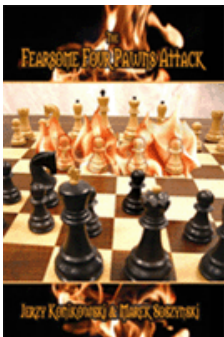




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Rating Chart

- ♦ – A poor book.
- ♦♦ – Not very good.
- ♦♦♦ – A useful book.
- ♦♦♦♦ – A good book.
- ♦♦♦♦♦ – An excellent book.

Reviewed this month:

Fighting the Anti-Sicilians
by Richard Palliser

Starting Out: Classical Sicilian
by Alexander Raetsky & Maxim Chetverik

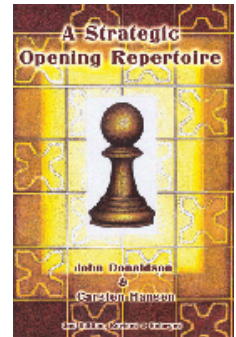
The Accelerated Dragon (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

Chess Informant, Vol. 100
by Zdenko Krnic & Aleksandar Matanovic

En Passant

Chesspublishing.com: d-pawn Specials
by Eric Prie

Check out these bestselling titles from [USCFSales.com](#):



[A Strategic Opening Repertoire](#)

by John Donaldson & Carsten Hansen

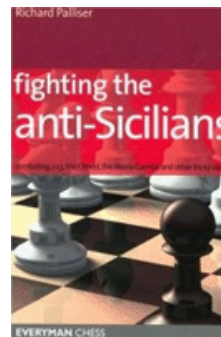
Read an excerpt [here](#).

Two Sides of the Sicilian

This month we will focus on three recent releases on the Sicilian Defense. Two concern the Open Sicilian, where White plays 3 d4: one is latest from Raetsky & Chetverik on the Classical Sicilian; the other is a DVD on the Accelerated Dragon by Nigel Davies. Also, we look at the 100th volume of *Chess Informant*, and take another passing look at chesspublishing.com.

Fighting the Anti-Sicilians by Richard Palliser, Everyman Chess 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 254pp., \$24.95

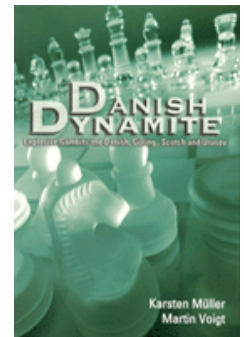
Over the years English international master Richard Palliser has proven himself to be a very reliable author. In the present volume, he addresses how to handle the numerous Anti-Sicilians such as 2 c3, the Closed Sicilian, the Grand Prix Attack and the Morra Gambit, among others.



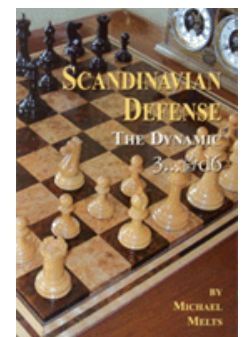
The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (2 pages)
- Preface (2 pages)
- 1 The 2 c3 Sicilian (57 pages)
- 2 Move Order Issues After 2 Nc3 (18 pages)
- 3 The Closed Sicilian (43 pages)
- 4 The Grand Prix Attack (39 pages)
- 5 Other Approaches After 2 Nc3 (15 pages)
- 6 Kingside Fianchetto: 2 d3 and 2 g3 (8 pages)
- 7 The Queenside Fianchetto: 2 b3 (12 pages)
- 8 Gambits (38 pages)
- 9 Miscellaneous (13 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)

As usual, Palliser distributes and dissects the material with a very capable hand, while also providing numerous original ideas and clever recommendations to avoid problematic lines and to create the most trouble for the opponent.



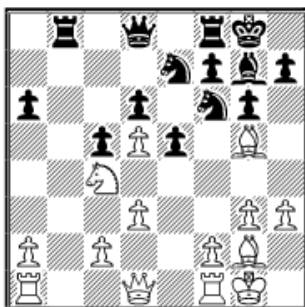
[Danish Dynamite](#)
by Karsten Mueller & Martin Voigt



[Scandinavian Defense: The Dynamic 3...Qd6](#)
by Michael Melts

In general, Palliser offers good suggestions for players of these various lines. I checked the validity of a couple of his recommendations for Black and found them solid and worth a try. However, I disagree with him in the following line:

1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 g3 g6 4 Bg2 Bg7 5 d3 d6 6 Be3 Nf6 7 h3 e5 8 Nge2 0-0 9 0-0 b5 10 Nxb5 Rb8 11 Nec3 a6 12 Na3 Rxb2 13 Nc4 Rb8 14 Bg5 Be6 15 Nd5 Bxd5 16 exd5 Ne7



17 Qc1!?

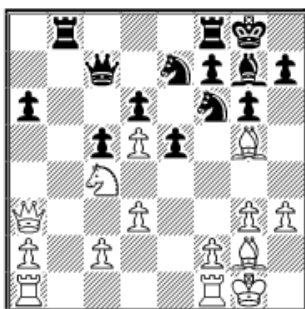
This is actually a recommendation from Palliser's book on the [Closed Sicilian](#). His main line now continues:

17...Qc7

Another try is 17...Qd7, which goes unmentioned by the author, but White also achieves the better game after 18 Qa3 Nfxd5 (18...a5 19 Qxa5 Nfxd5 20 Qa6 f6

21 Bd2 leads to the same as 18...Nfxd5) 19 Qxa6 f6 20 Bd2 Rfd8 21 Rfb1 Nb4 22 Bxb4 cxb4 23 Nb6 Qe6 (23...Qc7 24 Rxb4 Qxc2 25 Rab1, and White has a plus) 24 Rxb4 d5 25 Rab1, and White is much better.

18 Qa3!



Palliser only covers 18 Bxf6 Bxf6 19 Qa3 e4 20 dxe4 (20 Rab1 Nxd5 (20...exd3 21 Qxd3 Rb5 is fine for Black too) 21 dxe4 Rxb1 22 Rxb1 Nc3 23 Rb3 Ne2+ 24 Kh2 Nd4 25 Rb6 Nxc2 26 Qxa6 Bd4 27 Rb7 Qc8 28 Nxd6 Qe6 with a complicated game) 20...Bxa1 21 Rxa1 Rfd8 22 f4 f6 23 Qc3 Rf8 24 Kh2 Rbe8, and, as Palliser indicates, White has compensation for the exchange, but doesn't have any advantage.


18...Ra8

One alternative is 18...Nexd5, but White is also better in this line, e.g. 19 Qxa6 Nb6 20 Qa5 Rfc8 21 Rab1 Nfd7 22 Rb5 h6 23 Bd2 Nxc4 24 Qxc7 Rxc7 25 Rxb8+ Nxb8 26 dxc4 Ra7 27 Rb1 Nd7 28 Bc6 Nf8 29 a4, and White should win.

19 f4! exf4 20 Bxf4 Rfd8 21 Rae1 Nh5 22 Bg5 f6 23 Bd2 Nxc3 24 Ba5 Qa7 25 Bxd8 Rxd8 26 Rf2, and White is clearly better.

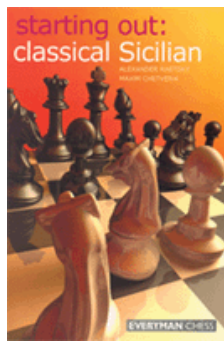
This line is just one tiny fraction of the chapter on the Closed Sicilian, but it represents an example of why readers need to examine the suggested lines carefully, even those from a well-respected author. Obviously, the analysis in the above is relatively sparse, and improvements will likely be found for both sides.

This is a very good book and I happily recommend it to anyone playing the Sicilian. Of course, those using Anti-Sicilian lines as white should also consider purchasing it in order to see what their future opponents may have up their sleeves.

My assessment of this book: 

Fighting the Anti-Sicilians
by Richard Palliser

The Classical Sicilian arises after 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 (or 2...Nc6) 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 (5...d6). It is not as popular as it was in the nineties, when it was a mainstay in Kramnik's repertoire. It ran into tough times in the Richter-Rauzer (6 Bg5), and became a rare guest in top level chess, but it has never been refuted. It can



be found in the repertoires of a number of top players, such as Malakhov, Dreev, and Kozul. Yet it is noteworthy that of the complete games in this book, only a few are from recent years.

The contents are divided as follows:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 Rare 6th Moves (16 pages)
- 2 The Boleslavsky: 6 Be2 e5 (14 pages)
- 3 The Sharp 6 Bc4 (31 pages)
- 4 The Sozin Attack (20 pages)
- 5 The Velimirovic Attack (20 pages)
- 6 6 Bg5: The Richter-Rauzer (11 pages)
- 7 The Traditional: 6...e6 7 Qd2 Be7 (25 pages)
- 8 The Modern: 7...a6 (34 pages)
- Index of Variations (5 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

The material is well presented and the authors take care to select the variations that are most relevant for the reader. It is almost an impossible task to present the material in so few pages. For example, the Sozin Attack by itself is a massive opening complex, which has had whole books devoted to it, but here the authors cover it in twenty easy-to-read pages. Thus, the book will not serve as a stand-alone volume, but neither is it meant to.

This is a very good introduction to the Classical Sicilian for both colors; it allows the reader to obtain a good understanding of the typical plans for both sides and aids in the further study of this opening.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦

[Order Starting Out: Classical Sicilian](#)
by Alexander Raetsky & Maxim Chetverik

The Accelerated Dragon (DVD) by Nigel Davies, ChessBase GmbH 2007, Playing time 4 hours, \$31.99

On this new DVD, English grandmaster Nigel Davies presents a repertoire for Black in the Accelerated Dragon, which arises after 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6. As regular readers of this column may know, I have played the Accelerated Dragon on and off since I was scholastic player, and the first book I wrote was on this opening.



The presentation of the material is easy to follow, and Davies makes a good case for why Black is okay in this variation. I focused my attention on the lines that I consider critical, and I'm rather impressed with the depth of the presentation. Davies, while obviously having to cut some corners, manages to reach into the nooks and crannies to cover the most important material.


The contents are divided as follows:

- Intro
- Maroczy 10.Qd2 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bc6 12.f3 a5 13.b3 Nd7 14.Be3
- Maroczy 10.Qd2 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bc6 12.f3 a5 13.b3 Nd7 14.Bf2
- Maroczy 10.Qd2 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bc6 12.f3 a5 13th Move Alternatives
- Maroczy 10.Rc1 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bc6 12.f3
- Maroczy 10.Rc1 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bc6 12.Qd3
- Maroczy 10.f3
- Maroczy 10.f4
- Maroczy 10.Nc2
- Maroczy 10.Nb3
- Maroczy 10.Rb1
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8th Move Alternatives
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Nb3 Qc7 10.f4 d6 11.Be2 b6 12.g4
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Nb3 Qc7 10.f4 d6 11.Be2 b6 12.Bf3
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Nb3 Qc7 10.Bg5
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bb3 d6 10.h3 Bd7 11.f4 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Bc6 13th Move Alternatives
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bb3 d6 10.h3 Bd7 11.f4 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Bc6 13.Nd5
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bb3 d6 10.h3 Bd7 11.f4 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Bc6 13.Qd3
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bb3 d6 10.h3 Bd7 11.Re1
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bb3 d6 10th Move Alternatives
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.e5 Ng8 9.f4
- 5.Nc3 ... 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.e5 Ng8 9.Bd4
- 5.Nxc6
- 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 d5
- 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Be2 0-0 8th Move Alternatives
- 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Nb3 0-0 8.Be2
- 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Nb3
- 5th Move Alternatives

By and large, Davies has put together an excellent repertoire for Black, putting emphasis on solid positional lines that have a sufficient amount of dynamic counterplay to go for a win, which can be particularly difficult when facing the Maroczy.

My only criticism with this DVD, and others of its ilk, is the lack of bibliography. Thus you can't see the author's sources or know where to look if you feel compelled to study the lines in further detail. This may be a minor snit, but it is easily rectified, and it should be addressed by the publisher.

Anyone who plays the Accelerated Dragon will be able to find something of interest on this excellent DVD. However, it is primarily designed for players rated up to 2000, and to those who want to learn the opening for the first time. It doesn't contain much original analysis or improvements over existing theory, but it has plenty of useful suggestions, some new and some also seen in other works.

My assessment of this DVD: 

The Accelerated Dragon (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

Chess Informant, Vol. 100 by Zdenko Krnic & Aleksandar Matanovic et al., Sahovski Informator 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 339pp., \$36.00

Since 1966 a group of chess enthusiasts have published serials of the best games and latest opening theory. Now in their 43rd year *Chess Informant* has reached the landmark volume number 100, and the importance of this series cannot be underestimated.



In the pre-computer age, *Chess Informant* was the most important publication for serious players, who carefully studied its contents prior to upcoming tournaments. Often your preparation was based on what you could find on your opponent's repertoire based on his or her games in *Informant*. It was the late World Champion Tigran Petrosian who called these players "the Children of *Chess Informant*."



This volume contains statistics from all previous volumes on the trends of openings, number of games, annotated games, annotated games by world champions, most games by which players, etc. The contents are divided as follows:

- Contributors (2 pages)
- The ten best games of the preceding Volume (1 page)
- The ten most important theoretical novelties of the preceding Volume (5 pages)
- System of Signs (3 pages)
- Games
 - A (25 pages)
 - B (74 pages)
 - C (56 pages)
 - D (63 pages)
 - E (46 pages)
- Index (11 pages)
- Annotators (2 pages)
- Combinations (5 pages)
- Endings (6 pages)
- Studies (3 pages)
- Tournament Results (13 pages)
- The Best of Chess Informant - Aleksandar Matanovic (12 pages)
- Chess Informants 1-100 (3 pages)

Generally speaking, the distribution of the material is standard to *Chess Informant*. I like that they are celebrating Aleksandar Matanovic in this volume, for in many ways he is the grand old man of *Chess Informant*. He may not be a particularly familiar name to many of today's players, but in his heyday he played games against Bogoljubow and Tartakower, and he has beaten Petrosian, Larsen, and Keres, while gaining draws against the likes of Fischer, Smyslov, Botvinnik, Spassky, Tal, Karpov, Korchnoi and Kasparov to name just a few. He has had a long, impressive career, even more so when you add *Chess Informant* to his list of accomplishments. Here are a couple of his games:

Aleksandar Matanovic – Lev Polugaevsky
Skopje/Ohrid Skopje (16), 1968

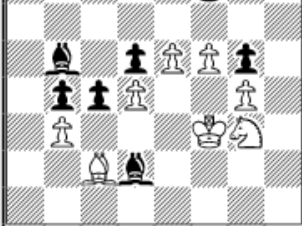
1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 Bd7 7 f4 Qb6 8 Nb3 e6 9 Qd2 Be7 10 0–0 0–0 11 e5 Nd5 12 Nxd5 exd5 13 exd6 Bxg5 14 fxg5 Nb4 15 Kb1 Rac8 16 Nd4 Qxd6 17 a3 Nc6 18 Nb5 Qe7 19 Bd3 Be6 20 Qf4 Qc5 21 Rhe1 d4 22 Nd6 Rb8 23 Qh4 h6 24 gxh6 Rfd8 25 hxg7 Kxg7 26 Qh7+ Kf8 27 Rxe6 1–0

Aleksandar Matanovic – Tigran Petrosian
JUG-URS Skopje, 1969

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0–0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 0–0 9 h3 Nd7 10 a4 Bb7 11 d4 Na5 12 Bc2 c5 13 Nbd2 Re8 14 Nf1 exd4 15 cxd4 Bf6 16 axb5 axb5 17 Qd3 e4 18 Qe3 Nb3 19 Rxa8 Bxa8 20 Ng3 Nxe1 21 Qxc1 g6 22 Qf4 Nf8 23 Qd2 d5 24 e5 Bg7 25 h4 Bc6 26 h5 Ne6 27 Nf1 f5 28 Rd1 Qe7 29 Ra1 Ra8 30 Rxa8+ Bxa8 31 Qa5 Bc6 32 N1h2 Qd8 33 Qd2 Be8 34 hxg6 hxg6 35 g4 f4 36 Kg2 Bf8 37 Ng1 Qh4 38 b3 Ng5 39 Qxf4 Ne6 40 Qf3 Bf7 41 Ne2 Bh6 42 Nf1 Ng5 43 Qg3 Qxg3+ 44 Kxg3 Ne4+ 45 Kg2 Nd2 46 Nxd2 Bxd2 47 f4 b4 48 Kg3 g5 49 f5 Be8 50 Kf3 Bb5 51 Ng3 Kf7




52 f6 Bd7 53 bxc4 dxc4 54 d5 b3 55 e6+ Bxe6 56 dxe6+ Kxe6 57 Bd1 Bc3 58 f7 Bb4 59 Ne4 Kd5 60 Nxc5 Kd4 61 Ne4 Kd3 62 Be2+ Kd4 63 Nd2 b2 64 Bxc4



Bxd2 65 Ba2 Bh6 66 g5 Bg7 67 Kf4 b1Q
68 Bxb1 Kd5 69 Kf5 1-0

For some other highlights from this volume, check out the Informant@ChessCafe column for [December 2007](#) and [February 2008](#). If you

have thus far missed out on the *Chess Informants*, you should buy a volume to experience it for yourself. The contents of just one volume can provide months of study material. *Chess Informant* has also been publishing on CD, so it is available in electronic format as well. It is certainly worth the investment.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order Chess Informant, Vol. 100](#)
by Zdenko Krnic & Aleksandar Matanovic

Chesspublishing.com: d-pawn Specials, by Eric Prie, Chesspublishing.com 2008, Subscription \$19.50-\$99.00 per year.

This marks the second in a series of reviews of the chesspublishing.com website. It is a subscription service with twelve separate sections devoted to various openings. For more general information, see my [February 2008](#) column.




Here we will look at the *d-pawn Specials* section, which has been hosted by French grandmaster Eric Prie since 2003. The updates are monthly, and unlike some of the other sections, the focus isn't so much on the games played in the previous month. Instead, Prie tends to focus on one or two lines in each update and then carefully dissect the material. This approach makes a lot of sense, since openings such as the London, Trompowsky, Torre, 2 Bf4, The Barry Attack, the Colle, 2 Bg5 and others are not seen as frequently in top play.

Thus, readers are graced with an amazingly knowledgeable host, who time and again rocks the foundation of current theory with his evaluations. For instance, many of the most critical lines in the Trompowsky were first suggested and analyzed by Prie on this website, and we frequently see games where lesser-known and lower-rated players use his recommendations to beat or draw much stronger players. So it is an excellent resource for those who play these lines or have to face them.

I read Prie's column every month and it has helped me to gain good positions in online or regular games. I should also note that once you subscribe to a section, you are granted access to all the previous updates, going back to 1999. Prior to Prie, another d-pawn specialist, English grandmaster Aaron Summerscale, capably hosted the site.

For those interested in these openings, this website provides wonderful value for the money, and a year's access will give you a chance to carefully explore lines at your leisure that are often overlooked in current opening monographs.

My assessment of this site: 

Chesspublishing.com: d-pawn Specials
by Eric Prie

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