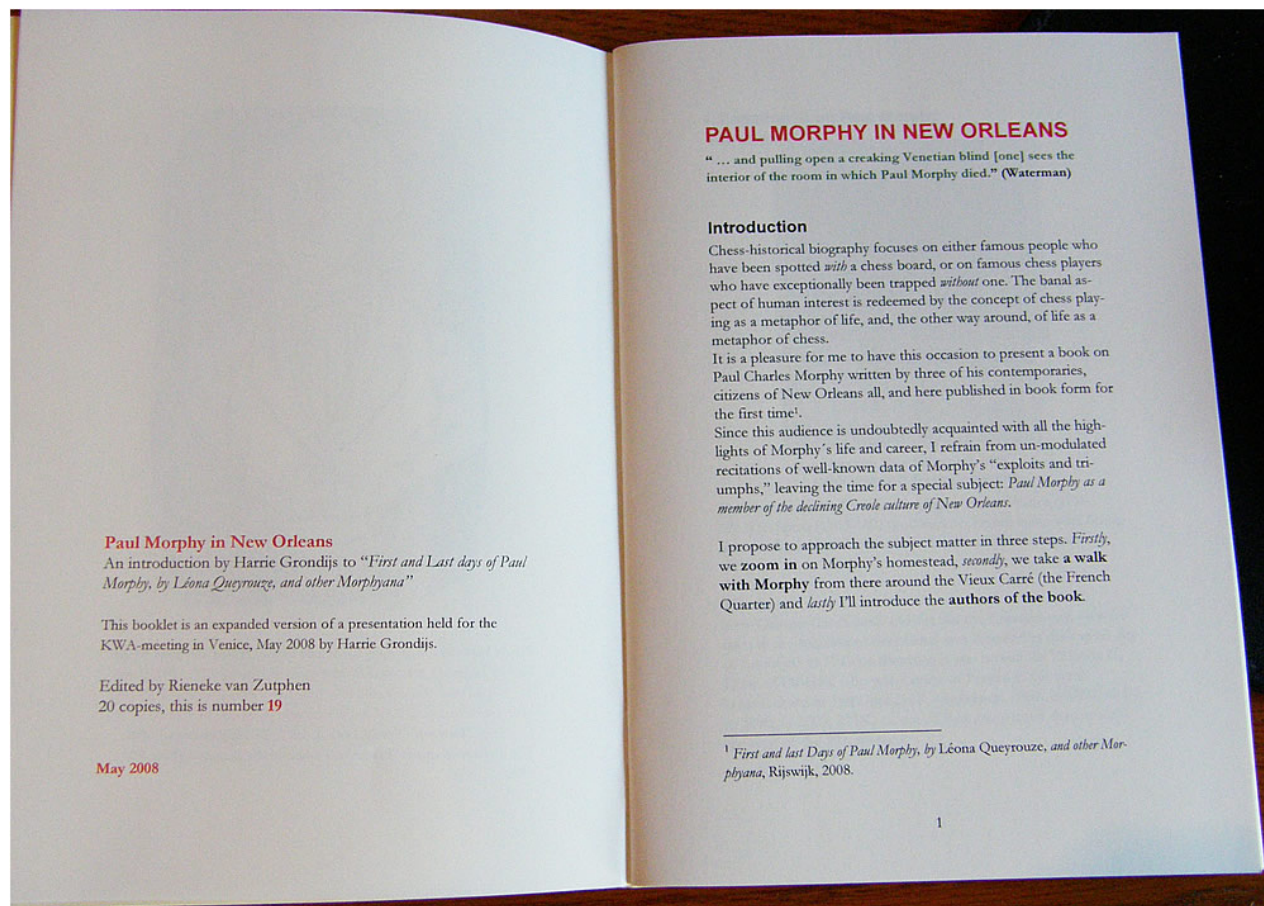


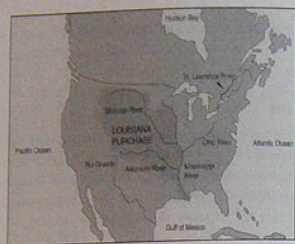
Harrie Grondijs made us especially happy with the next lecture as in addition to his lively explanations of Morphy's life (and death) as well as of the situation of the Creole population in the New Orleans of the nineteenth century he presented the participants a small booklet which documented his talk. ([Picture series 4](#) on the lecture / 11 pictures)

His fantastic book "First and Last Days of Paul Morphy" (text by Léona Queyrouze and other "Morphyana") already seems nearly sold out to me.



Brochure "Paul Morphy in New Orleans"





Area of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803

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I. Zooming in on Paul Morphy

The state:



Situation New Orleans in 1875
(with proposed drainage system)

The "ownership" of Louisiana swapped from France (1718-1763) to Spain (1763-1801) and back to France again until Napoleon finally sold the land to the USA (Louisiana Purchase in 1803).

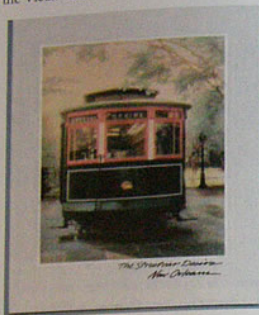
The town:

New Orleans (*La Nouvelle Orléans*, aka the Crescent city, - a reference to the Mississippi river bend) was founded as the capital city of Louisiana in 1718 by Bienville; it was named for Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, who was Regent of France at the time). New Orleans in 1880 had 216K inhabitants, 246K in 1890, 484K in 2000, in 2007: 273K, ... not all that many more than around the start of the 20th century!

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The quarter:
The original heart of the city along the board of the Mississippi, is named the Vieux Carré.



Royal Street with streetcar

The French Quarter, or Vieux Carré, is located on a bend in the Mississippi River. North Peters Street follows the bend, but the rest of the streets parallel to the river are in a straight line. [...] So close to the water, the houses are weather beaten and prone to rot and termite damage. The paint peels easily and the ironworks rust. Over time it has withstood hurricanes, floods, fires, yellow fever epidemics, war, neglect, industrialization and commercialization. (Cohen).

The streetcar you see at street's end in the cover photograph rattled along Morphy's house; it was named DESIRE - in one direction- in the other direction CEMETERIES (it ran until 1948).

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Originally the streetcars of New Orleans were drawn by horses and mules (mules better stood the heat). The first electric streetcar of New-Orleans dates back to 1891 (first experiments were during the World Cotton Centennial 1884/85).

The house: Morphy's Homestead



89/91/93
Royal Street in 1921



417 Royal Street in the 2000s

The house of the Morphy's was on 89/91/93 (today 417) Royal Street. It is described in much detail in the sketches by Waterman and Queyrouze.

It was built after 1795 by Vincent Rillieux (great-grandfather of Edgar Degas) and bought in 1805 to house the Banque de la Louisiane, the first bank established in Louisiana after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. It became the residence of the Alonzo Morphy family from 1841 to 1891. The property was 72 feet wide and 124 feet deep (incl. the garden).

Paul M. was not born here but in the so-named Beauregard House² in 1837, the house was built for grandfather Lecarpentier (or, if you wish, Le Carpentier).

Let us pick up again on Sarah Beth's description of the town:

² P.G.T. Beauregard, general and hero of the Confederates, lived there from 1866 until 1868.

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...It was originally a French colonial and Spanish settlement which for a century or more stayed isolated from the rest of New Orleans in language and customs. As the rest of the city prospered [in the first quarter of the 20th century], the Vieux Carré began a rapid decline and many of the beautiful homes were converted into laundries, small factories and rooming houses for the workers of the newly industrialized area. By the 1920s its decay had reached a point where many people wanted to simply tear it down. But, as happens with other poor places, artists, writers and musicians moved in because of its low rent and wonderful atmosphere. Preservation committees were established and much of its former beauty had been restored. Today, tourism is probably both its greatest danger and biggest ally. (Cohen)

The garden:

The Patio Royal Tearoom was one of the attempts to restore new economic life into the French. The picture shows the Patio Royal in the early 1920s opened as a part of the reconstruction of the Vieux Carré.



The Patio Royal tearoom in the courtyard

The back-gallery:

On the landing on the right stood Paul's uncle Ernest in the company of chess master Jacob Löwenthal (who was on a visit to his friend Eugène Rousseau who was then employed as cashier of the N.O. Citizen's Bank) and he called out to a group of playing children:

... Ernest Morphy rose, and stepping in the back-gallery which overlooked the yard, all abloom on that breezy day of May. "Paul, come up here quickly; we want you," he merrily cried out to Paul who had just returned from school, and was playing with some friends. (Queyrrouze)³

³ A lengthy interpretation of this scene, that is clearly based on Queyrrouze's sketch can be read in *Keyes*.

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II. A Sunday Walk with Paul Morphy

Now it is 35 years later, and we take a walk with Morphy on a hot Sunday morning. Paul Morphy leaves his home early Sunday morning, walks up to the corner of Royal Street and St. Louis Street where he buys a morning paper⁴ that he carries with him into the lobby of the old St. Louis Hotel to read⁵. Then he resumes his walk strolling down Royal Street, turning right into Toulouse Street, then left into Chartres Street and across Jackson Square towards St. Louis Cathedral where he reads Catholic mass.



Jackson Square



Inside the French Market

He has enjoyed the view of the historic buildings (The Cabildo, where the Supreme Court was housed from 1868 until 1910, the St. Louis Cathedral and the Pontalba buildings where it seems the

⁴ Probably either the (*Sunday*) *Picayune* or *L'Abeille de la Nouvelle Orleans* (or perhaps the *New Orleans Times-Democrat* that had a weekly chess column edited by James Séguin with the help of Morphy's friend Charles Maurian).

⁵ The old St. Louis Hotel, severely damaged by a hurricane in 1915, was torn down in 1916. In its place came the Omni Royal Orleans hotel.

Morphy family lived in one of the apartments⁶, (as later would William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote etc.). After the Holy Mass he proceeds toward the French Market, where he buys some cookies⁷ and turns back toward Royal Street passing by the Beauregard-Keyes house, his birthplace, where its later owner Frances Parkinson Keyes wrote *The Chess Player*⁸, and Morphy turns right into Royal Street again along the Haunted

⁶ According to David Lawson in "The Pride and Sorrow of Chess," the family lived for a short period of 4 months on Jackson Square in an apartment in one of the Pontalba building, before moving to Royal Street, this to allow for "extensive refurbishing" of the house on Royal Street. However, the Morphy's moved to Royal Street in 1841 and the Pontalba buildings were erected in 1848/9. Maybe the family moved out temporarily to allow the reconstruction work in later years?

⁷ "[...] "calas" (delicious rice cakes.) Morphy was particularly fond of these, and would always buy a large bag to bring home, and would often divide his purchase with some of the small boys in the neighbourhood. [...] Morphy's next stop was at Himbert's "charcuterie shop" where he would buy a bag of delicious little cakes which he carefully handled, these cakes being cooked in butter, and Morphy always wore grey kid gloves in winter. [...] After having carefully deposited his bag of cakes in the hands of his little niece (the writer) he would take possession of a large rocker either in the grape arbour, enjoying the pleasant sunshine and admiring the many beautiful flowers for which Mr. Morphy's immense garden was noted. But if the weather was inclement, the family would enter the music room where his sister-in-law would sing one of his favourite songs or play one of the classics, and Morphy was soon lost in a day dream. However, when the butler announced that dinner was served, Morphy was wide awake and did full justice to the meal. Very often these Sunday dinners included Edgar Hincks, a cousin of the Morphy's, and other close relatives. [...]" (Morphy-Voitier)

⁸ In an author's note she mentions the work of Léona: "... and shortly after his death his mother's close associate, Léona Queyrrouze, wrote a long résumé of his rise and fall [...], which was duly translated and offered to various periodicals, none of which was sufficiently perceptive to use it." (Keyes)

— page 8-9

House (in which Delphine Lalau die tortured her slaves in the attic before she was chased from the city). Arriving at Esplanade Avenue he walks up to Rampart Street where his brother Edward lives (alas, I don't know on which address exactly), where he hands out the cookies to Edward's children and takes lunch with the family, sits in the garden. Late afternoon he returns to his homestead, walking down the Rampart Street and along the premises of the New Orleans Chess, Checkers and Whist Club.



Beauregard House



Delphine Lalau die Haunted House

The N-O. Chess, Checkers and Whist club counts well over a 700 members, a number that rises to over a thousand in the course of the decade; its popularity has a lot to do with the (lack of) alcohol regime and gambling practices⁹, and since December 1883 it is located on the upper floors of the Perry House on the corner of Canal and Baronne Street. The club cherishes a number of Morphy memorabilia including a bust by the French sculptor

⁹ However, the editor of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat on April 20th, 1884 put it that: "... we can not honestly allude to the N-O Chess, Checker and Whist Club as a chess club when there are probably not more than one-sixth of the membership chess players. We assert that no man can play chess and drink whisky at the same time. [...] If a chess club can not exist without having cards and liquor associated with it, let it die."

tor (and chess player) Eugène Lequesne of their worshipped hero Paul Morphy¹⁰. Finally home Morphy takes a bath.



Rebuilt home of the CCW Club (1895)

The man:

Sometimes a member of the CCW club would cast a distracted look out of the window and down below he would see a village idiot making strange gestures, talking to himself as he turned his monocle on the young women passing by. The distinguished club member would turn away in disgust and cast an obedient glance at Lequesne's serene bust as he walked back to his game¹¹.

¹⁰ Lost in the fire of the building on January 22nd, 1890.

¹¹ Steinitz met with Paul Morphy on Canal Street in 1883. The *Cincinnati Gazette* in May 1884 reported Zukertort meeting Morphy on Canal Street "... and Mr. Morphy, who had known Dr. Z. in Paris years ago, came up and saluted him politely in French. Mr. Morphy said that urgent business had compelled his retirement from chess. The two met again on the same street, and Mr. Morphy spoke of imagined personal grievances that showed plainly the sad condition of his mind. Dr. Zukertort is not hopeful that Mr. Morphy can be restored to mental health." The source of this story is Zukertort himself, and he later admitted inventing these brief encounters to shake off impertinent journalists.

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III. The authors

• G. Abbot(t) Waterman

On the 2nd of May 1891 the homestead of Morphy was sold at public auction. The property was 72 feet wide and 124 feet deep. On the ground floor were housed 4 shops. After Paul's death¹² his mother and younger sister Helena had lived there alone but they followed Paul into the grave in 1885 and 1886 and the house was from then on managed by Paul's brother-in-law John Sybrandt (who with his wife, Paul's eldest sister Malvina had returned from England and moved in after the death of Helena). They soon moved out again, seeking smaller quarters uptown and the house was occupied by strangers until it was sold as part of the legacy settlement in 1891. Waterman reported about the event with a lot of background information in the *Times-Democrat* of May 3rd 1891.

The information I have about Waterman is from an article in *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, July 1950 entitled "Old Days on the New Orleans Picayune", by John Kendall (who worked for the Picayune from 1891 onwards). Abbott Waterman was

...one of the most attractive of the younger generation of Picayune reporters. He was a native of New Orleans, member of a well-known family. He was a very handsome, poetic looking young man, slender, graceful, with an interesting pallor, and a head crowned with masses of curling black hair ... an excellent reporter and a fluent writer, but seems to have had no particular literary aspirations otherwise.

¹² Paul Morphy died on July 10th, 1884, followed closely by his mother on January 11th, 1885, and sister Helena in 1886. Malvina and John died in 1894.

... Waterman turned out to be a solid citizen, sober, highly respected and exemplary in all respects. When the Standard Oil Company established a plant in Baton Rouge, he quit the Picayune to take a position as public relations man with it, and died in that employ some years ago¹³. (Kendall)

Waterman's report of the auction reads like a Greek drama with a single absent actor, or, rather, with an actor's dead body dramatized in the form of a house.

The drama starts with the arrival of a chorus of actors and spectators:

...There was the usual crowd of attendance – thin, nervous acting men, hoping for a chance for a speculation that would net them large profits in a short time; easy-going, well-dressed capitalists and wealthy real estate owners looking for investments that would yield reasonable annual revenues ... and a score more of idle spectators, men who, with nothing to do and no money to spend, were trying to while away the dragging hours, dividing their attention between the bidding and the bar. (Waterman)



The family bathroom in 1891

This is followed by a description of the history of the property and a detailed description of the sorrowful state the rooms in the house are in (some are in use by a shoemaker, who has a shop on the ground floor). The telling seems to reflect on the state of its illustrious inhabitant.

¹³ I.e. in the 1940s.

— page 12-13

... This room is now unused, and is kept closed. It is dark and dreary, and the door hinges are stiff with the rust of many years, while the window glasses are coated thickly with dust, and so covered with heavy cobwebs that the sun light can scarcely enter. The walls are peeling, the ceiling is stained and musty, and there is nothing in the room but dust and dirt and desolation. Gloomy as is the whole property, from years of neglect, this one room is alone, in comparison, in its woeful state of dreariness. ... Passing along the rickety wooden back gallery, one overlooks the court yard, and pulling open a creaking Venetian blind sees the interior of the room in which Paul Morphy died.¹⁴ In its present condition it is dreary and dark enough for a felon's cell. The calcimined walls are crumbling and cracking, and from around the skylight in the centre of the ceiling the plastering has fallen off in large pieces and lies upon the floor. Pieces of matting, rags and other rubbish are heaped in one corner, and a liningless bathing tub stands in another. (Waterman)

Waterman describes the rise of the owners of the home, then their decline and downfall and the dilapidation that followed of the property. The article ends with the climax that comes when the attendants at the auction turn out to be silent extras and nothing else: nobody is prepared to bid more than the opening bid.

... *The Only Bid*
The drawing had been hung, the property described - \$6,000 was offered and called again and again by the auctioneer, but the bid was not increased. "Third and last call gentlemen! Are you done? Is it possible that I must sell this mansion for \$6,000? Why, the lots themselves could not be bought for double the money! Once more! Are you done? Then it is going, once (pause), twice

¹⁴ The room is locked up so the reporter must pass along the "rickety gallery" before he peeps into the interior of Paul's room.

(pause), third and last time (pause) and sold! Sold for \$6,000 to that gentleman over there! That gentleman was Mr. J.B. Esnard, who, after the sale, stated that he had bought it because he could get it cheap. He does not know to what use he will put the place. And thus, after a possession of 50 years the historic building, for which Mr. Justice Morphy paid \$30,000, was sold at public auction, for \$6,000. (Waterman)

In *Morphy Gleanings* by Philip Sergeant we read that the house was "re-opened" in October, 1921 after a long period of evil days, "... neglected, forgotten by all save tourists and those interested in the old New Orleans." (Sergeant)

• Léona Queyrouze

Léona Queyrouze was born in 1861, her brother Maxime in 1866.

Their father was Leon Queyrouze, a remarkable man. Born in France in 1818 he moved to America at a young age where he became a successful merchant of (imported) wines and groceries, first with his partner Oscar Blois, later on his own account (he advertised almost daily in *l'Abbeille*).

In his spare time Queyrouze captained the Orleans Guard, a *corps d'élite*, one of many unruly regiments formed shortly before the Civil War.

At the onset of the Civil War, Leon Queyrouze was commissioned by the Governor of Louisiana to lead his Orleans Guard Battalion into battle as reinforcement for the Confederate Army. Major Leon Queyrouze, a Colonel now, led his battalion at the battle of Shiloh on April 6, 1862:

The few moments we spent there were for us the most dreadful. One could hear a pin drop; throughout the battalion, officers and soldiers were calm and collected, and I believed that, as each one

— page 14-15

thought of all on earth who were dear to him, whom perhaps he would never have the good fortune to see again, for we realized that at any moment we would enter in the midst of that destructive barrage and that doubtless many among us would never see another day. Those few motionless moments impressed us more than we found ourselves under fire amid the bullets, the cannon balls and the shrapnel. It was also on that hill that we heard the first bombs whistle [...] hundreds of bullets plowed the soil on all sides about us and whistled near our ears. (from *The Shiloh Diary of Edmond Enoul Livaudais*, New Orleans, 1992)

Because the soldiers in Queyrouze's battalion wore their traditional blue uniforms in the battle they were fired at by Confederate troops. Coldly, Queyrouze ordered to return the friendly fire, and when he was informed that his men were firing on their allies, he retorted: "*I know it; but damn it, we fire on everybody who fires on us.*" (Livaudais)

At the end of the next day, after fierce battling, the Orleans Guard retreated to Corinth, Mississippi. On account of a knee-injury Queyrouze had to give up the command. The battalion had incurred thirty-three percent of casualties. Soon enough Queyrouze was arrested by the Union Army under General Butler, and, refusing to sign the amnesty oath, he fled to Cuba where he worked for a brokerage business.

After war's end Queyrouze returned to New Orleans. He became a prominent citizen of New Orleans and was one of the founders of the *Athénée Louisianais*, a society to preserve French culture and literature.¹⁵ He died in 1895,

¹⁵ Colonel Leon Queyrouze died on Friday, Jan. 18th, 1895, at the age of 77 years.

... A lengthy funeral procession, which included the surviving soldiers of the Battalion [Livaudais was among them] of the New Orleans Guard, followed his basket draped with the battle flag of Shiloh. (obituary in *l'Abbeille*)



Essay *De l'Indulgence*

His daughter Léona had an excellent privately tutored education. She learned the classics in Latin and Greek, studied European literature, philosophy, science, art, languages and music. She turned out to have great musical talent, and composed a number of marches &c. the scores of which are kept to this day at the Williams Center. One of her longer works was performed by a Mexican Army Band on the occasion of the World Cotton Centennial Exposition, on March 25th, 1885 for an audience of 5000.

She published under different names, including some long essays on Racine and Wagner. She was the only female member of the *Athénée Louisianais* and would be the first woman to give a speech in public in N-O.

Léona presented a ... conférence sur la bonne aventure, donnée dans la maison de Mollie Moore Davis et publiée plus tard dans le *Picayune*. Je le tiens de Mlle Queyrouze elle-même.

In 1884 she had already given ... une conférence à l'Athénée Louisianais sur "l'Indulgence" c'était la première fois qu'une Créole se permettait de parler en public à la Louisiane et, de la part d'une jeune fille de 23 ans, le fait était du plus mauvais gout. (Tinker)

— page 16-17



Léona Queyrouze in 1880 and later in life

She was well aware of the decline of the Creole community, but always remained loyal to its values and traditions, and therefore eminently qualified to sympathize and express the frustration that she saw in the heart of the family Morphy. In 1891 she published a poem in *l'Abeille* that said it very clearly: the Northern American were just a people of adult children that "crushed" everything holy to the French and the Spanish nation.

For the fading flower of our Creole race
Once a proud race. The other nation
Those mere infants with their blonde looks and words
Crush under their heels the generations
Of the French and the Latin, the Grand Spanish,
And all those who knew the same passion. ...

The poem ends:

... Our ancestors' language
Is now denigrated and only found on headstones
Cut off and exiled, we are ushered to the large rolling river where
its heavy waves take us under
Taking all, carrying all, into the tomb of the abyss.

(from the poem "Imprecatio" by Léona Queyrouze, in *l'Abeille*, May 3rd, 1891; Meletio, page 255).
Léona attributed this poem to Gayarré on the occasion of the river washing away the tombs of Spanish ancestors on an old cemetery, a metaphor for the loss of the Creole civilisation.
In the late 1930s

... Léona Queyrouze had a personal maid and one of her duties was to make sure that Léona's long full skirts did not brush against the small ornate iron coal burner stove that was situated in the middle of the room. Thus, long into the twentieth century, Léona remained a woman out of time and out of place, holding on to the vestiges of a fashion and a culture that had disappeared long ago. [...] Her life story serves as a relic of a vanished culture, and one that inhabits and gives meaning to the concept of a loss cultural moment. (Meletio)

Léona maintained a remarkable relationship with an old friend, Anatole Cousin (1809-1889), who rather than properly managing his factory of bricks composed hundreds of sonnets which remain unpublished (with a few rare exceptions in the *l'Abeille*). Cousin had grown very fat and lived a retired life: seated in the shade of his large oaks, without vest or shoes, writing poems, singing them out loud to check on their harmonies, as two black slaves on each side waved cool air towards him to freshen him up.
We know the letter that Thelcide wrote to New York to thank the chess officials for the condolences they had expressed on the occasion of the death of Paul. In a letter that Léona wrote to her admiring friend Anatole Cousin she explained that in fact it was she, Léona, who had written the letter for Thelcide.

— page 18-19

... All my spare time is devoted to that unfortunate Madame Morphy, who since the death of her son Paul, claims me without pause, and for whom I take care of her correspondence. I have had to reply to the condolences from the Chess Club of New York, among other things. (Léona Queyrouze, letter of September 9th, 1884)

Léona took up the plan for her sketch of Paul Morphy (who lived at a knight's distance from her home) around 1888 (when she asked Canonge about the exact date of death of Morphy).



Frances Parkinson Keyes at her writing desk

The first version was written in French and she was unwise to send the only copy to Ernest Duclos, a son of a commercial contact of her father's, in 1892. Ernest went to see Numi Preti (son of the famous Jean Preti) who advised him that there would not be much interest for such a work in France:

"... his father published a book about chess 25 years ago under the patronage of your regretted friend P.M., he had drawn an

edition of 500 copies, and, well, only last year his son had sold the last remaining copies."

Later Duclos gave the manuscript to read to a literary friend (the author Émile Riquiez) asking for his opinion, who managed to lose it¹⁶. This happened in 1894. Léona wrote the sketch anew, this time in English. Via friends in New York she tried to sell it for publication in instalments to popular magazine's (like *Harper's Magazine*) but nothing came of it.
When Léona died in 1938 the *Times-Picayune* brought the news that brother Maxime planned to correct and update her manuscript for publication. It is that manuscript that is now kept in the *New Orleans Historic Collection*¹⁷ and is put to print for the first time.

• Louis Placide Canonge

Louis Placide Canonge was born in 1822.

His father Judge J.F. Canonge received his early education in Marseilles, and came to the United States via St. Domingo¹⁸ after the French revolution.

¹⁶ "Ce Monsieur ayant porté la manuscrit à la campagne pour le lire attentivement aux dernières vacances, le lut et lorsque vous lui écrivîtes, il chercha le manuscrit pour vous le retourner mais à son grand étonnement il lui fut impossible de le retrouver..."

¹⁷ The *Historic New Orleans Collection* is a museum, research center, and publisher dedicated to the study and preservation of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South region. General and Mrs. L. Kemper Williams, collectors of Louisiana materials, established the institution in 1966 to keep their collection intact and available for research and exhibition to the public.

¹⁸ St. Domingo was first settled by Spain in the late 15th century, France colonized it in the 17th century. During its years as a French sugar colony the island was one of the wealthiest spots on earth. French

— page 20-21

The youngster Placide was sent to Paris where he took courses at the Lycée Louis le Grand. Upon his return he made his literary debut, at the age of 17, with a story that was published in two parts in *L'Abeille*. He soon became very *en vogue*, being an elegant gentleman, a dandy, with a cultivated taste for the arts and music, - dead against the influx of the Yankees¹⁹ from the North.

Louis Placide Canonge played an important role in the establishment of Creole literature and music on the cultural scene of New Orleans. He wrote articles and stories for *L'Abeille de la Nouvelle-Orléans*, started up several papers on his own (among which *l'Epoque* had a claimed circulation of 4,000), was an art critic and worked on theatrical productions. His published works include²⁰:



ships and citizens traveled regularly between the island and Louisiana. Many of the émigrés fleeing the revolutionary slave rebellions of the early 1790s came to Louisiana, infusing it with a fresh dose of French culture.

The cultural influences of these émigrés, both black and white, greatly affected the development of New Orleans during the early decades of the 19th century.

¹⁹ The attack on the "intruder" George W. Cable, to which the larger part of his obituary of Paul Morphy is dedicated, is a telling demonstration of Canonge's chauvinist feelings.

²⁰ See *Bibliography of New Orleans Imprints 1764-1864*, by Florence M. Jumonville, Historic New Orleans Collection, 1998.

Maudit Passeport! Ou les infortunés d'une drogue, vaudeville en un acte, 1840;
Qui perd gagne. Comédie en un acte en prose, 1849;
France et Espagne, ou la Louisiane en 1768 et 1769, Drame en 4 actes, 1850;
Le Comte de Carmagnola, Drame en cinq Actes, dix Tableaux et deux Epoques; 1856;
La Louisianaise. Chant patriotique (sur l'air de la Marseillaise.) Paroles de L.P. Canonge, 1861.

The theatre always remained Placide's true passion: he managed the Theatre of New-Orleans (1860) and the French Opera during two consecutive seasons between 1873 and 1875.

He worked for *L'Abeille de la Nouvelle Orléans* from 1882 onward, contributing critical literary and musical reviews until his death.



New Orleans French Opera house

He remained a close friend of the Morphy family all his life; mother Thelcide and her son Paul (but certainly *not* father Alonzo!) shared his enthusiasm for music and opera, as illustrated by the following anecdote taken from *First and Last Days of Paul Morphy* (on page 105):

The Morphy home was a temple of art. Judge Morphy would undoubtedly have enjoyed life a great deal more, provided there had been much less music about it. This predicament was that of almost all those who are doomed to share the life of artists, without partaking of their temperament and tastes; and who are consequently tortured, with no adequate compensation by the drudgery, inevitable in all things, and unbearable to those who take no special interest in what constitutes the predominant passion of others. He once depicted his domestic life to one of his friends in a very amusing way, with a comical, half distracted, half resigned manner. His son Paul was then almost famous. "Can you understand how I manage to exist in such a purgatory as this place?" he ejaculated in what may be termed joking earnest. "When I come home from court, tired out after a day of arduous labor, about half a block or more from my house, I begin to hear vague and disconnected sounds, rather barbarous, I may venture to say, at least to my uncultivated ear. Of course, it is my wife's indefatigable piano, which can make as much noise as a whole orchestra. I open the gate, climb upstairs, and somewhat shyly step into the parlor, where I find her wrapped up in her usual artistic ecstasies, constructing some musical scheme, and only leaving her piano to rush to the bureau in front of which you, her accomplice, are seated, busily engaged in writing a libretto for her opera. Naturally, neither one of you deigns to notice my profane intrusion in your sanctuary, and I retire on tiptoe." The gentleman who had the benefit of that description was Mr. L. Placide Canonge, a gentleman of distinct Creole attraction, a spirited Louisianan journalist and litterateur, well known in Paris where he was educated, like almost all the children of high-born families, at that ante-bellum period. Monsieur Canonge, whom the Judge good-naturedly called his wife's accomplice, had become the collaborator of Mrs. Morphy who was then composing an opera, the title of which was *Louise de Lorraine*. It seemed a daring enterprise, and so it was. But no obstacles, no difficulties could dishearten the energetic woman,

and she encountered them valiantly and successfully. Some are born to conquer, like others to succumb. The remarkable merits of that opera elicited highly favorable criticisms from composers of renown, and won their unrestricted approbation. It is greatly to be regretted that she never completed the last act, although there was sufficient material in it for two. She first divided the opera into five acts, and finally decided to condense the two last into one. "After that first and most unlucky excursion," resumed the Judge, "I enter the drawing-room where I find my son Paul eagerly bending over a chess board, with his head buried in his hands, meditating upon some problem, and as immovable and impassible as Archimedes threatened with death by the Roman soldier. I turn away to go to my room; but at that moment, certain unearthly and singularly lamentable accents rouse my curiosity, and make me feel somewhat uneasy. I walk in that direction, and after exploring the premises I discover my brother-in-law, Charles, in a remote room, patiently practicing on the flute (the instrument which I most abhor, and Heaven knows how! I suppose I need not tell you.) My only refuge is my room to which I betake myself in despair, and shut myself up with care, intercepting that horrible din as well as I can. When it is nearly time for dinner, it stops a short while, just long enough for all to wash their hands and get ready. I next sit down to my meal, in company with silent and solemn persons, all of whom are wholly absorbed in their respective monomania, and visibly importuned with everything that does not relate to it. We part in the same cheerful fashion, and it is soon evening. In summer I sit on the balcony, smoking a cigar and comfortably enjoying the cool breeze, and I dream that the demon of music had granted me a truce. A short-lived illusion, alas! At that very moment, a host of fifteen, twenty, thirty musicians (I beg your pardon, artists); speaking all languages known on the surface of our globe, invade the place, and I feel as if I had been transported to Babel. Then my wife begins one of her interminable concertos, to which succeeds another, and so on, until my home gradually becomes a musical Inferno. The climax of my misery is reached when I am compelled to leave my cozy seat on the balcony, on account of the crowd that gathers in front of the house, as

though they were expecting a free show. Did you ever see a man victimized to such a degree?"²¹ That witty parody of his home-life was fundamentally true, and more akin to reality than parodies are wont to be. Three or four times a week a numerous assembly of artists, pertaining to almost every nationality, met at the house of that talented woman whose supremacy they unanimously recognized. "*C'est noire maître à tous* (she is the master of all of us)" was their opinion, expressed by one of them, an old French musician. (Queyrouze)

Placide contributed the libretto for *Louise de Lorraine*, the opera that Thelcide Morphy left unfinished at her demise in January 1885. The chess editor of *The New Orleans Times-Democrat* wrote a short obituary for Thelcide, with much emphasis on her musical prowess:

Mrs. Thelcide Morphy, the mother of Paul Morphy, died in this city on the 11th inst. having survived her beloved and tenderly watched over son but a few months. Although living a life of comparative seclusion for many years past, Mrs. Morphy in former days was a prominent and much admired member of the highest circles of Creole society. Her musical talents, especially, were of a high order; as a pianist she was a true virtuoso, and she has, we believe, composed some works of great merit, although these have never passed beyond manuscript. If Paul Morphy inherited in his chess play the acute discrimination, the judicial steadiness and accuracy of his father, Judge Alonzo Morphy, it was undoubtedly from his talented mother that he derived the extraordinary imaginative force, the unequalled brilliancy of conception that marked his grandest combinations. Mrs. Morphy was a Miss le Carpentier, one of our oldest Creole families.

²¹ Alonzo Morphy died in 1856, years before Léona was born. Probably, this anecdote was communicated to Léona by Canonge, directly, or in one of his letters to her.

(James D. Séguin in the *New-Orleans Times-Democrat*, January 25th 1885)

It was only logical that the family's best friend contributed the long obituary for *L'Abeille* that appeared two days after Morphy's death (even though Canonge's expertise and interest at chess were probably rather minimal). Placide Canonge also was in regular attendance at the Queyrouze salon soirées. Léona herself named some of the other visitors to their home:

... Our home on St. Louis street was the meeting place for Gayarré, the two famous Dr. Merciers [cousins of Canonge], General Beauregard — we even entertained Paul Deschanel who became president later of France, and other celebrities. (Meletio)

Canonge was an eccentric man of culture with many original ideas and plans! When a Mr. Helper from St. Louis launched a plan for a railway that would eventually stretch out from Behring's Straits to Cape Horn (requiring 150,000 workers and seven years of incessant work), Canonge reacted with very highly-strung words of praise in support of the daring scheme: "[...] the Americas should, in their turn, become the centre and standard of all civilization." He compared the Americas to a man, the railway to his vertebral column. "[...] What a superb spectacle that would be of the giant of this civilization proudly reclining his head on the westerly shore of Hudson Bay, and having his feet in the Strait of Magellan. One more effort and there he is, grandly stretching himself out to the very perimeters of the two poles?" Canonge continues with a pathetic outburst, overflowing all bounds:

Your proposition imparts standing and strength to those other resolute and gigantic schemes in which, so to speak, are concreted and crystallized the predestined aspirations and intentionalities of mankind, now agitated and oscillating with a

— page 26-27

spirit of unrest aroused by the consciousness of an unduly lengthening period of imperfect advancement in the world's wealth. (Canonge)

Yes, Placide Canonge was quite a character!

One of his pupils, who has kept a lively memory of him, tells me that he was always dressed in a black outfit, a big ring on his finger, an enormous outmoded tie-pin. His black eyes pierced, lively, under a large and high brow, and his thin body gave him the aspect of an intellectual. He belonged to the Latin race, nervous and impressionable, incessantly turning or pulling at his sideburns with the brusque movement that belongs to the swallow busy chasing insects. He was irritable, but could not keep order in his classes. (Tinker)

What is more, Canonge was a short-tempered man, who fought in a number of duels, on life or death, in defence of his own honour or that of one of his comrades.

Tinker mentions a duel that Canonge fought with Emile Hiriart, a vitriolic critic of the *True Delta*. In 1859, Hiriart wrote an article in which "certain gentlemen from New Orleans" were accused of spending more time with the artists of the Opera than with the members of their families. Consequently, Placide Canonge and E. Locquet challenged Hiriart to a duel²². On Mardi Gras of that year Canonge fought him first, at the pistol at ten meters, three bullets were exchanged. All three bullets fired by Hiriart grazed Canonge's cloak; he received them with calm and a smile on his lips. The duellists were both unhurt; the witnesses decided that their honour was saved. Canonge had been lucky, more lucky than Locquet who was shot dead a few hours later by Hiriart.

²² In all likelihood conducted in line with the etiquette of duelling set forth by J.R. Quintero, reporter of the *Picayune* under the heading: *The code of honour, its rationale and uses, by the tests of common sense and good morals, with the effects of its preventive remedies* (New Orleans, 1883).

Canonge corresponded on a regular basis with Léona Queyrouze. She dedicated the poem "At the Opera" to him.

The day after Canonge died on January 22nd, 1893, an obituary appeared in *The New York Times*.

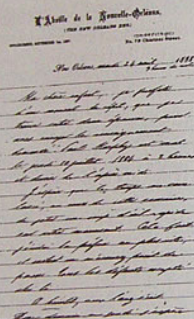
L. Placide Canonge.

At noon yesterday, L. Placide Canonge, one of the editors of the *New Orleans Bee*, and the nestor of the press in that city, died of the grip. His career was one of remarkable brilliancy. Born in New Orleans in 1822, he was the son of Judge J.F. Canonge, a native of San Domingo. The senior Canonge received his early education in Marseilles, and came to the United States after the French revolution. He read law in Philadelphia under the celebrated French lawyer Duponceau, an intimate friend of George Washington, and then practiced in New Orleans. He sent his son to the Louis le Grand College of Paris to be educated. In 1838 the young man returned to New Orleans, thoroughly versed in the literature of the day, and at once seized the pen he afterward wielded with so much success. From 1839 to his death he was constantly at work adding successively fresh laurels to the literary garlands of his native State. Audubon, Allard, St. Ceran, Lepouse and their compeers were just beginning to pass away, and he aspired to be their worthy successor. He entered journalism as a contributor to the columns of *L'Abeille*. He founded and edited a number of newspapers, wrote much for the press of Paris, and put on the stage more than a dozen plays early in the seventies. He was clerk of the Criminal Court, Superintendent of Schools, Professor of French at the University of Louisiana, and a member of the State House of Representatives. He was appointed an officer of the Academy by the French Government in 1885 as a mark of recognition for his literary efforts and constant labor for the perpetuation of the French

— page 28-29

Language in Louisiana. (obituary in *The New York Times*, January 23rd, 1893)

In the Morphy obituary (included in full in the book) Canonge uses the deceased chess master as a pawn in the struggle for the establishment of a neo-Creole cultural renaissance in defiance of the Northern American bid for domination²³; an attempt to preserve Franco-centric elements and to re-interpret the Creole history, mitigating faults while mythologizing their perceived superiority (as having descended upon them from noble aristocratic families of Spain and France).



Letter Canonge to Léona

²³ Personified in George Cable who according to Canonge was an intruder into a culture of which he did not share the values and that was way above him.

Conclusion

Knowingly or unknowingly, the contributors of the original sketches in this book considered Morphy as an icon for something over chess: a symbol of the unfaltering superiority of the Creole class in the Louisianan society of the day. In Léona Queyrouze's sketch dead Morphy ends as the child from the beginning: in the arms of his loving black nanny. For Abbot Waterman the home of the Morphys falls into decay, a simile for Paul's fall into oblivion. Canonge, finally, woes the Creole world and its exponent Morphy in defiance of the hateful new order personified by George Cable. Which deficiencies of character brought Morphy to a standstill and turned him into an ambitionless on-looker of the world around him? Sheer indolence? Haughtiness perhaps? An unhappy lover affair? Edge wrote this lament about him in a letter to Fiske:

... The main reason for Morphy's treatment is this: You know that any labourer in the South is regarded as a slave: he has come so to think of me. I made the proposition to him to accompany him to Paris as his secretary, etc., if he would pay my expenses, which I would pay at some future day. He ultimately got to think me a nigger, actually telling me one day, "you will write, you must write, you are paid to write". No other man but myself would have forgiven him that. ... (letter to Willard Fiske by Frederick Edge written in April 1859)

Morphy's disease was a progressive combination of several ingredients, leading to inflexibility, innate unwillingness to adapt to the reconstruction of society after the defeat of the traditional value system (honor, culture) to the revolutionary standards imported from the North (economic profit and informality). He ended with complete mental paralysis, the ultimate impersonation of the Creole community's fate.

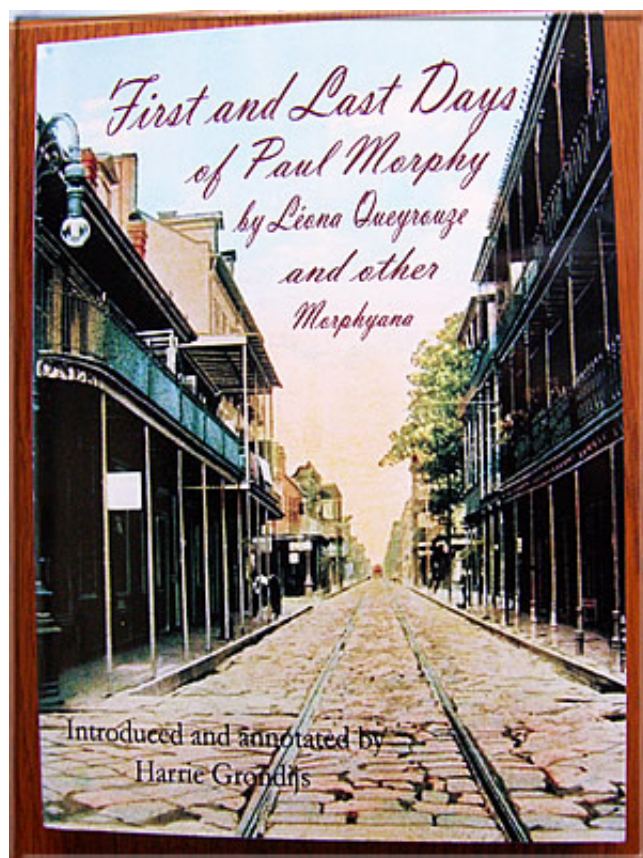
— page 30-31

Thus, finally **zooming out**, the auctioning of the dilapidated house was a metaphor for the downfall of the ruins of one man, Paul Morphy, and the downfall of that man was a metaphor for the disappearance of the entire Creole society (washed away as the tombstone of the city's Spanish ancestry) in the Vieux Carré, in New Orleans, in Louisiana.

Publications referred to in this presentation

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Meletio, Dr. Donna M.; *Léona Queyrouze (1861-1938) Louisiana French Creole Poet, Essayist, and Composer*, San Antonio, 2005.
Morphy-Voitier, Regina; *Life of Paul Morphy, in the Vieux Carré of New-Orleans and abroad*, New Orleans, 1926.
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Queyrouze, Léona (aka Beauvais, Constant); *First and Last Days of Paul Morphy, respectfully inscribed to the illustrious Memory of the Chess King*, Rijswijk, 2008.
Sergeant, Philip W.; *Morphy Gleanings*, London, 1932.
Tinker, Edward Larocque; *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle, Essais Biographiques et Bibliographiques*, 1932.
Waterman, George Abbot; *Home of the Morphys*, article in the *N.O. Times-Democrat*, May 3rd, 1891.

— page 32-33



Three testimonies by contemporaries of Paul Charles Morphy, the Chess King from New Orleans (1837-1884), about his life, his death, and his home are here published in book form for the first time.

Léona Queyrouze, a young lady friend of the Morphy family, wrote a sketch about Morphy's first and last days. The manuscript of the English version of her reminiscences is kept at the Williams Research Center of the Historic New Orleans Collection. By kind permission of this institute Léona's manuscript, written before 1890, is here put into print.

George Abbot Waterman, brilliant star reporter for the *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, witnessed and reported about the auctioning off of the Morphy home in 1891.

Finally, this book presents an obituary of Morphy by the eccentric Creole musical manager, author and journalist *Louis-Placide Canonge*, it appeared in *l'Abeille de la Nouvelle Orléans* two days after Morphy died. In this article Canonge used the Creole Chess King's personality and his triumphs as pawns in the continuing struggle of the Creoles against the North American bid for domination of Louisiana.

Harrie Grondijs introduces the three authors and recounts Morphy's personal decline after his chess career ended. This on the basis of a wealth of contemporary newspaper articles (some of which are here reproduced for the first time) and fragments taken from books about Creole New Orleans and Morphy's chess career and life.

Here a short introduction to the book



Hendrik Grondijs and Rieneke van

Zutphen

After that we all were "curious" about the evening meal, after all Venice is definitely regarded as a "tourist trap" – but in the "Ristorante Diana" in our quarter Cannaregio we could feel in the best of hands. ([Picture series 5](#) / 5 pictures)

Anyhow, we were guests there three times then ...



Near to the Ristorante Diana

After returning to the Casa Cardinale – its "closing time" was 11 pm – still chess was played till late into the night, particularly Peter Holmgren and Luca D'Ambrosio proved to be tenacious "blitzers". But this formed only a prelude to the great KWA tournament next evening.



(Relatively) early in the morning and in bright weather we spontaneously decided on a boat trip by vaporetto (The small ferries which guarantee the local traffic in Venice.) via the whole Canale Grande along the Biennale grounds, the Arsenale (formerly the greatest shipyard of the Middle Ages which a large part of the power and influence of the Venetians was based on).

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Our group on one of the numerous bridges

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... and in the narrow streets and alleys of Venice

Antonio Rosino and Luca D'Ambrosio are a team which works well together as tourist guides, naturally our South Tyrol chess friend is perfectly bilingual (German/Italian). And certainly there has never been such a knowledgeable guided tour with regard to the chess historical importance of the town built on a lagoon. ([Picture series 6 - Via the Canale Grande to St Mark's Square and back to the Casa](#) / 28 pictures.)



Antonio Rosino as tourist guide

After the lunch-break (at Diana – where else) our traditional book market of the KWA was held, but for different reasons this led only to a considerable increase of the number of Scandinavian chess books in Italy while the Italian "treasures" remained in the country. (Later on the "true" reasons were revealed: On the one hand Antonio Rosino is "sitting" on a real treasure in the "Cannaregio", on the other hand the probably highest concentration of Italian chess literature outside Italy is found in Amsterdam ...)



At the KWA book market: Carlo A. Pagni, Hans Ellinger, Calle Erlandsson and Toni Prezioso



Harrie Grondijs and Antonio Rosino



Toni Prezioso and Carlo Alberto

Pagni



Antonio's plenary lecture (in fact two lectures) confirmed once more the great importance of Italy, but also of Venice for the evolution of modern chess – a wonderful digression through the centuries, but also through the last decades of the Italian and the Venetian chess culture.

Many marvellous pictures were shown and history(ies) told. We were all enthusiastic – a small part is provided by this picture series ([series 8](#) / 32 pictures) – at the same time I'm offering reminiscences of certainly a highlight of Antonio's chess life – Venice 1967. It's true that the 25 years young local master (the picture is from 1965) turned out to play a good host and he took the red lantern in the tournament but at least he wrung a honourable draw from a top-class grandmaster.

Supposedly Antonio was not always able to concentrate himself during the games - partly played in the "leaden chambers" - due to the fantastic view of the lagoon...



II° Torneo Triveneto a Squadre "Bassano del Grappa" 5-8 Dicembre 1965
Second from the right: Antonio Rosino



The game Mark Taimanov vs Antonio Rosino ended with a draw after 77 moves: [Taimanov - Rosino](#)
Venice 1967



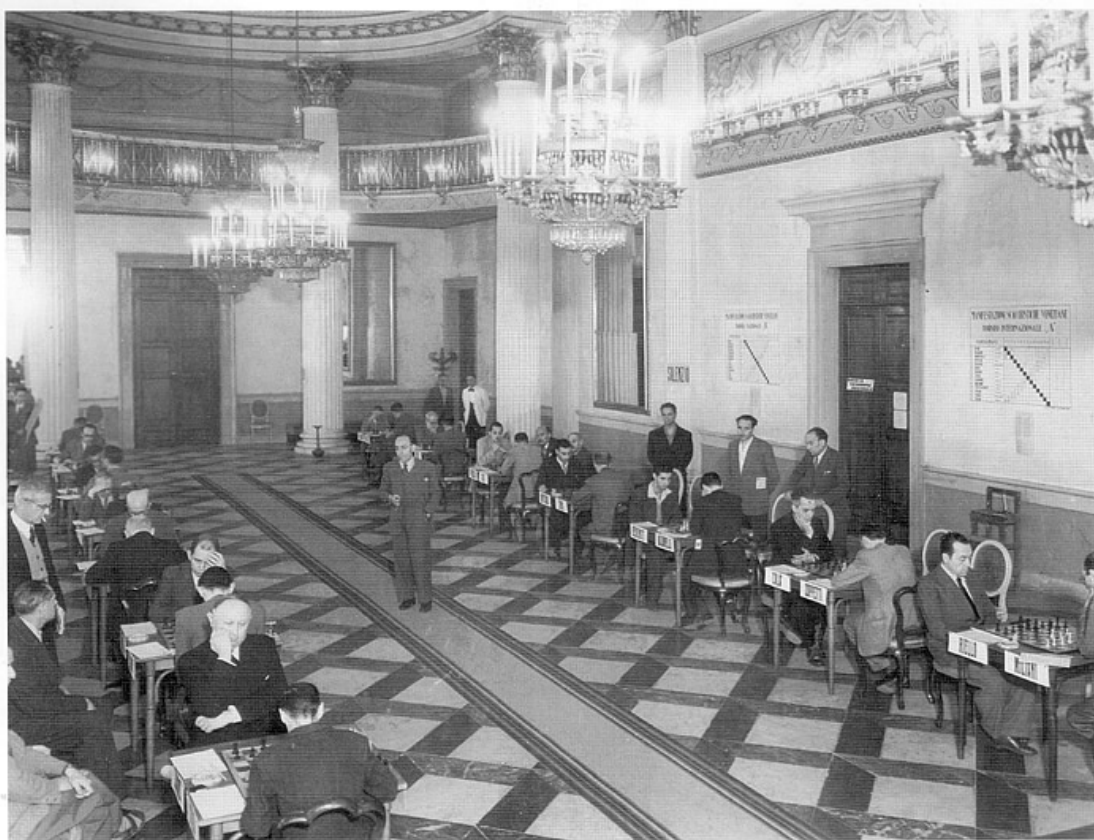
A few more interesting illustrations from *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate*:

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Manifestazioni Scacchistiche Veneziane 29 Settembre - 12 Ottobre 1947
(Ala napoleonica del Palazzo reale in Piazza San Marco)
Torneo Internazionale, Torneo Nazionale



PSZ.



PSZ.



Torneo Internazionale - 1947



PSZ.

Torneo Inter... - In piedi da sin.: Murru, Zucchetto Gianfranco, Zamberlan Junior, Benvenuti (il 2°, 3°, 4° con Pavanati, costituivano: "I 4 della Caro Kan" (dai ricordi orali di Gianfranco Zucchetto) La foto è stata pubblicata in: A. Chicco - A. Rosino: Storia degli scacchi in Italia, Venezia, Marsilio Editori, 1990.

I VINCITORI Trofeo Umberto Sartori 1944

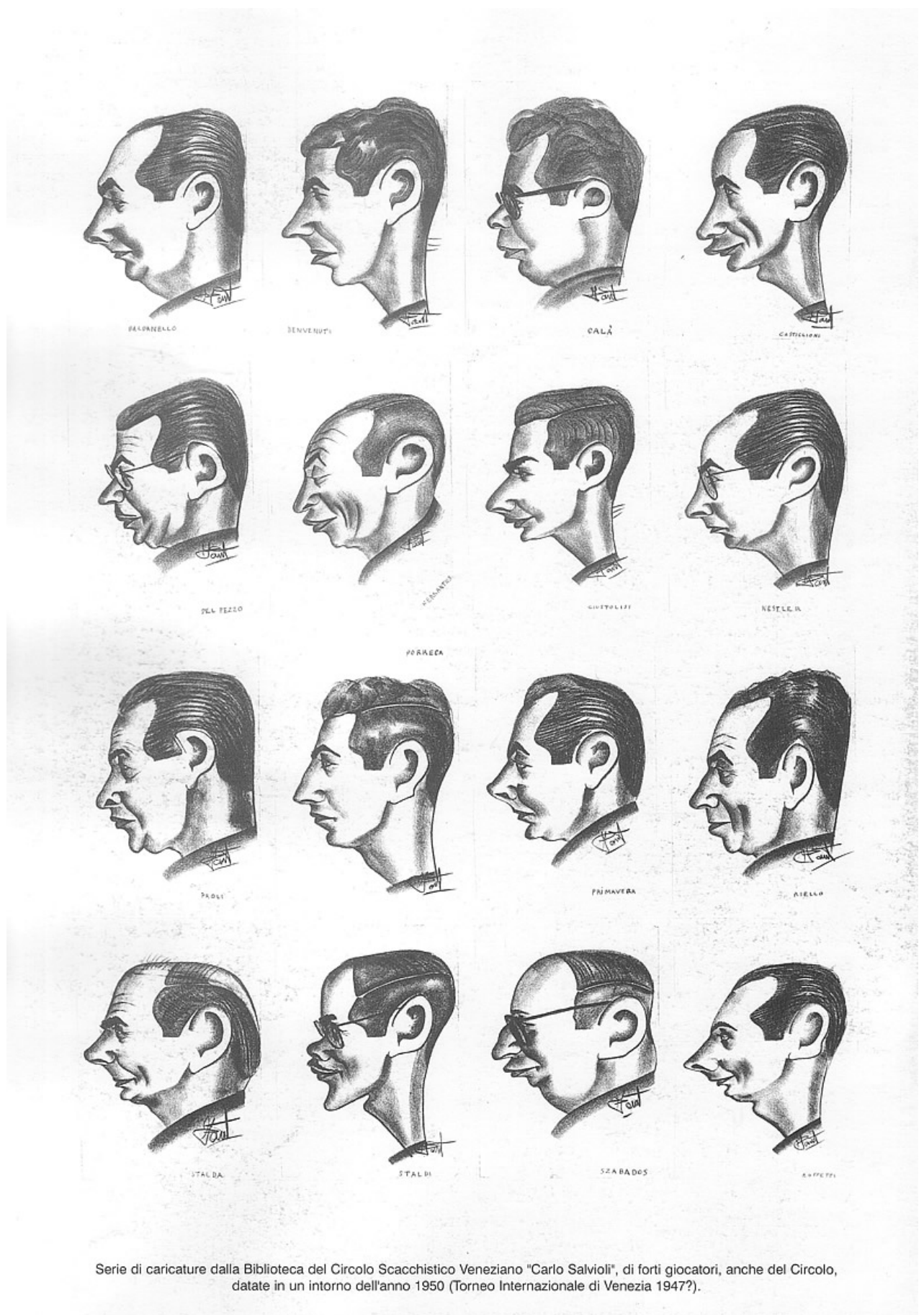


C.S.

Trofeo Umberto Sartori; a squadre (di 3) fra i soci del Salvio, 1944 - Da sin.: Zoppetti, Hellmann, Baldanello Emilio.
Vedi anche foto a Pagg.: 81, 69, 23.



SSA, Vol. 22, p. 85



SSA, Vol. 17, back page

But the two following lectures held great attractions for the audience as well for partly totally unknown

material was shown or reports were given on works in extensive "research projects". It is always a pleasure if collectors of chess books use their often extensive collections also for the general [chess] public or if a chess player gradually becomes a collector likewise through the historical interest in our game.

Luca D'Ambrosio is a shining example for the latter, by his interest in chess at Meran he finally found his way to the Ken Whyld Association, and with his fantastic contribution, his patience with all the enquiries and the excellent organization he has contributed very much to the success of our meeting.



Luca D'Ambrosio speaks

We were enthusiastic about the preview of his potential book on the two Meran tournaments 1924 and 1926 ([picture series 9](#) / 13 pictures) – just as about Peter Holmgren's masterful report on the life, the chess creations, but also on the man Gideon Ståhlberg.



Peter Holmgren ([Gallery 10](#) / 14 pictures and [pdf-file](#) / 3 MB)

After that an evening walk to Antonio Rosino's home in Cannaregio [partly the former Jewish ghetto of Venice with impressing alleys and small squares, but also rio tera as it is called – filled up canals ([series 11](#) / 7 pictures).]

Antonio and his wife Christina had kindly invited us to a casual get-together in their hospitable house – certainly the highlight of our stay. The conversation was not only about chess, but maybe this is my subjective perception which our companions wouldn't like to share – the pictures ([series 12](#) / 9 pictures) speak volumes, or the treasures from the library of the Italian Chess Federation housed in Rosino's home (and from his own collection) seem to have generally found one-sided interest.



from left : Hans Ellinger, Peter Holmgren, Daniele Ruggieri and Calle Erlandsson

By the way we had a further guest this evening: Daniele Ruggieri, Miquel Artigas' brother-in-law is not only a strong chess player but also a famous musician (flutist) – see [Conservatorio di Musica](#) and [cultura & spettacolo](#).

Many thanks again to our host, but also to Ermide Sanvito for her kind assistance and to Joan Holmgren who got a wonderful bouquet of flowers, our present.

After 10.30 pm return to the Casa "Cardinale Piazza" where the first international blitz tournament of the Ken Whyld Association started with ten participants at the beginning. Then Miquel Artigas and Daniele Ruggieri fell "victim to the closing time", later on our Swedish friends Calle Erlandsson and Peter Holmgren as well as Hans Ellinger dropped out owing to lack of fitness. But the hard core was untiring as is shown by the two photos (Casa, around 1 am). I myself realized in the course of this blitz evening that I have possibly internalized too much of "Lasker" – those who see a lot can stand a lot.



Toni Prezioso and Luca

D'Ambrosio playing "blitz"



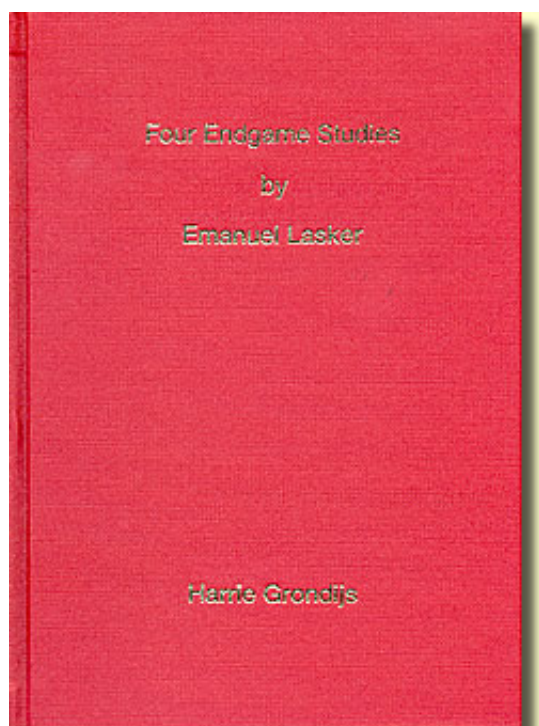
Jurgen Stigter vs Harrie Grondijs

I can give now a virtually smooth transition to the final round which started (unscheduled) with my presentation of the Lasker project – a short digression into the "art of improvisation" – as the connecting cable to our beamer was missing which had been in the true sense "packed" together with Antonio Rosino's laptop ... (This morning the chess trainer Antonio had been called to his protégés in Jesolo where a junior tournament was held.)

With the help of the tireless Luca (and Christina Rosino) and the patience of my chess friends we also succeeded in taking this hurdle – here my contribution ([pdf-file](#) / 3 MB).



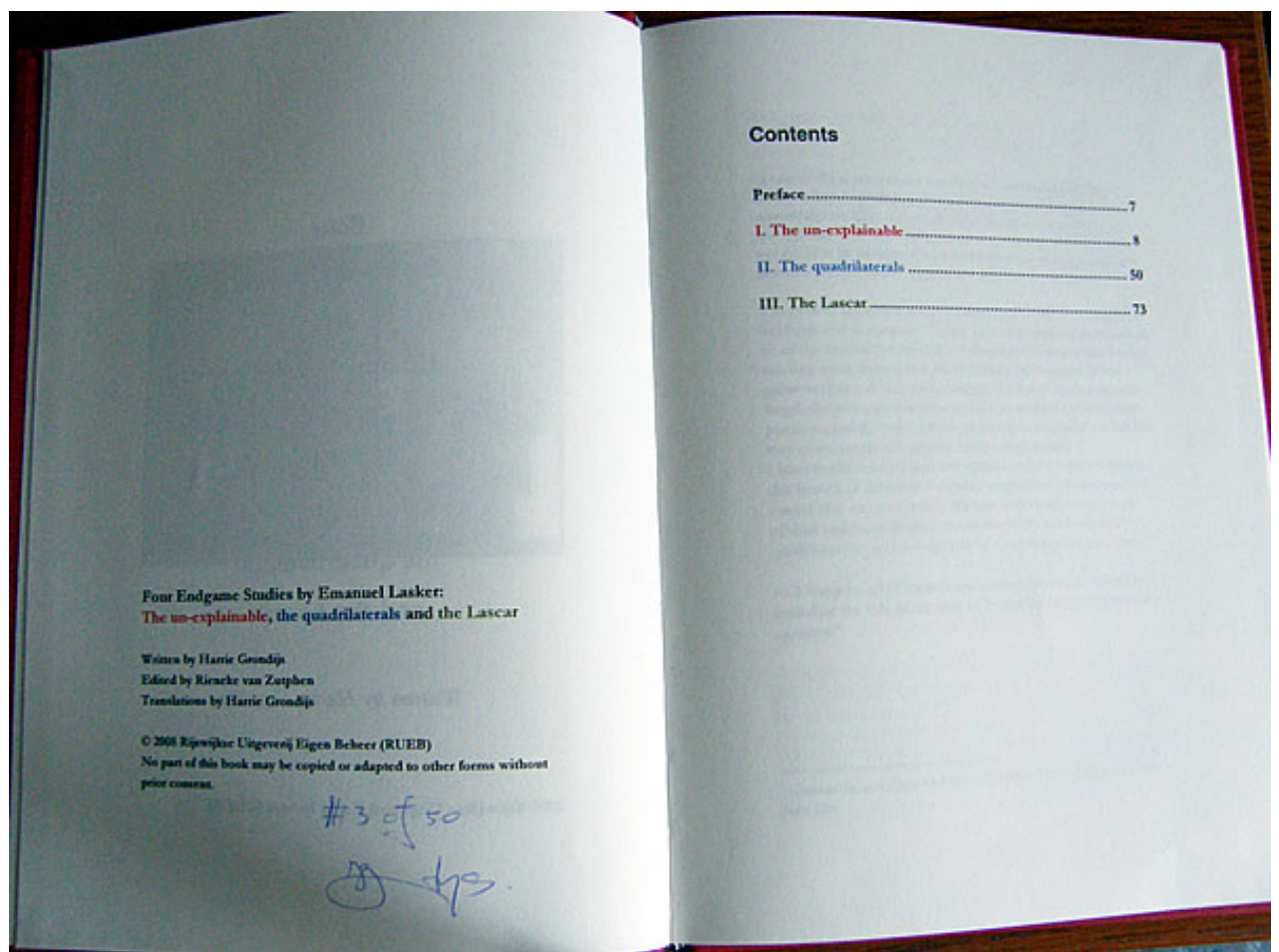
Lecture without beamer



It was a special pleasure to me to present at the same time the small book on Lasker's studies by Harrie Grondijs, so to speak as a "trailblazer" for our great Lasker book.

Here a few selected pages from the book:

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— Imprint - Contents

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Preface

In one of the series lectures bundled in *Common Sense in Chess* Lasker writes: “Of this part of the game, called the end game, it is a characteristic that the King – hitherto the direct object of attack on the part of your opponent – over whose safety you anxiously watched, and whose power was limited to the protection of a few pawns needed for his own security, now becomes a powerful weapon of offense and aggression in your hands.”¹

The present booklet is meant to shed light on Emanuel Lasker’s indulgence with endgame studies. Not by presenting an inventory of *all* the studies that the chess champion composed (there were not that many anyway and his ambitions in this niche of the game were not all that far-reaching), but rather by discussing at length the inner mechanisms at work in *a selected few* of his compositions, and by putting them in their proper context in the history of the world of endgame study composition.

I have finally selected just four specimens of Lasker’s activity in this branch of the game for closer inspection: the one most discussed (the **un-explainable**), the one esthetically most accomplished and many-shaped plus its would-be successor(s) (the **quadrilaterals**), and the one lost or most forgotten (the **Lascar**).

As it happens all of these compositions, each in its unique way, underline the role of the king as “*a powerful weapon of offense and aggression*.”

¹ *Common Sense in Chess*, by Emanuel Lasker, Dover Edition of 1965, page 104.

I. The un-explainable

Lasker with Reichhelm

Lasker started a chess column for the *Manchester Evening News* in the spring of 1901. In one of his first contributions, printed on April 10th, 1901, appeared the un-explainable, "Ending Nr. 1", diagrammed in the form of U1.²



Manchester Evening News April 10th, 1901

At the time the still quite young mathematician, also reigning chess champion of the world, lived as a boarder on 89 Brunswick Street, Manchester, England. To the census people he gave *Doctor of Philosophy* as his occupation. The owner of the house was the widow Amy Middleton, 33. She was a music teacher, "working at

² We'll refer to this position as the *Lasker position*.

home for her own account," mother of daughter Gertrude, 9 years old, and a son, Charles, 12 years old.

The solution of U1 was published the next week on April 17th, 1901 (see picture).

On April 24th, Lasker replies to a puzzled correspondent: "W.H. Scott: Ending No. 1 is drawn by Kb3, Black replying Ka7. See solution published."³

In the next month, of that year, May 1901, Lasker travels to the United States. From a letter that Gustavus Reichhelm writes to the editors of the short-lived Canadian magazine *Checkmate* we know that coming from New York Dr. Lasker visits the Franklin Chess club in Reichhelm's home town Philadelphia on Friday May 17th, 1901. On this night Lasker shows his original position to Reichhelm and learns of a suggested amendment (see diagram U2).⁴

The ending No. 1 can only be won by the following manoeuvres:—		
1. K-K12	2. K-K11	3. K-K12
K-K12	K-K11	K-K11
4. K-Q2	5. K-Q3	and wins.
1. K-K12	2. K-K11	3. K-Q1
K-K11	K-K11	K-Q1
4. K-K11	5. K-Q3	and wins.
K-K12	K-K11	K-Q1
1. K-K12	2. K-K11	3. K-Q1
K-K11	K-K11	K-Q1

Solution to the Lasker position U1 ("ending No. 1")
Manchester Evening News, April 17th, 1901

In a letter to *Checkmate* Reichhelm betrays a certain premonition of the champion's coming discontent with a bit of pre-empive

³ The information about this first publication, establishing Lasker's right of priority to the position and its idea, has been retrieved with the kind help of Tony Gillam.

⁴ That position we'll name the *Lasker-Reichhelm position*.

Start chapter 1

II. The quadrilaterals

The first quadrilateral made its appearance in the German chess magazine *Deutscher Wochenschrift*, Sunday July 13th, 1890, Volume 6, nr. 28, on page 236, as Endgame Nr. 92. At the time Emanuel Lasker lived in Berlin. The composition was dedicated to "Herrn W. Steinitz".

It is probably the best remembered of Lasker's productions. Judging by the number of reprints it was an instantaneous hit (if an endgame position can be that). Lasker was not yet in contention for the world chess championship. Had his chess career been broken off after the publication of this position, the quadrilateral would have secured his name an everlasting place in the history of chess composition.

The position is easily remembered and its solution is a progression that points itself out (see diagram Q1).⁵²

The material class to which the study belongs is just inside the realm of the 6-men Nalimov-type of tablebases. Those tablebases come in very handy for a further technical analysis of this quadrilateral, and they further the appreciation of the relative impact of alternative move orders.

Henceforth, each move of the main line solutions is followed by an indication of the number of moves until the final conversion to the win (in this case the mate, or the eventual capture of the black rook by the queen or successful pawn promotion).

Here is the solution to Q1:

1. Kb7[36]⁵³ Threatens first of all 2. Rxb2. White can afford to lose time with either 1. Kd8[40], 1. Kd7[38], or 3. Rh6[39] but

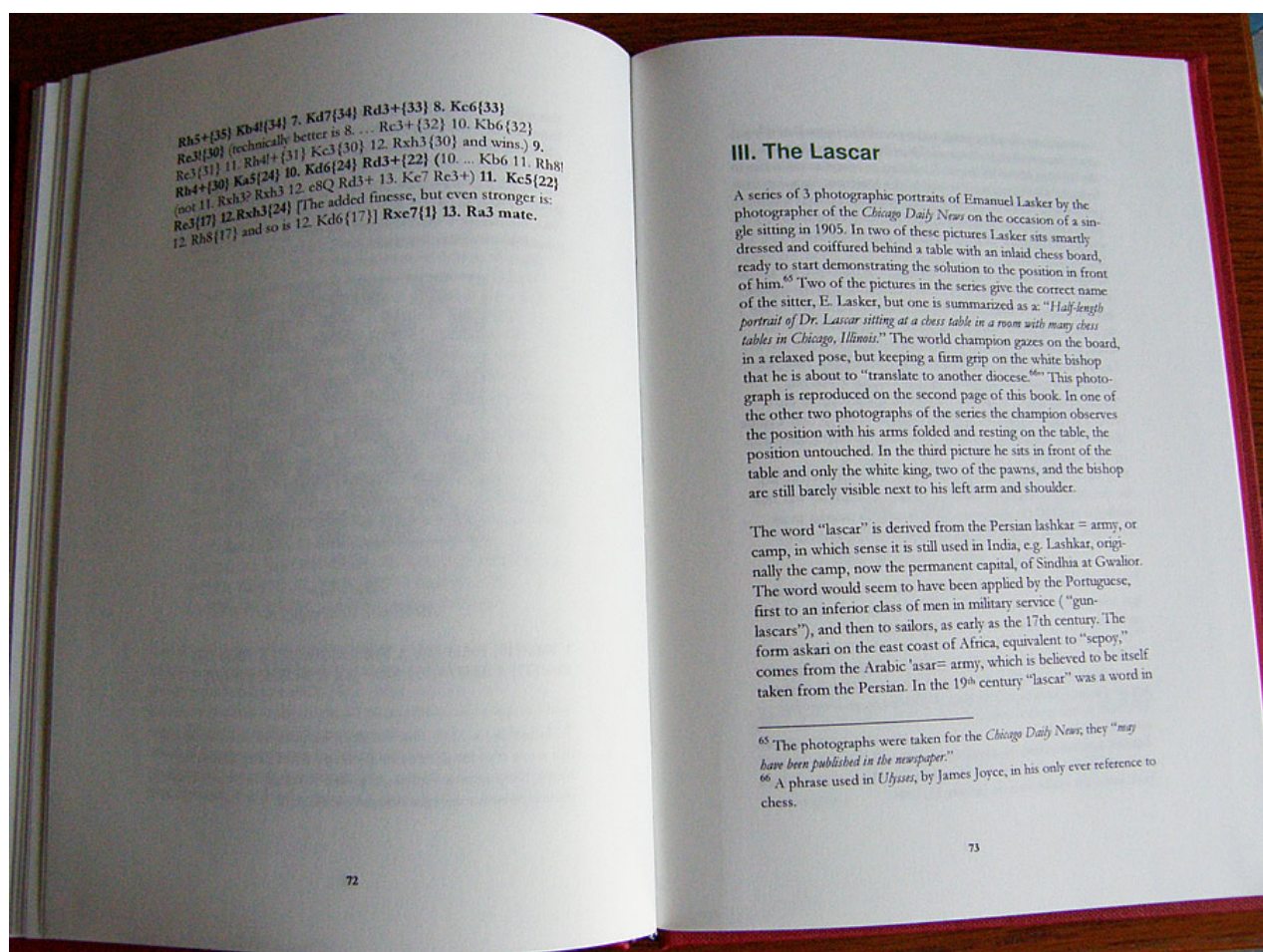
⁵² In a progression White realizes an ulterior goal through a finite succession of manoeuvring from one sub-goal to the next.

⁵³ Whenever the position has 6 men or less 1 add between accolades, {}, the number of moves until the guaranteed win as it is stored in the Nalimov tablebase for that position.

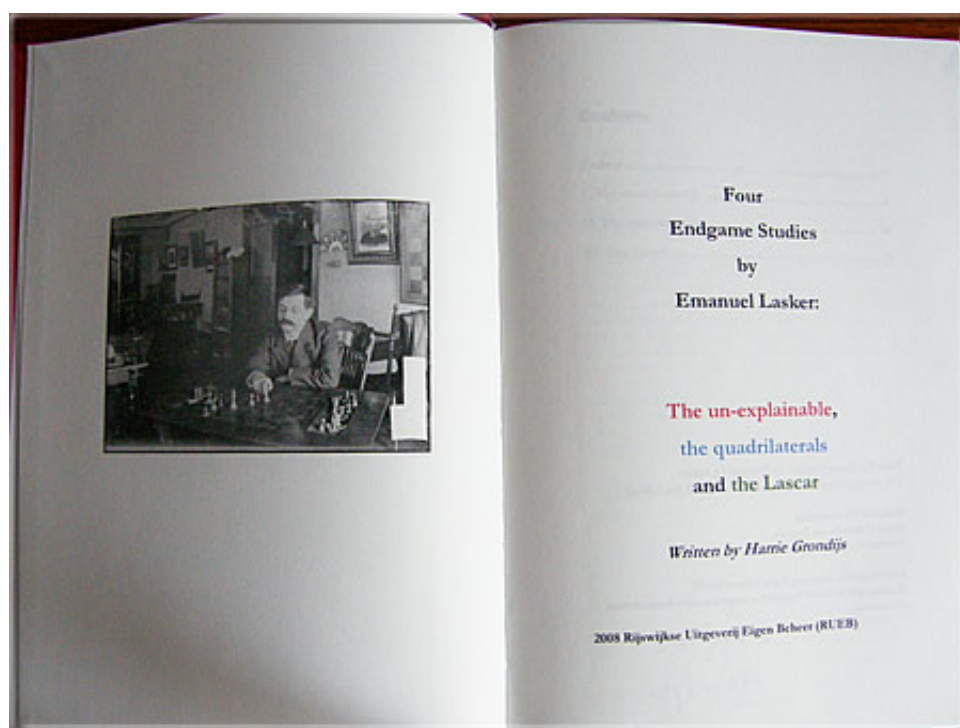
those moves are only delaying the execution of the successful progression; a 'serious' dual is 1. Kb8[36] which constitutes an alternative path to the target square a7 in the same number of moves. But, careful, other rook moves lead up to a draw, e.g. 1. Rh5+ (?) Kb6 2. Rh6+ (certainly not 2. Rh7? Rxc7 and Black wins!) 2. Ka7 and a draw. 1. ... Rb2+ [35] 2. Ka7 [35] Upkeeping opposition but relinquishing the guard of the pawn. Not 2. Kc8?, when 2. ... Ka(b)6 draws. 2. ... Re2[34] switchback. Black must keep White "busy" with threats or else White captures the black pawn or the white pawn promotes. 3. Rh5+ [34] 3. Kb7 [8] [36] delays the win. 3. ... Ka4 [33] 3. ... Kb4 loses sooner because after 4. Kb6 Black has no check. 4. Kb7 [6] [33] 4. Rb2+ [32] 5. Ka6 [32] Re2 [31] switchback. 6. Rh4+ [31] Ka3 [30] 7. Kb6 [30] Rb2+ [29] 8. Ka5 [29] Re2 [28] switchback. 9. Rh3+ [28] Kb2 [27] 9. ... Ka2 [21] loses much quicker! The difference is accounted for by the technical intricacies of the possible ending of queen versus rook. 10. Rxb2 [27] and wins.

White's plan is to push Black's king downward, rank by rank, until it withdraws onto the second rank. Then the white rook captures the black pawn and wins because the black rook is skewered, it is pulled away from the guard of the white pawn. The sub-goals of the systematic movement (the black king is chased downward rank by rank) are realized via repeated opposition. Black's counter-play is based on the (defensive) gravity exerted by the white pawn on its king. Until the final finesse the white king must remain in a position to protect the white pawn. Therefore, before White checks following up on the opposition, Black intends to force the white king back through a (renewed) attack on the unprotected pawn. However, before the king returns toward the pawn White has time for an *intermediate check* successfully driving the enemy king one rank downward and White's king next guards its pawn from an advanced square (c8-b7-b6) disallowing the immediate return of the black king. This procedure is repeated.

Start chapter 2



_ Start chapter 3



_ Frontispiece and title page

This gives the opportunity to introduce a further permanent guest of our meeting who made a good impression by his profound questions and contributions: Francesco Gibellato from Mestre is a great Lasker expert but also a chess author, as follows from his numerous articles in Italian. Maybe this "chess researcher" will find his way to our strong Italian KWA group.



[Francesco Gibellato](#)

Some publications by Francesco Gibellato:

-



[I Tornei di Trieste](#)

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Francesco Gibellato*

Louisa Matilda Ballard Fagan

Received December 1993

Riassunto

Nota biografica su Louisa Matilda Ballard Fagan - la prima rappresentante italiana nelle competizioni scacchistiche internazionali femminili.

Abstract

A biographical note about Louisa Matilda Ballard Fagan - the first woman chessplayer to represent Italy in international women's chess competitions.

Nella monumentale Storia degli Scacchi in Italia di Adriano Chicco ed Antonio Rosino è riportato, al numero 17 della sezione dedicata alle partite storiche, l'incontro Fagan - Richmond (Londra 1897), vinta da Fagan. Invano tuttavia il lettore ricerca nel corpo dell'opera un riferimento a Fagan - e tantomeno a Richmond.

Louisa Matilda Ballard nacque a Napoli il 9 gennaio 1850, da padre di origine americana e da madre italiana, e nella metropoli del Mezzogiorno d'Italia trascorse l'infanzia e la giovinezza.

Miss Ballard imparò gli scacchi fin da giovanissima: il padre era un noto appassionato, e così pure il fratello maggiore, il dottor William Robert Ballard, che sarebbe divenuto uno dei più eminenti scacchisti londinesi del periodo tra il 1870 ed il 1910, e per lungo tempo primo giocatore del prestigioso *St. George's Club*.

In seguito al matrimonio con l'irlandese J. G. Fagan - ufficiale dei Lancieri di Bombay - Louisa Ballard, ora divenuta Mrs. Fagan, acquisì la cittadinanza britannica e si trasferì in India, dove visse per parecchi anni.

Già durante il soggiorno nella lontana India Mrs. Fagan seppe attrarre su di sé l'attenzione degli ambienti scacchistici, dapprima con la pubblicazione sul *City of London Chess Magazine*, a partire dal 1875, di alcuni problemi da lei composti, e poi di nuovo nel 1882 con la sua vittoria - a punteggio pieno - nel torneo di scacchi del Circolo degli Sports di Bombay, torneo nel quale era la sola donna partecipante.

Successivamente tuttavia sulla stampa scacchistica si perse notizia di Mrs. Fagan, il cui nome tornò alla ribalta solamente molti anni più tardi, con la fondazione del *Ladies' Chess Club* di Londra.

Sino alla fine dell'Ottocento l'attività scacchistica femminile era stata generalmente considerata una semplice curiosità - se non addirittura una bizzarria - ed in ogni caso non

meritevole di alcuna seria attenzione.

Però negli ultimi anni del secolo - in evidente correlazione con la comparsa dei primi movimenti femministi, ed in particolare del movimento per il diritto di voto alle donne - si vide il sorgere ed il vivacissimo fiorire di una diffusa attività scacchistica femminile, dapprima con la sempre più frequente partecipazione delle donne ai circoli ed alle competizioni scacchistiche fino ad allora riservate agli uomini, e quindi con la formazione di circoli esclusivamente femminili



Louisa Matilda Ballard Fagan (1897)

in numerose città, quali ad esempio Edinburgo, Glasgow, New York. Ma il più importante tra i circoli femminili dell'epoca fu probabilmente il *Ladies' Chess Club* di Londra, costituito nel gennaio 1895 e presto giunto a contare oltre 100 socie.

Tra le prime socie del nuovo circolo fu Mrs. Fagan, che rapidamente acquistò una posizione di preminenza fra le amazzoni della scacchiera.

Lo sviluppo dello scacchismo femminile in Gran Bretagna portò presto ad un primo risultato: la disputa ad

(*) Dott. Ing. Francesco Gibellato - Resp. Serv. Elab. Dati dell'A.S.P.I.V. di Venezia - Maestro F.S.I.

Le partecipanti dovettero misurarsi con un regolamento

Comunque l'attività scacchistica più assidua di Mrs. Fagan si svolse nell'ambito del *Ladies' Chess Club*, di cui ella fu per anni il giocatore di punta. Più volte vincitrice del campionato del club, con le tre vittorie consecutive negli



Nel 1914 lo scoppio della Prima Guerra Mondiale portò in tutti i paesi europei ad un brusco ridimensionamento dell'attività scacchistica, che negli anni di guerra rimase confinata quasi esclusivamente all'interno dei singoli circoli.



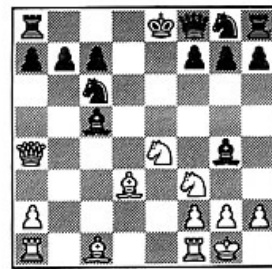
Festival di Craigside 1898 - Sedute in prima fila: a sinistra Miss Finn, a destra Mrs. Fagan (in piedi al centro della seconda fila si nota Amos Burn).

Anzi molti circoli incontrarono crescenti difficoltà e cessarono la loro attività sciogliendosi.

Alla fine del 1917 anche il *Ladies' Chess Club* cessò di esistere, ed il nome dell'ormai anziana Mrs. Fagan cessò di apparire nelle cronache scacchistiche.

Come ricorda il *British Chess Magazine*, Mrs. Fagan si era illustrata non solo nell'ambito scacchistico, ma anche nell'ambito sociale, quale esponente di rilievo della *Women's Emancipation Union* e membro della *Fabian Society*.

Louisa Matilda Ballard Fagan si spense in Inghilterra l'11 agosto 1931, all'età di 81 anni.



14.Ce4xc5 Ag4xf3. 15.Tf1-e1+ Cg8-e7; 16.g2xf3 0-0; 17.Da4-b5 Td8-d6; 18.Db5xb7+ Rc8-d8; 19.Ac1-f4 Ce7-c8; 20.Af4xd6 Df8xd6; 21.Ad3-f5 Cc8-e7; 22.Db7-a8+

Si poteva dar matto una mossa prima con 22.Db7-c8+ Ce7xc8; 23.Cc5-b7#, ma la fine non tarda comunque.

22...Cc6-b8; 23.Da8xb8+ Ce7-c8; 24.Db8xc8#.

Ancora dal torneo del 1897 vediamo la partita vinta da Mrs. Fagan alla terza classificata.

Bianco: **Mrs. Fagan** - Nero: **Miss Thorold**
Primo Torneo Internazionale Femminile (Londra 1897)
Partita d'Alfiere

1.e2-e4 e7-e5; 2.Af1-c4 Af8-c5; 3.b2-b4 Ac5-b6

Dopo 3...Axb4 il Bianco poteva continuare con 4.c3 o con 4.c3, rientrando nel Gambetto Evans od in linee di gioco simili, oppure anche con 4.f4, rientrando nel cosiddetto Doppio Gambetto McDonnell, introdotto nel famoso match McDonnell - Labourdonnais del 1834. Il Nero ricusa di entrare in queste linee di gioco violente ed a doppio taglio, e porta l'incontro su linee di gioco abbastanza simili a

talune moderne varianti della Partita Italiana.

4.Cg1-f3 d7-d6; 5.c2-c3 Cg8-f6; 6.d2-d3 Ac8-g4; 7.h2-h3 Ag4-h5; 8.g2-g4 Ah5-g6; 9.Ac1-g5

Mossa non troppo precisa, perché offre al Nero l'occasione di giocare con forza 9...h5 - occasione di cui per il Nero non approfitta.

9...h7-h6; 10.Ag5-h4 Dd8-d7

Era migliore 10...Cbd7 e poi 11...c6 e 12...Dc7. (Deutsche Schachzeitung)

11.a2-a4 a7-a6; 12.Cb1-d2

Il Bianco poteva ottenere un importante vantaggio di posizione cambiando i pezzi sulla casa f6 perché così l'Alfiere nero in g6 sarebbe rimasto rinserato probabilmente per sempre. (Deutsche Schachzeitung)

12...Cb8-c6; 13.Cd2-b3 d6-d5; 14.e4xd5 Cf6xd5; 15. Dd1-d2 Cd5-f4; 16 O-O-O

Giocata con giusto apprezzamento della posizione. (Deutsche Schachzeitung)

16...Cf4-g2?

Mossa errata, che conduce prontamente ad un irrimediabile svantaggio di posizione. Il Nero doveva giocare 16...f6 e 17...O-O-O, con gioco ricco di prospettive.

17.Ah4-g3 f7-f6; 18.Th1-g1!

Il Bianco sfrutta con precisione l'errore del Nero.

18...Cg2-f4; 19.Ag3xf4 e5xf4; 20.Tg1-e1+ Re8-f8; 21 d3-d4

Assicuratosi una forte prevalenza centrale, il Bianco passa risolutamente all'attacco.

21...Ag6-f7; 22.d4-d5 Cc6-e7; 23.a4-a5 Ab6-a7; 24. Te1-e2 b7-b5; 25.a5xb6 c7xb6

Il Nero avrebbe fatto meglio a giocare 25...Axb6, rimanendo purtuttavia in una situazione difficile.

26.d5-d6 Ce7-g6; 27.Ac4xf7 Rf8xf7

La presa con la Donna sarebbe stata migliore, sebbene dopo 27...Dxf7; 28.d7 Td8 (non 28...Dxb3; 29.d8D+ Txd8; 30.Dxd8+ Rf7; 31.Td7+ Ce7; 32.Dxe7+ Rg6; 33.Dxg7#) 29.Cd4 Txd7; 30.Ce6+ Dxe6; 31.Txe6 Txd2; 32.Txd2 il Bianco avrebbe comunque ottenuto una posizione vinta.

28. Dd2-d5+ Rf7-f8; 29.Dd5xa8+ Rf8-f7; 30.Da8-d5+ Rf7-f8; 31. Td1-e1 il Nero abbandona.

Nessun maestro sdegnerebbe di aver condotto l'attacco in questa partita. (Deutsche Schachzeitung)

Ma è giusto, alla luce delle vicende biografiche sopra illustrate, considerare Mrs. Fagan una scacchista italiana? A questo riguardo ci sembra opportuno lasciare la parola a lei stessa.

Nel 1904 ad Hastings e nel 1905 a Southport si erano tenuti il 1° ed il 2° Congresso della neonata Federazione Scacchistica Britannica. Nel loro ambito erano stati disputati il 1° ed il 2° Campionato Britannico femminile. Mrs. Fagan aveva presenziato ai due Congressi, ed aveva anche preso parte a qualche gara di contorno, ma si era astenuta dal prender parte ai Campionati. Questa circostanza aveva dato adito a qualche stupido commento sulla stampa inglese. Allora Mrs. Fagan inviò una lettera di precisazione al *British Chess Magazine*, nella quale tra l'altro affermava:

Io sono nata in Italia... e qualche anno fa ho rappresen-



Louisa Matilda Ballard Fagan

tato l'Italia nel Torneo Internazionale Femminile, le mie origini familiari essendo italiane ed americane. Io mi sono ritenuta senz'altro non ammessa a partecipare al Campionato Britannico femminile. Sebbene per legge io sia una suddita britannica, ho ritenuto che la mia propria nazionalità non potesse venir ignorata nella materia in questione - né ho desiderato che venisse ignorata. ... Se verrà stabilito che posso competere per il Campionato Britannico Femminile senza perdere il diritto di rappresentare la mia propria nazionalità in ogni futuro torneo internazionale, forse lo farò in qualche futura occasione.

Il formale diritto di Mrs. Fagan a partecipare al Campionato Britannico Femminile venne poi confermato, ma Mrs. Fagan anche in seguito ricusò sempre di farne uso.

Queste parole ben giustificano il nostro diritto a considerare a pieno titolo Louisa Matilda Ballard Fagan la prima rappresentante dell'Italia nelle competizioni scacchistiche internazionali femminili.

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Francesco GIBELLATO*

ARCHIVI SCACCHISTICI NAZIONALI SU INTERNET

Received: March, 1999

Riassunto

Viene illustrata brevemente la radicale trasformazione dei modi di conoscenza e di diffusione di notizie e cultura scacchistiche attraverso archivi scacchistici computerizzati e la sempre più vasta diffusione del World Wide Web su Internet.

Lo scrivente presenta il sito Ital-Base da lui curato.

Abstract

National chess Archives on the Internet.

A brief discussion on the radical transformation that is affecting our ways of finding out about and propagating chess information and culture through computerized chess archives; also addresses the increasingly vast spread of the World Wide Web through the Internet.

The writer presents his own site, called Ital-Base.

Nell'ultimo decennio i modi di conoscenza e diffusione di notizie e cultura scacchistica hanno subito due successive e radicali trasformazioni.

La prima trasformazione è stata apportata dall'impiego sempre più generalizzato, da parte di scacchisti di ogni rango ed ogni categoria, di archivi scacchistici computerizzati, gestiti per lo più da noti programmi commerciali (**ChessBase**, **NICBase**, **Chess Assistant** ed altri) ma talvolta anche da programmi cosiddetti *shareware* e da programmi di pubblico dominio.

La seconda trasformazione è stata apportata dall'avvento e dalla sempre più vasta diffusione del World Wide Web su Internet, che hanno reso possibili da una parte la sempre più rapida diffusione delle notizie ora è addirittura possibile seguire in diretta molti tra i principali tornei e dall'altra la creazione e la messa a disposizione di chiunque di grandi archivi di partite.

Particolarmente importante in questo senso l'archivio creato da **Doug Attig** ed ospitato nel sito Internet dell'**Università di Pittsburgh**, che ospita un numero di partite dell'ordine del milione, tra cui quasi tutte tra le più importanti competizioni della storia scacchistica e collezioni monografiche dedicate ai grandi scacchisti ed a specifiche aperture.

Gli archivi scacchistici sono particolarmente adatti al trattamento con mezzi informatici: una singola partita può venire memorizzata mediamente in un centinaio di bytes o poco più, e poche migliaia di bytes solitamente bastano a contenere un intero torneo. Così archivi di grande rilevanza possono venire facilmente memorizzati in un odierno personal computer, ed il loro aggiornamento ed ampliamento tramite scarico dai principali siti sul Web può venire com-

piuto in tempi di collegamento molto contenuti.

Specialmente apprezzabile anche la facilità, per chiunque, di contribuire con propri apporti, tratti magari da testi rari e da documenti (come formulari originali delle partite) normalmente di difficile accessibilità. Tuttavia, con l'ampliarsi del fenomeno, la mole dei dati disponibili ne ha reso inopportuna la concentrazione in archivi centralizzati come appunto Pittsburgh.

Così nel 1997 **John Saunders** ha ideato e creato su Internet **Britbase** - archivio dedicato alle competizioni scacchistiche disputatesi sul suolo britannico - esprimendo, nelle note di presentazione inserite nella sua home page, l'auspicio che analoghi archivi venissero creati nelle principali nazioni scacchistiche.

E difatti l'esempio di John Saunders ha presto ispirato e risvegliato l'emulazione di altri appassionati. Sono apparsi così, tra gli altri, i siti denominati:

Argenbase	Argentina
BaseArgentina	Argentina
Czechbase	Repubblica Ceca
Danbase	Danimarca
Dutchbase *	Paesi Bassi
Dutchbase *	Paesi Bassi
Finnish National Chess Database	Finlandia
Italbase	Italia
Svebase	Svezia

(* = si tratta di due siti dallo stesso nome ma distinti) ed altri ancora.

Recentemente è apparso anche un America-Base suddiviso in sottosezioni dedicate ciascuna ad un paese del continente americano.

Ma sarebbe inutile dilungarsi in liste di siti, la rapida evoluzione dei quali renderebbe presto obsolete; rimando piuttosto alla consultazione di elenchi aggiornati in rete, quali ad esempio quello mantenuto da Lars Balzer all'indirizzo

<http://www.rhrk.uni-kl.de/~balzer/chessgames.html>

ed allo stesso Britbase all'indirizzo

<http://wkweb1.cableinet.co.uk/jsaunders/Britgame.htm>.

Il sito *ItalBase* si propone in particolare di offrire le partite delle più importanti competizioni scacchistiche svoltesi in Italia, con particolare riguardo per i tornei internazionali ad inviti e per i Campionati Italiani individuali. Vi è in programma per il futuro l'inclusione degli incontri della squadra nazionale - specialmente alle Olimpiadi - ed inoltre collezioni monografiche di partite scelte giocate dai migliori scacchisti italiani.

Il sito è attualmente ospitato all'indirizzo

<http://members.tripod.com/~italbase>

ed è curato dallo scrivente.

* Dott. Ing. Francesco Gibellato,
 Resp. Serv. Elab. Dati dell'A.S.P.I.V. di Venezia. Maestro F.S.I.

Francesco GIBELLATO*

SCACCHI, SPIE, CRITTOLOGIA E COMPUTERS: IL CASO ULTRA

Received: April, 2000

Riassunto

La Seconda Guerra Mondiale ha visto la nascita dell'elaboratore elettronico, stimolata da *Ultra*, l'organizzazione britannica creata per intercettare e decrittare i messaggi delle forze armate tedesche ed italiane.

Un notevole contributo alla nascita dell'elaboratore elettronico è venuto dagli scacchi - un gioco facilmente rappresentabile nel formalismo della logica matematica - e da alcuni noti scacchisti.

Abstract

Chess, spies, cryptology and computers: the ULTRA affair.

The Second World War saw the birth of the electronic computer, spurred by *Ultra*, the British organization set up to intercept and decrypt the messages of German and Italian armed forces.

A notable contribution to the birth of the electronic computer came from chess - a game easily in the formalism of mathematical logic - and from some notable chessplayers.

Buenos Aires 1939

Buenos Aires, 1° settembre 1939: nella capitale argentina è in pieno svolgimento la VIII Olimpiade di Scacchi - di fatto, il campionato del mondo a squadre nazionali. Per la prima volta la competizione si svolge fuori d'Europa. A causa del costo e del molto tempo richiesti dalla lunga trasferta, parecchie squadre europee (tra cui l'Ungheria e l'Italia) sono assenti. Assente pure, per l'impossibilità di coprire le spese di viaggio e l'indennità per i giocatori, la squadra degli Stati Uniti - campione uscente. In compenso, per la prima volta sono presenti numerose squadre di nazioni americane, e grazie a loro è stato raggiunto il nuovo record di presenze: 27 nazioni. Il numero, anzi, è tanto elevato da obbligare ad istituire - anche qui per la prima volta: in precedenza tutti i Tornei Olimpici erano stati disputati con girone all'italiana - quattro gironi eliminatori, in ciascuno dei quali le tre squadre meglio classificate si sarebbero qualificate per il girone finale, mentre le squadre rimanenti avrebbero disputato un torneo di consolazione. I gironi eliminatori, iniziati il 21 agosto, si sono conclusi il 31, e tutti attendono con impazienza il primo turno di finale, che si deve giocare quel 1° settembre.

Ma già nella mattinata la radio comincia a portare dall'Europa notizie tragiche: dopo molti giorni di acuta tensione, si sono verificati scontri alla frontiera tra Germania e Polonia; le truppe tedesche hanno iniziato l'invasione del territorio polacco. Per ora lo stato di guerra vige formalmente solo tra Germania e Polonia, ma nessuno si fa illusioni: ben difficilmente la Germania accetterà l'ultimatum presentato quello stesso giorno da Gran Bretagna e Francia, che esige l'immediato ritiro delle truppe tedesche dal territorio polacco. Ed infatti il 3 settembre Gran Bretagna e Francia a loro volta dichiarano guerra alla Germania. La Seconda Guerra Mondiale è cominciata.

Albert Becker, giocatore e capitano della squadra tedesca,

scrive in una lettera inviata in patria alcuni giorni più tardi:

Lo scoppio della guerra il 1° settembre mise in grande inquietudine gli scacchisti partecipanti al torneo. I capitani di tutte le squadre vennero quindi interpellati dalla direzione di gara, perché dichiarassero se il torneo dovesse proseguire oppure venir sospeso; erano stati appena completati i gironi eliminatori. Tutti i capitani si espressero per la prosecuzione, salvo gli inglesi, dei quali Alexander, Thomas e Milner-Barry partirono subito, sicché la loro squadra dovette ritirarsi. Nelle altre squadre rimasero pressoché tutti, e la competizione proseguì.

Il ritorno in Europa richiederebbe ora quasi un mese di navigazione, e per molti scacchisti presenti al torneo il viaggio sarebbe un'avventura dall'esito incerto: per i tedeschi, c'è la difficoltà di passare indenni tra le maglie del blocco navale anglo-francese; per i polacchi, perché forse al ritorno la loro patria non sarebbe più esistita.

Il torneo dunque continua, regolare per quanto le circostanze lo consentono, e grazie alla precauzione di non far disputare gli incontri tra la Germania da una parte, e Polonia, Francia e Palestina dall'altra (per tutte tre gli incontri la giuria fissa d'ufficio il risultato di 2-2), e grazie anche al contegno responsabile tenuto da tutti i giocatori, il torneo si conclude il 19 settembre, dopo alcuni comprensibili momenti di tensione, ma senza che nel frattempo si siano verificati incidenti degni di rilievo.

Il torneo viene vinto per la prima volta dalla Germania (che si avvale anche dell'apporto dei giocatori austriaci, la cui patria era stata annessa alla Germania l'anno precedente), davanti alla Polonia (uno stato che, il giorno della cerimonia di chiusura del torneo, ormai non esiste più!) ed all'Estonia.

Per molti scacchisti europei comincia ora un'odissea che si protrarrà per anni: molti di loro, impossibilitati a rientrare nel loro paese, si stabiliscono in Argentina, alcuni - ad esempio Najdorf ed Eliskases - per sempre. Altri - ad esempio Aliechin - riescono a rimpatriare dopo lunghi mesi e innumerevoli traversie.

Come abbiamo detto, una squadra aveva però deciso, in quel drammatico 1° settembre, di abbandonare il torneo: la squadra britannica. Tre suoi componenti - Thomas, Alexander e Milner-Barry - si erano imbarcati immediatamente per l'Inghilterra; gli altri due - Golombek e Wood - si erano fermati ad assistere Vera Menchik, che nel torneo di Campionato del Mondo Femminile - organizzato congiuntamente all'Olimpiade - per l'ennesima volta difendeva vittoriosamente il suo titolo. Poi anch'essi avevano fatto ritorno in patria.

Lasciava perplessi il ritiro degli inglesi, sul motivo del quale non era stata data una chiara spiegazione: lo scoppio della guerra aveva creato a loro problemi certo gravi, ma sicuramente meno gravi che ai rimanenti scacchisti europei. Qualche mese più tardi un lettore inviò infatti al *British Chess Magazine* una lettera, nella quale scriveva:

(*) Dott. Ing. Francesco Gibellato
Resp. Serv. Elab. Dati dell' A.S.P.I.V. di Venezia. Maestro F.S.I.

Francesco GIBELLATO *

Scacchi, spie, crittologia e computers: da Ultra a Deep Blue ed oltre

Received: March 30, 2001

Riassunto

L'autore illustra lo stretto legame storicamente intercorso tra scacchi, crittografia, spionaggio ed informatica, e ricorda la partecipazione di alcuni noti scacchisti alle attività dei servizi segreti negli anni successivi alla Seconda Guerra Mondiale.

Dopo un breve accenno ai precursori Gustavus Selenus e Babbage, vengono rievocate alcune vicende della storia segreta del controspionaggio britannico e statunitense.

Richiamate l'enunciazione dei fondamenti teorici dell'informatica, della teoria della comunicazione e dell'intelligenza artificiale da parte di Turing e Shannon, si segue lo sviluppo dell'informatica applicata agli scacchi e le principali sfide tra elaboratori e tra questi e gli umani, culminate nella storica vittoria di Deep Blue su Kasparov.

Mentre l'industria elettronica mette a frutto l'esperienza accumulata in queste sfide per la produzione di nuovi elaboratori di straordinaria potenza, si profila l'avvento di sistemi di nuova generazione: gli elaboratori biomolecolari.

Abstract

Chess, Spies, Cryptology and Computers: from Ultra to Deep Blue and Beyond.

The author illustrates the close historical connection between chess, cryptology, espionage, and information science; he also describes the participation of several famous chess players in secret services operations during the years following the Second World War.

After a brief mention of precursors Gustavus Selenius and Babbage, the work goes on to narrate some of the secret history behind British and American counter-espionage activities.

The basic theoretical foundations of information science, communication theory, and artificial intelligence as formulated by Turing and Shannon are expounded, followed by developments in information science applied to chess. The work goes on to describe the main matches between computers amongst each other, and then against humans, culminating in the historic victory of Deep Blue over Kasparov.

While the electronics industry continues to put the accumulated experience of these matches into the production of powerful new super computers, we are introduced to the advent of systems belonging to a whole new generations: that of biomolecular computers.

Abbiamo rievocato in un precedente articolo (*Scacchi, spie, crittografia e computers: il caso Ultra* in *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate* n° 19 - 1999) alcune vicende relative alla creazione dei primi elaboratori, al loro impiego nel campo della crittografia nel corso della Seconda Guerra Mondiale, ed alla partecipazione di alcuni famosi scacchisti a queste storiche eventi.

Ma il legame tra scacchi e crittografia, ed addirittura il

legame tra scacchi ed elaborazione automatica dei dati, non era sorto affatto con la creazione di Ultra, bensì molto prima.

Gustavus Selenus

Ne abbiamo un importante esempio già nel Seicento. Nel 1624 era comparso in Germania un ponderoso trattato di crittografia dal titolo *Cryptomenytices et Cryptographiae libri IX*. Il trattato, pur senza apportare contributi di grande originalità, illustrava accuratamente i metodi crittografici in uso in quell'epoca. Il suo autore si era celato - coerentemente con il tema dell'opera - sotto uno pseudonimo: Gustavus Selenus. E già nel 1616 il medesimo autore aveva pubblicato a Lipsia, sempre sotto la copertura del medesimo pseudonimo, un importante trattato di scacchi: *Das Schach- oder König-Spiel*. L'opera riprendeva, per il tramite della versione italiana del Tarsia, il classico trattato del Ruy Lopez, con interessanti ampliamenti di carattere storico e più limitati approfondimenti di carattere analitico, questi ultimi di minor valore.

Il personaggio celato sotto lo pseudonimo di Gustavus Selenus era il duca Augustus di Brunswick-Lüneburg, uomo di grande cultura e di spiccata personalità, che nel 1636 sarebbe succeduto al fratello nel governo del ducato di Brunswick-Lüneburg - uno dei tanti staterelli, e non certo il meno importante, nei quali si era disgregata nel Seicento la compagine imperiale germanica - e lo avrebbe guidato con mano sicura negli ultimi perigliosi anni della Guerra dei Trent'Anni.

Charles Babbage

Le opere crittografiche e scacchistiche di Augusto di Brunswick-Lüneburg, pur forse le più importanti, nei rispettivi campi, tra quelle pubblicate in Germania nel Seicento, erano tuttavia nel complesso opere di erudizione e di compilazione più che d'ingegno, con pochi apporti di vera originalità. Di tutt'altro spessore invece i contributi apportati, due secoli più tardi, da Charles Babbage, scienziato ed inventore eccentrico ma indubbiamente geniale.

Charles Babbage era nato in Inghilterra nel 1792, ed aveva ereditato dal padre banchiere una considerevole fortuna che gli aveva consentito di dedicarsi liberamente ai suoi molteplici interessi. Innumerevoli le sue invenzioni ed i suoi risultati scientifici, dei quali è impossibile trattare adeguatamente in questa sede. Basti ricordare che i suoi lavori matematici gli avevano fatto assegnare la cattedra lucasiana di matematica all'Università di Cambridge, la stessa che era stata di Newton e che è oggi del famoso scienziato Stephen Hawking.

Oltre che per i suoi risultati in campo scientifico, Babbage era noto per le sue capacità di decifrazione, tanto da



Jurgen Stigter presented the collection of Alvise Zichichi (1938-2003) recently purchased by him ...

Jurgen Stigter presented the collection of Alvise Zichichi (1938-2003) recently purchased by him ...



Alvise Zichichi

[Entry in "Chicco/Porreca" on [A. Zichichi](#) (jpg-Datei)]



Ex Libris of Alvise Zichichi



... while Alessandro Sanvito was in very sensitive words reminiscent of his friend of many years' standing.

... while Alessandro Sanvito was in very sensitive words reminiscent of his friend of many years' standing.

I would like to remind here of Alessandro's great master Adriano Chicco and to express again my thanks to his "best pupil".

[Obituary of Adriano Chicco](#) by Alessandro Sanvito.

As bonus Alessandro Sanvito's article from *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate*: "Gli Ex Libris Nelle Biblioteche Scacchistiche Italiane" (Ex Libris in the Italian chess libraries) - SSA, Fasc. 13, 1993:

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Alessandro SANVITO*

GLI EX LIBRIS NELLE BIBLIOTECHE SCACCHISTICHE ITALIANE

Received: April, 1993

Riassunto

L'Autore illustra, in sintesi, la storia degli Ex Libris Scacchistici, cioè del desiderio di manifestare, con un simbolo artistico personalizzato, la proprietà libraria.

Abstract

EX LIBRIS IN THE ITALIAN CHESS LIBRARIES

The author synthetically illustrates the history of the ex libris regarding chess, where the labels express the ownership of the books with a personalized artistic symbol.

Il secolo XVIII, ancora vibrante degli echi delle concezioni umanistiche e rinascimentali, e almeno in parte consone col pensiero illuministico, rappresentò un'epoca di crescenti interessi ed attività nel campo delle scienze.

Ciò determinò l'esigenza di occuparsi di libri. Ma questa necessità di libri - contrariamente a quanto avviene oggi - solo in rarissimi casi poteva essere soddisfatta dalle biblioteche pubbliche così che il sorgere di biblioteche private fu motivato non solo dal piacere di raccogliere libri, ma soprattutto dalla necessità di studiare per ragioni professionali o per puro e semplice interesse personale.

Si può pertanto affermare che la storia della biblioteca dalla fine della guerra dei trent'anni fino all'ultimo scorcio del XVIII secolo fu esattamente storia di biblioteche private, e nonostante anche nei secoli precedenti vi fossero state, in Europa, raccolte private di notevole importanza si può asserire a buon diritto che fu proprio nel XVIII secolo l'epoca della massima fioritura di superbe biblioteche private.

Appare evidente l'incalcolabile importanza che assunse per lo studioso, oltre all'esperienza personale e alle nozioni apprese per tradizione, il poter attingere al sapere tramandabile attraverso i testi. L'indissolubile stretto legame che unisce lo studioso alla carta stampata, dunque, alimentò la creazione di raccolte di libri e di qui al proliferare di biblioteche private.

E col crescere di numero e di importanza delle raccolte private apparve presto l'uso degli **ex libris** come contrasegni dei libri appartenenti ad una particolare biblioteca.

L'uso degli **ex libris** è un'abitudine che si impose molto rapidamente già sin dalla seconda metà del XV secolo, soprattutto in conseguenza della possibilità di produrre in molte copie ciascuna di queste etichette, grazie ai procedimenti della xilografia o della calcografia. E altrettanto rapidamente e in misura sempre crescente, l'**ex libris** venne inteso come un biglietto da visita del proprietario, per cui si tenne che esso fosse di artistica fattura.

Naturalmente all'inizio della storia delle biblioteche priva-

te e alla conseguente comparsa degli **ex libris** intesi come sigillo di proprietà, i raccoglitori di libri in prevalenza si annoveravano tra gli appartenenti a professioni sanitarie come medici, farmacisti e speziali.

Assai più tarda, viceversa, è la comparsa di biblioteche

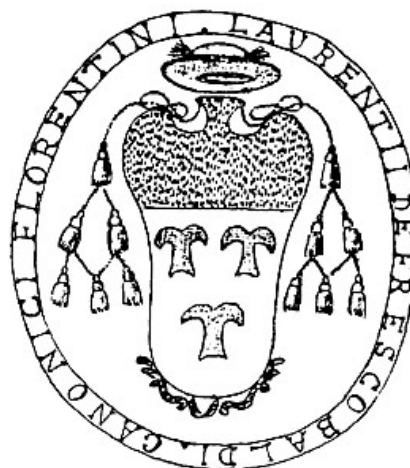


Foto 1 - Ex libris del canonico Lorenzo De Frascobaldi

private scacchistiche che ragionevolmente può essere fissata intorno alla fine del secolo scorso e ancor più recente è la comparsa dei primi **ex libris** scacchistici sebbene sia necessario fare una distinzione profonda fra **ex libris** scacchistici e **ex libris** aventi legami con blasoni, imprese accademiche e sigilli. Questi ultimi sono molto precedenti poiché i blasoni e le imprese servirono spesso come fonti di ispirazione per gli **ex libris**: tipica è la figura araldica dello scacatto, un fregio che ricorda la scacchiera su stemmi e vessilli e che è assai più antico del gioco.

Probante è, in questo senso, l'**ex libris** del canonico fiorentino Lorenzo de Frascobaldi, trovato da Adriano Chicco nel libro del Gelli, risalente alla metà del Settecento, che coi tre rocchi del blasone può essere considerato uno dei più antichi **ex libris** scacchistici a soggetto araldico-scacchistico. (Foto n. 1)

Tuttavia, a differenza di quanto accade nel resto dell'Europa dove l'usanza di preparare **ex libris** scacchistici è molto diffusa, in Italia questa simpatica abitudine è stata scarsamente coltivata, nonostante da oltre un secolo si possano contare nel nostro Paese, numerose ed importanti biblioteche scacchistiche private.

Ed è inutile sottolineare che l'importanza di una biblioteca scacchistica privata non consiste, evidentemente, nella sola abbondanza numerica ma anche, e forse soprattutto, nella qualità o nella rarità dei libri posseduti.

Se si esclude una noterella pubblicata su una rivista

(*) Storico degli Scacchi - Milano

scacchistica, non risulta, per quanto si sappia, che siano mai stati scritti in Italia, articoli per divulgare tale disciplina su riviste del settore, perché l'unico accurato studio dedicato agli **ex libris** scacchistici, dovuto ancora ad Adriano Chicco, fu pubblicato su una rivista di pura erudizione.

Uno fra i più noti collezionisti ed esperti nel campo degli **ex libris** scacchistici è, senza dubbio, il giornalista polacco Jerzy Gizycki, autore, tra l'altro, di due importanti pubblicazioni scacchistiche.

Lo studioso polacco possiede una collezione di oltre 600 **ex libris** scacchistici provenienti da ogni parte del mondo, oltre, naturalmente, ai suoi personali **ex libris**, che ammontano a circa una trentina di esemplari.

A lui si deve la pubblicazione di diversi piccoli cataloghi divulgativi, sfogliando i quali si scoprono numerosissimi titolari di biblioteche scacchistiche private.

Fra i più noti ricorderemo Louis Mandy, un erudito francese, al quale va riconosciuto il merito iniziale della diffusione dell'**ex libro** scacchistico; il dottor Meindert Niemeijer, problemista olandese, che fece pervenire, molti anni prima della sua morte, la sua biblioteca personale, alla biblioteca reale dell'Aia, che, oggi, unita alla precedente donazione dello storico van der Linde, costituisce la maggior parte della sezione scacchistica di quella libreria denominata, appunto, van der Linde-Niemeijeriana; Jean Mennerat, francese, riservatissimo titolare di una importante biblioteca scacchistica, e il Grande Maestro tedesco Lothar Schmid, unanimemente considerato possessore della più grande biblioteca scacchistica privata del mondo.

Quello che qui più interessa, tuttavia, è segnalare gli **ex libris** scacchistici italiani: e per far questo indispensabile è ricorrere alla consultazione degli articoli di Mandy (1952) di Chicco (1983), oltre ai cataloghi di Lamarche (1973), di Gizycki-Pawlak (1980) e di Gizycki (1984).

Uno dei primi **ex libris** scacchistici italiani, di derivazione borghese, opera del maestro Ugonia (circa 1920), in ogni caso, non può essere considerato un sigillo di proprietà privata, poiché apparteneva ad un circolo ricreativo che, forse, possedeva una piccola biblioteca scacchistica.

Gli **ex libris** scacchistici italiani, per quanto consti, perché non si può escludere che vi sia qualche bibliofilo riluttante a divulgare il proprio sigillo, dovrebbero essere, a tutt'oggi, fra quelli accertati con sicurezza, solo sei.

E il condizionale sembra d'obbligo, poiché si ha notizia che Giuseppe Cauti dovrebbe essere titolare di un **ex libris**, non datato ma presumibilmente anteriore alla seconda guerra mondiale, come titolare di un **ex libris** datato 1971 dovrebbe essere Paolo del Pozzo ma le informazioni sembrano incomplete e ancora tutte da verificare.

Il dottor Chicco, osservando il catalogo di Lamarche, che con i suoi 113 **ex libris** scacchistici è sicuramente incompleto, contò quattro **ex libris** italiani, sebbene nell'elenco l'Italia fosse segnalata solo tre volte. Molto correttamente ai tre indicati, Chicco aggiunse il quarto di Bruno Bassi, inserito, erroneamente, nel catalogo come svedese.

È noto che lo studioso veneziano fu a lungo lettore all'università di Upsala e in quel lontano paese scandinavo a lungo visse, ma in realtà italiano a tutti gli effetti.

Il secondo **ex libris** italiano inserito nel catalogo è attribuito a un certo Cuisio G. Camponi, (silografia di Benito Boccolari, Modena, 1936), del quale si sa ben poco, poiché fu trovato nella grande collezione di **ex libris** scacchistici dell'olandese Eugene Strens.

Gli altri due **ex libris** segnalati sono attribuiti l'uno ad Adriano Chicco, e l'altro ad un noto uomo politico italiano, del quale ignoravamo la comune passione per i libri scacchistici, e del quale omettiamo il nome, per ragioni di riservatezza, nonostante appaia chiaramente nel catalogo francese.

Il quinto **ex libris** scacchistico italiano, citato con le sole iniziali D. P., è indicato con chiarezza nel catalogo di Gizycki del 1984 con il nome completo di Davide Pellegrini, che è stato individuato come un giocatore italiano per corrispondenza molto attivo attorno agli anni trenta.

Infine molto recente è l'**ex libris** scacchistico di Alessandro Sanvito.

La nascita di un **ex libris** avviene in tre modi: il primo, più frequente, è quello in cui il titolare fornisce un'idea o un bozzetto ad un artista che completerà l'**ex libris** provvedendo ad una "tiratura" silografica in un certo numero di copie ed è per questa ragione che nei cataloghi specializzati accanto al nome del titolare dell'etichetta figura anche quello dell'artista; il secondo metodo è quello nel quale il titolare



Ex libris Brunonis Bassi

Foto 2 - Ex libris Brunonis Bassi.

si disegna e produce in proprio l'**ex libris** che, una volta individuato, viene segnalato con la dizione latina "Ipse fecit"; e il terzo modo è quello in cui il titolare affida ad un artista libertà assoluta di creazione senza alcun suggerimento.



Foto 3 - Ex libris A. Chicco.

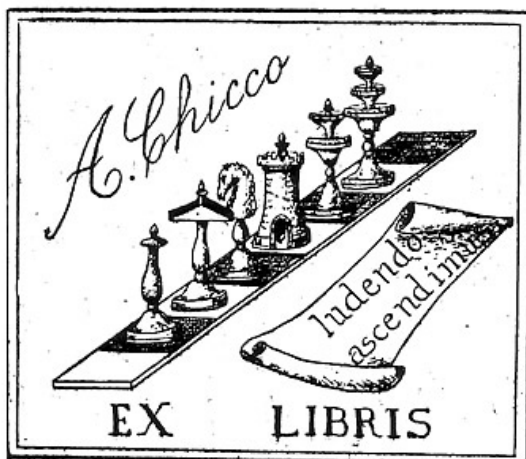


Foto 4 - Ex libris A. Chicco.

Naturalmente ogni titolare può prepararsi più di un **ex libris**

Quello che incuriosisce negli **ex libris** scacchistici italiani è il fatto che per un verso o per l'altro alcuni di essi sono stati accomunati in situazioni enigmatiche che hanno incuriosito non poco gli esperti del settore.

Si pensi alle iniziali D. P. nell'**ex libris** scacchistico del 1930, completate con sicurezza solo nel 1984 dopo accurate ricerche, né si sa con esattezza chi fosse Cuisio G. Camponi, il cui conosciuto **ex libris**, finì nella collezione Strens, anche se è lecito pensare che il modenese fosse un bibliofilo appassionato di scacchi.

Anche l'**ex libris** di Bruno Bassi (Foto n. 2), ispirato dalla silografia del terzo capitolo del libro del Caxton conosciuto col titolo di **Game and play of Chess Moralized** e considerato come la prima versione inglese del trattato di fra Jacopo da Cessole, oltre ad essere stato per lungo tempo indicato come svedese, ha lasciato per anni insoluto il quesito del nome dell'artista, per cui sembra plausibile pensare che si sia trattato di un ipse fecit. Anche sugli **ex libris** scacchistici appaiono talvolta, frasi o motti emblematici che



Foto 6 - Ex libris Alessandro Sanvito.

se non spiegati dal titolare devono essere necessariamente interpretati.

È il caso dell'**ex libris** dell'uomo politico italiano, opera dell'artista D. A. Bueno de Mesquita del 1947 "Every man meets his Waterloo at last" che può essere - essendo tra l'altro scritta in inglese - variamente interpretato.

Molto più chiaro è il motto latino dell'**ex libris** di Adriano Chicco - e sembra superfluo ricordare che questo titolare è stato il più grande studioso italiano di storia degli scacchi - opera dell'artista tedesco Willi Kornher del 1982, su bozzetto del Proprietario, "In spicis inspicior", poiché è lo stesso titolare che ne fornisce la spiegazione, che può essere duplice: "nelle spighe sono visto", oppure se letto "Inspicis inspicior", "Tu guardi, sono visto". (Foto n. 3)

Un vero e proprio giallo è stato per oltre quarant'anni un secondo **ex libris** di Adriano Chicco con motto latino (Foto n. 4). Di questo **ex libris** non si è mai conosciuto il nome dell'artista né la data di realizzazione, nonostante il titolare, che ne ha sempre negato la paternità, sia stato assalito di domande per anni e anni.

Solo oggi grazie alla sua cortesia siamo in grado di risol-



Foto 5 - Ex libris Alessandro Sanvito.

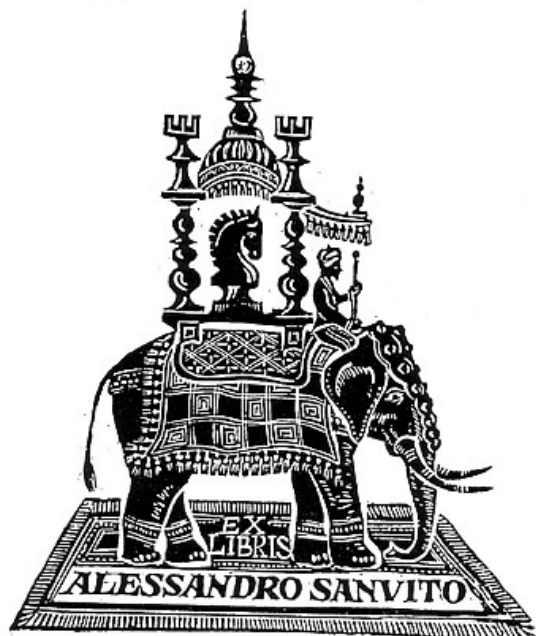


Foto 7 - Ex libris Alessandro Sanvito.

vere l'enigma poiché fu proprio lo stesso studioso genovese che con la lettera personale svelò il giallo nel 1988.

L'**ex libris** fu realizzato nel 1946 da sua moglie per festeggiare un anniversario del marito così che questo **ex libris** ammantato di affetto coniugale e per questo volutamente tenuto celato fu, dunque, un ipse fecit carico di dolcezza.

Pure l'ultimo **ex libris** italiano del 1992 di Alessandro Sanvito (Foto n. 5) presenta qualche anomalia. Affidato all'artista polacco Wladyslaw Koscielniak, con i buoni uffici di Gizycky, il titolare suggerì l'idea di un Re in avorio, appartenente ad una serie di scacchi del XVIII secolo come motivo base lasciando alla fantasia dell'artista il completamento dell'opera. Appare così sullo sfondo il duomo di Milano, città del titolare, che tuttavia, si presenta priva della guglia maggiore alla cui sommità si posa la famosa madonnina dorata.

L'augurio è che tale anomalia ne accresca in futuro la curiosità.

Sempre dello stesso artista, senza suggerimenti ed in completa libertà, sono due altri **ex libris** dello stesso titolare che si ispirano (Foto n. 6) ad una miniatura del noto codice Alfonsino del XIII secolo e (Foto n. 7) ad un re indiano di una serie di scacchi del XVIII secolo.

Come considerazione finale si può soltanto notare che sotto la spinta della produzione libraria di massa - di per sé

vantaggiosa - è andata un poco perduta l'usanza degli **ex libris**. Dove un tempo si applicavano sui libri etichette personalizzate e di ottima fattura, oggi troviamo banalissime stampigliature. E poiché in passato l'**ex libris** esprimeva il piacere del possesso e sottolineava l'alto valore di un patrimonio librario è auspicabile che dopo questa relazione altri bibliofili scacchisti italiani siano indotti a provare la medesima sensibilità interessandosi nella creazione di nuovi **ex libris** scacchistici.

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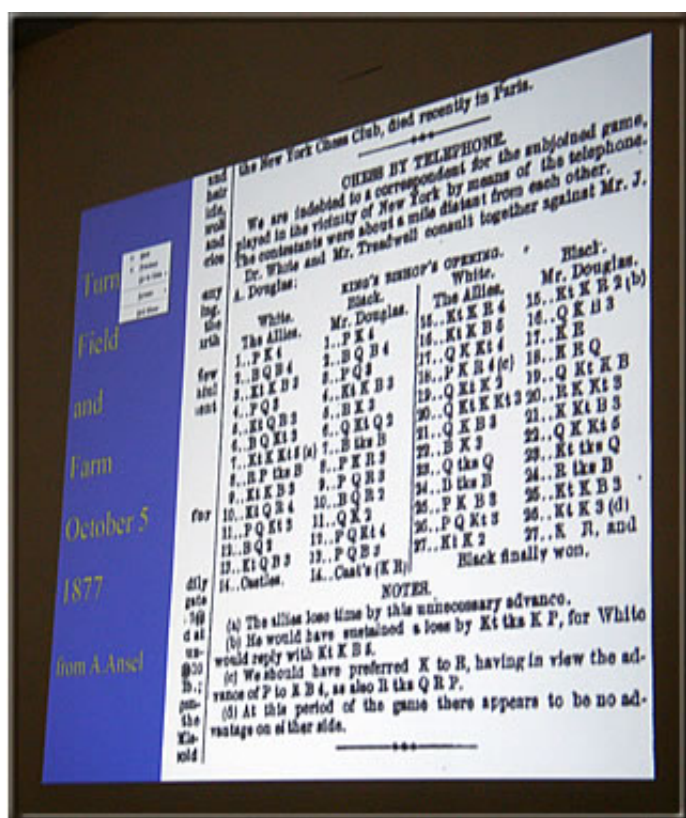
Alessandro Sanvito and Calle Erlandsson

After that the irrepressible Prof. Carlo Alberto Pagni (*1931!) presented the results of his latest "finds" (acquired with the help of Tony Gillam):

A short history of chess games by telephone - As early as 1877 chess games were for the first time played by phone, probably above all to "popularize" this new means of communication. Owing to Carlo Pagni's superior skill as a speaker we were able to make up a lot of time; it is particularly satisfying that by this contribution Tony Gillam was at least indirectly in our midst as well. The high EURO exchange rate and his decision to invest the money better in chess books have finally prevented the intended visit from "The Chess Player" from Nottingham.



Carlo Alberto Pagni



Game played in the vicinity of New York by means of the telephone. The contestants were about a mile distant from each other. Allies (Dr. White , Mr. Treadwell) vs Mr. A. Douglas. From *Turf, Field and Farm* 5 October 1877 (Archives Andy Ansel)

Game played in the vicinity of New York by means of the telephone. The contestants were about a mile distant from each other. Allies (Dr. White , Mr. Treadwell) vs Mr. A. Douglas.

From *Turf, Field and Farm* 5 October 1877 (Archives Andy Ansel)

Two articles on early correspondence chess tournaments in Italy from the pen of Carlo Alberto Pagni appeared 2006 in *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate* - here the first page of each contribution:

Carlo Alberto PAGNI*

**The First National Chess Correspondence Tournament in Italy
Under the patronage of the Unione Scacchistica Italiana.
1897-1902**

Pietro Seni, the first unofficial chess correspondence Italian champion.

Received: May 1, 2006

Riassunto

Il Primo Torneo Nazionale per Corrispondenza in Italia, col patrocinio dell'Unione Scacchistica Italiana. 1897 - 1902. Pietro Seni, il primo campione italiano, non ufficiale, di scacchi per corrispondenza

Il primo Torneo per Corrispondenza in Italia fu organizzato da "La Gazzetta del Popolo della Domenica" un settimanale di Torino, 16 Giugno 1895 - 1899; l'Autore rimanda ad un suo precedente lavoro.

Un altro Torneo fu organizzato in Novembre 1896 dal Circolo Scacchistico Fanese; fu chiamato "Gara Fanese". Purtroppo nel 1897 il Torneo collassò: il Circolo organizzatore, per ragioni ignote, non diede più informazioni sui risultati.

Nel dicembre del 1897 il Prof. Augusto Guglielmetti, dell'Accademia Romana degli Scacchi, fondò l'Unione Scacchistica Italiana (U.S.I.). Nel Gennaio 1898 l'U.S.I. avvocò a sé la direzione della "Gara Fanese" cambiandone il nome in: "1ª Gara Nazionale per Corrispondenza" e le regole.

Abstract

The first Tournament was organised by "La Gazzetta del Popolo della Domenica", a weekly newspaper in Turin, on June 16, 1895-1899; the author refers readers to one of his previous works on this topic.

Another Tournament was organised in November 1896 by the Fanese Chess Circle and was named the "Fanese Competition". Unfortunately, in 1897 the Tournament came to a sudden end: the Circle that organised it, for unknown reasons, did not give any further information on the results.

In December 1897, Professor Augusto Guglielmetti of the Roman Chess Academy founded the Italian Chess Union (U.S.I.).

In January 1898, the U.S.I. took the "Fanese Competition" under its wing, changing its name to the "First National Correspondence Chess Competition" and the rules.

The first Italian Chess Correspondence Tournament was organized by "La Gazzetta del Popolo della Domenica", a weekly magazine issued in Torino. It begun June 16 1895 and ended 1899 (see: "The First Italian Correspondence Chess Tournament", by Carlo A. Pagni, Chess Mail 8/2005, pages 41-46). Another tournament was organized in November 1896 by the Circolo Scacchistico Fanese (Fano Chess Club). It was told "Gara Fanese". The tournament had been planned as "knock-down" tournament. The players were coupled by draw; 2 games should have been played in each round; the winners being admitted to the successive round. The result being a draw both the players were admitted to the successive round. If the players, at the last round were three, there would have been a final triangular round: each player had to play two games against the others. The prizes were: 1st 100 Italian Lire; 2nd 50 Lire; 3rd 25 Lire. The games begun regularly.

Unfortunately at the end of 1897, in spite of many requests by the players and the communications on various magazines and newspapers, the tournament collapsed because the Fano Chess Club, for unknown

reason, did not give more information about the results of the games. In the meanwhile, December 1897, under the spur of Prof. A. Guglielmetti, a very active member of the Accademia Romana degli Scacchi, the delegates of seven chess clubs, namely Roma, Catania, Genova, Torino, La Spezia, Napoli and Palermo, held a meeting in Roma and founded the first Italian Chess Federation, named Unione Scacchistica Italiana [U.S.I.]. As President was elected G. Sonnino, a member of the Italian Senate; Secretary A. Guglielmetti; the Directive Committee was formed by Giuseppe Alessi (Catania), engineer Emilio Olivari (Genova), professor Gaetano Simeoni (Napoli), Francesco Abbadessa (Palermo), Andrea Cavalleri (Torino), professor Giovan Battista Valle (La Spezia) and lawyer Emilio Orsini (Livorno).

The U.S.I. begun its activity the first January 1898. In the first communication, January 1898, the U.S.I. undertook the direction of the "Gara Fanese", allowing its continuation, but changed its name and rules. The new name was "1ª Gara Nazionale per Corrispondenza", that is "1st National Correspondence Tournament". Here and there, on the magazines of the time, and in some communication of the U.S.I. it was also epitomized "ex Gara Fanese", that is "previously Gara Fanese". The change of the rules included that, to get the final ranking, the score of the Final Round would have been added to the scores obtained in the preliminary rounds. The new rules were published on the magazines Ruy Lopez [1898 no. 12 p. 249 and 1899 nos. 1, 6, 8 and 10] [Ruy Lopez being the Official Organ of the U.S.I.] and Rivista Scacchistica Italiana [1900 no. 2 and 1901 no. 5], directed by A. Guglielmetti, but probably not on the Nuova Rivista degli Scacchi. The Rivista Scacchistica Italiana superseded the magazine Ruy Lopez in 1900.

FIRST ROUND

The entries were 80; so that there were 40 couples. In the available magazines information on the name of the players and on the score is incomplete. Only a partial reconstruction of the table of the participants has been possible [Table 1]. For certain couples the name of the second player is lacking. Four players, Rossi Lodovico La Spezia, Guardone Tommaso Taranto, Bergamini Paolo Pesaro, Howard Teofilo Gai Napoli (or Firenze?) withdrew from the tournament [Ruy Lopez 3:20-21, 1898]: maybe they formed the last two couples for which no information is available. The tournament seemed to ruin at the end of 1898. But, thank to efforts of the secretary of the Unione Scacchistica Italiana, the results of the games of the First Round were collected allowing the continuation of the tournament. The list of the winners in the First Round is given in Table 1.

(*) Studioso della storia degli scacchi per Corrispondenza - Milano.

Carlo Alberto PAGNI*

Il Primo Torneo Internazionale per Corrispondenza organizzato in Italia. 2 settembre 1901 - autunno 1904.

Received: May 1, 2006

Riassunto

Questo primo torneo internazionale fu indetto dalla Rivista Scacchistica Italiana, che era la continuazione della rivista spagnola Ruy Lopez divenuta nel 1898 Organo Ufficiale della Unione Scacchistica Italiana. Alla fine del 1899 Ruy Lopez cessò le pubblicazioni e nel 1900 A. Guglielmetti, a Roma, fondò la Rivista Scacchistica Italiana. Il Torneo Internazionale fu indetto dalla rivista il 1° maggio 1901. I partecipanti furono 9 fra i quali solo un italiano, L' Ing. Pietro Seni da Roma, forte giocatore a tavolino ed anche per corrispondenza.

Il Torneo si concluse nell'autunno 1904 con la vittoria del fortissimo russo O.S. Bernstein.

Abstract

The First International Correspondence Chess Tournament organized in Italy under the aegis of the Italian Chess Union (U.S.I.) was announced by the Rivista Scacchistica Italiana [Italian Chess Review].

This first International Tournament was held by the Rivista Scacchistica Italiana, the continuation of the Spanish review Ruy Lopez (from 1898 Official Organ of U.S.I.). At the end of 1899, Ruy Lopez ceased publishing and in 1900 Guglielmetti founded the Rivista Scacchistica Italiana in Rome.

The Tournament was held, by the R.S.I., in May 1901, with 9 players participating, including only one Italian, the engineer Pietro Seni from Rome, a good over-the-board and a strong correspondence player.

The Tournament finished in Autumn of 1904 with the victory of O.S. Bernstein a very strong Russian player.

Il Primo Torneo Internazionale per Corrispondenza giocato in Italia, sotto l'egida della Unione Scacchistica Italiana [U.S.I.], fu organizzato dalla Rivista Scacchistica Italiana.

La rivista che, sia detto per inciso, era molto bella, ricca di notizie da tutto il mondo, era la continuazione della rivista spagnola Ruy Lopez, fondata a Barcellona nel 1896, che era divenuta nel 1898 organo ufficiale della U.S.I. Documenti non ve ne sono, ma è certo che questo accadde grazie alla collaborazione, basata su una buona amicizia, fra José Capo Gonzales che ne era il direttore e il Prof. A. Guglielmetti di Roma (1864 - 1936). Guglielmetti era riuscito a diventarne condirettore. La rivista, stampata a Barcellona, ebbe una sezione italiana, scritta naturalmente in italiano. Ma con la fine del 1899 Ruy Lopez cessò le pubblicazioni e Guglielmetti fondò a Roma la Rivista Scacchistica Italiana. Guglielmetti, che fu anche presidente della Accademia Scacchistica Romana e uno dei fondatori della U.S.I., molto si adoperò per la diffusione degli scacchi puntando molto sul gioco per corrispondenza. Fu certo per merito di Guglielmetti che il Torneo organizzato nel 1896 dalla Società Scacchistica Fanese, cui si iscrissero 80 giocatori di tutta Italia e che nel 1898 stava per naufragare poiché la Associazione Fanese si sciolse, poté essere proseguito sotto l'egida della Unione Scacchistica Italiana col nome di "1ª Gara Nazionale per Corrispondenza".

Il Primo Torneo Internazionale organizzato in Italia fu

indetto dalla Rivista Scacchistica Italiana nel fascicolo di maggio del 1901. Alle pagine 130-131 venne pubblicato il regolamento. Il torneo era aperto a tutti gli amatori di scacchi residenti in Europa e in Africa Settentrionale (Egitto, Tunisia e Algeria). I concorrenti non dovevano essere più di 10. La tassa di iscrizione fu fissata in 15 franchi oro. Ma i concorrenti dovevano scommettere una somma, sul cui ammontare potevano accordarsi fra di loro, che non doveva essere inferiore a 3 franchi oro per partita. I premi erano tre, di 80, 50 e 20 franchi oro, per i primi tre classificati. Un premio speciale, consistente nella annata 1898 della rivista Ruy Lopez, sarebbe stato assegnato a chi avesse ottenuto il miglior punteggio coi vincitori (sic!).

Ogni concorrente doveva giocare, simultaneamente, due partite con tutti gli altri. Le mosse potevano essere spedite con qualunque mezzo ma si consigliava di impiegare cartoline postali. Inviando la propria mossa si doveva ripetere, a conferma, quella dell'avversario. In caso di mosse condizionate si dovevano ripetere tutte quelle accettate. Era proibita ogni rettifica di mosse inviate (eccetto che nelle prime quattro). Ogni errore di scrittura veniva punito come in partita viva. Se due concorrenti avessero fatto una qualche rettifica la partita sarebbe stata assegnata perduta a tutti e due.

Meno chiaro era il regolamento in tema di controllo del tempo. I relativi articoli, nr. 5 e 6, recitavano: Il tempo massimo fra il ricevimento di una mossa e l'invio della risposta è limitato ad 8 giorni. Non ricevendo la mossa nel tempo indicato si darà avviso al Direttore del Torneo il quale si incaricherà di conoscere la causa del ritardo. Dopo 3 ritardi non giustificati il ritardatario sarà escluso dal torneo. Dove non si capisce bene se fossero concessi 8 giorni di riflessione o se, come mi pare più probabile, entro 8 giorni l'avversario dovesse ricevere la risposta. Comunque sia va detto che non vi furono, a quanto pare, contestazioni o reclami a questo proposito.

Le prime iscrizioni non si fecero attendere. Sebbene nel numero di agosto della rivista si comunicasse che vi erano solo sei iscritti stranieri, il giorno 2 settembre 1901 le partite ebbero inizio. Gli iscritti furono 9 e fra di essi un solo italiano, l'ingegner Pietro Seni di Roma. Nato nel 1841 e morto nel 1909, fu un buon giocatore, vincitore di tornei sociali romani e del Primo Torneo Nazionale Romano del 1875. Ma fu anche forte giocatore per corrispondenza: vinse infatti nel 1902 la 1ª Gara Nazionale per Corrispondenza della Unione Scacchistica Italiana. Gli altri otto concorrenti erano stranieri, ma spiccavano fra di essi giocatori di buon livello. A parte il vincitore, Samuel Ossip Bernstein, di cui parleremo più diffusamente, parteciparono L. Gottesmann, un cugino di Bernstein, P. Gaspary di Atene e J. Weismann di Parigi che si erano già distinti in altri tornei per corrispondenza organizzati in Francia.

(*) Studioso della storia degli scacchi per corrispondenza - Milano.



[Hans Ellinger and Toni Prezioso](#)

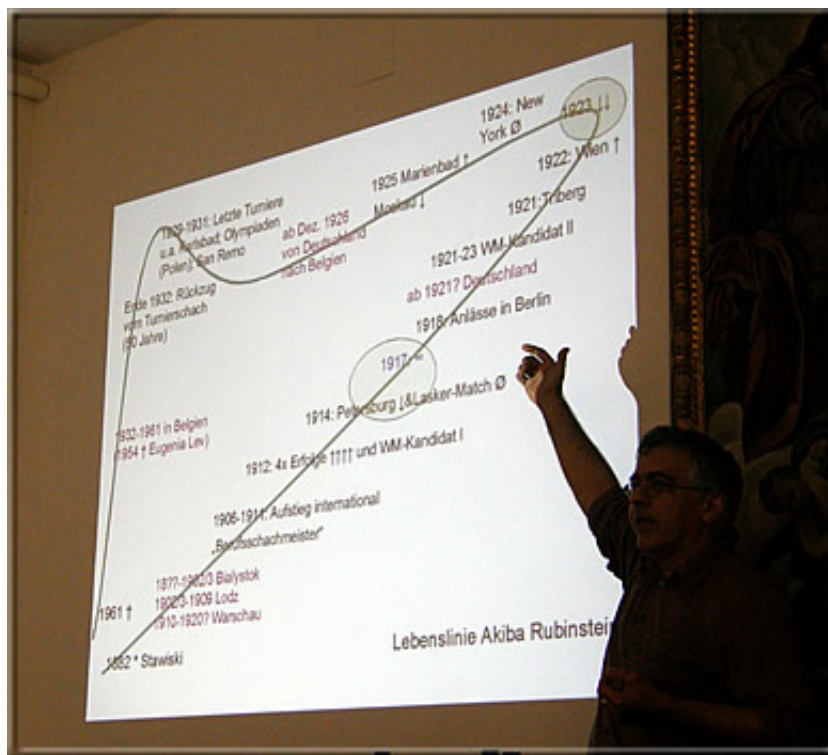
It is always a difficult situation to give the final talk – my friend Toni Prezioso let all others go ahead and presented us very impressively his Rubinstein biography project. His argumentation why at all an additional Rubinstein treatise seems to be necessary and how he intends "to interpret" it has caused a stir till long after midday – at the farewell dinner, naturally at "Diana".

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[Toni Prezioso](#)

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Ups and downs - the lifeline of

Akiba Rubinstein.

Before Alessandro Sanvito had generously left it to Luca D'Ambrosio, so to the "next generation", to find the closing words for our event, he mastered this task with style.

All that remains to be written is: Arrivederci Venezia 2008 – Arriba València 2009. (Meanwhile Miquel Artigas has promised his support for a regional meeting in Spain in spring 2009.)

* * * *

From my personal communication still a later reflection by Luca D'Ambrosio:

Being an eager reader of Italian and German chess literature I had very often the impression that these two chess worlds – geographically in such close proximity – hardly know each other. Of course with the exception of a few gifted researchers. The hurdle is clearly the language: Italians are predominantly monolingual, and if anyone is familiar with a foreign language it is mostly French or English. In consequence a large part of the German chess literature, the old but also the new one is unknown to Italians.

Vice versa nearly the same applies: Who in Germany knows Italian so well to understand correctly the works of a Chicco, to give only one example.

What pleased me in Venice is that these two worlds (my worlds!) approached a little. For instance I think it's good to show the progress of the Lasker biography in Italy, to present the commemorative publications, but also to mention vice versa what people are just working on in these parts.

Perhaps I am wrong in these thoughts, I like to be taught otherwise, but anyhow I have felt this way.

