

Valencia Spain: The Cradle of European Chess

Dr. Ricardo Calvo

Presentation to the CCI May, 1998 - Vienna, Austria

[Footnotes have been interlined for reading convenience rather than appearing as "endnotes"; the text has not otherwise been altered except for appropriate formatting for this forum].

Our premiere piece is by Dr. Ricardo Calvo. As a chess historian, author and reporter (be sure to check out the link to Dr. Calvo's website on our "Links Page"), as well as a chess player who earned the rank of IM, Dr. Calvo brings a uniquely qualified perspective to his work. Dr. Calvo sets forth evidence and arguments that Spain was the incubator and situs of the monumental changes that occurred in chess in the late fifteenth century, that resulted in the game we know as chess today. While many trace the introduction of the increased powers of the Queen and the Bishop to Renaissance Italy, Dr. Calvo presents a compelling case for his native homeland.

Introduction

Towards the end of the 15th century Medieval chess underwent a dramatic change with new rules - those we call now "modern chess" (1).

[Note 1: It is convenient to remember the rules of pieces' movements in Islamic and Medieval chess. All pieces were the same as today, except Queen and Bishop. The Queen, called then "alferza" in Spanish, or "fers" or "fiers" as still today in Russian, could only reach an adjacent diagonal square. The Bishop, or "Fil" in Arabic, ("arfil" in Lucena) could only jump to a third diagonal square regardless of the occupation of the intermediate point. Thus, the Bishop of c1 had only 8 squares in the board during the whole game: a3, e3, g1, c5, g5, a7, e7, g7. The same for all other bishops. A Pawn promoted only to a fers, and the newly promoted fers could, on its first move only, make two consecutive moves. A victory could be obtained when all pieces of the opponent have been captured ("Bare King" rule).]

The change was a revolution indeed (2).

[Note 2: When the literary chess circle of Valencia composed the "Scachs d'amor" poem and Lucena wrote his chess book, the popularity of the old game had already passed its medieval zenith. The XV century produced many chess works, but the flourishing period of expansion was over. There is a noticeable fatigue towards the old medieval chess rules, where the queen or "alferza" could only move to an diagonal square and the bishop only to a third diagonal square. The games were long and boring. So, the main form of playing chess with the old rules was betting with chess problems and not playing a game. Manuscripts in use are mainly compilations of chess problems, the most popular {having} been known as "Bonus Socius" and "Civis Bononiae". To revitalize the game, many attempts emerged spontaneously in many places, as had happened since the introduction of chess in Europe by the Arabs. Thus, chess could be played with dice since early medieval times, or on boards of new dimensions, with new pieces, as shown in the Codex of Alfonso X of Castile. Normal medieval chess also suffered modifications, and the rules of playing the game varied from country to country. As Murray said, there was no ultimate tribunal which could decide which rules were definitive.

The new form of playing chess adopted in the chess circle of Valencia completely changes the picture. With the rapid movements of queen and bishop, the theory of opening play becomes very important because it is possible to checkmate the opponent in a few moves. Arab players, with the old rules, didn't bother too much about the opening because the chess armies deployed slowly. So, each player, when beginning the game, had in mind a distinct order of battle or "tabiya" (classified with fancy names) which he intended to obtain, without caring about the opponent's moves. The real chess battle started in the middle game. Modern chess changes also all principles of attack and defense, because the new moves of queen and bishop increase tremendously the possibilities. Likewise, previous endgame theory is quite thoroughly shaken since a pawn can promote to a powerful queen. A completely new game has emerged. It suited

very well the spirit of the time. At the end of the XV century the geographic discoveries broadened the mental horizon, and the possibility of printing books speeded the codification of accumulated experience. A new role for women in society and politics appears. A changing social structure towards unitarian states where only the king could afford the costly artillery dismantles the political and military influence of feudal lords. All this is also reflected in the chess board, and the modern way of playing chess, tailored for a new era, expands rapidly and is immediately accepted in the leading European countries. From that moment down to our day, the chess game has grown and grown, becoming an impressive corpus of accumulated knowledge. See Antonius van der Linde "Das Schachspiel des XVI Jahrhubderts. Nach unedierten Quellen bearbeitet". Berlin 1874. Joachim Petzold "Das königliche Spiel. Die Kultur Geschichte des Schachs" Stuttgart 1987. pp. 147-155. "Beitrag zu einem strittigem Thema: Wie erklärt sich der Name Dame im Schach?" Europa Rochade. Maintal. Noviembre 1994. pp. 51-54. Hans Holländer "Bretter die die Welt bedeuten. Das Schachspiel in der frühen Neuzeit" in "Zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte der Brett- und Kartenspiele" Aachen 1994. pp. 21-30. Govert Westerfeld "Historia de la nueva dama poderosa en el juego de ajedrez y damas" Homo Ludens IV. Munich-Viena 1994. pp. 103-124.]

Among many other aspects affecting the practice of play, a single pawn could from then on decide the issue of the game by promoting into the powerful new Queen. Some relevant questions are: Where did this tremendous change take place? Who had the idea? When? Why? How was the cultural frame inspiring this unique development? There has been some confusion among chess historians, trying to answer in many ways these questions mostly with a mixture of intuition and speculation, because decisive sources were unknown to many of them (3).

[Note 3: In particular, the MS "Scachs d'amor" was discovered in 1905, when Van der Linde and Von der Lasa were already dead. There were votes for Spain (T. von der Lasa "Das Werk des Lucena von 1498" in Schachzeitung. Berlin 1858 pp. 443-445, 481-498. Ib. in 1859 pp. 9-12, 41-45, 71-74, 104-107, 224, 226. Also in "Zur Geschichte..." pp. 169-183.). France had its supporters as well (Jacob Silbermann y Wolfgang Unzicker "Geschichte des Schachs". Gütersloh, Munich-Viena 1975. pp. 36-46). Following Murray's preference, Italy came also as a candidate. A critical review is Egbert Meissenburg "Vom Firzan zur Königin im Eilschach" IFK (Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften". Ed. E. Strouhal. Viena 1995 pp. 27-37).]

The new game carries a persistent Spanish hallmark during the whole Renaissance. The most convincing point is the chronology of several chess works. Here is a chain of important facts:

1. The oldest game of modern chess appears in a Catalan MS with the title "Scachs d'amor". We can safely admit as birthplace of the new game a well-known literary circle in Valencia, around 1470-1490, the "Scachs d'amor" manuscript being its first written expression. The lack of modern references to this tremendously significant work is a very strange thing.(4)

[Note 4: Since the MS was discovered in 1905, neither Van der Linde nor Von der Lasa could enjoy the study of its significance. Murray used the data from Paluzie in the article "The Catalan poem Scachs d'amor" British Chess Magazine, Londres, 32, 1913 p. 72. After this, he included a short and superficial comment in his great book of 1913 (pp. 781-2). He admitted the possibility of the game having been really played, which seems very unlikely. The significance of "Scachs d'amor" is contemptuously treated in Murray. In a note on p. 781 he says for instance: "The poem exhibits some striking resemblance to Vida's "Scacchia ludus" described below, but on the whole I regard it as describing an earlier phase of chess than that in Vida". If it is earlier, (which on the other hand is an obvious fact), why such a brief and superficial treatment? Is it not a crucial piece of evidence in the whole problem of the origins of modern chess? The wording of Murray gives the impression (at least to me) that the Valencian issue took him "à contre-coeur". Murray was inclined towards an Italian scenario in the origins of modern chess, in spite of the opposite ideas already supported by Von der Lasa. For Murray, a new Valencian MS must have been uncomfortable. What is Valencia in the middle of the Italian splendour of the Renaissance? After the palsy induced by Murray, practically all the chess historians seem satisfied with the state of affairs. I have not found a single word about "Scachs d'amor" in the wonderful "Dizionario Enciclopedico degli Scacchi", (A. Chicco, G. Porreca. Mursia. Milano 1971) or in the prodigious "The Oxford Companion to Chess", by Hooper and Whyld (segunda edition 1992) in

spite of the mention of the "Scachs d'amor" game at the "Oxford Encyclopaedia of Chess Games" by D.Levy. K. O'Connell. Not a single word in Golombek's "Chess: A History" Putnam NY 1976, or in his "The Encyclopaedia of Chess".(Batsford Londres 1977). Not a single word in "Geschichte des Schachs", (Jacob Silbermann,Wolfgang Unzicker. Gütersloh, Munich-Vienna 1975) or in Petzold's "Das Königliche Spiel" (Kohlhammer. Stuttgart 1987). The list of omissions could be easily multiplied. Such sad phenomena are not rare in chess historiography. There are no advantages in insisting on it.]

2. The first printed chess book was the lost incunabulum by Vicent, in Valencia 1495. It contained almost certainly material on modern chess. (5)

[Note 5: Yuri Averbach, "Zagadka utracennoy knigi" in Nauka i Zizn. Moscú 1985. N. 8. pp. 137-141. English version under the títler "The Mystery of the Lost Book" in IFK (Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften". Ed. E. Strouhal. Viena 1995 pp. 117-122) and in "The Chess Collector", December 1993, vol IV, n. 3. Spanish version "Revista Internacional de Ajedrez", Febrero 1993 (nº 65), Marzo 1994 (nº 78). A discussion came in J. Perez de Arriaga in "Revista Internacional de Ajedrez" (Artículo en nº 68, mayo de 1993 y carta en nº 82 (julio 1994) and in "The Chess Collector", Vol VI, nº 1 y 2, Enero-Abril1997.]

3. The oldest preserved book on modern chess, i.e., the game being played with the current rules of movement, was written nearly 500 years ago by an Aragonese "converso" named Lucena, was printed in Salamanca by Hutz and Sanz in 1496 or 1497, and was dedicated to Prince Don Juan (1478-1497) . This work is closely connected with the other two, as I have been able to prove. (R. Calvo, "Valencia, Geburtstätte des modernen Schachs", Schach-Journal (1992), N.3. pp. 34-46. A shorter English version of this paper is R.Calvo, "Valencia, birthplace of modern chess". New in Chess, Alkmaar 1991. N.7. 82-89). Reviews on Lucena's book have been carried out recently (6) bringing up new data which enable a better picture on the origins of modern chess.

[Note 6: Ricardo Calvo "Lucena, la evasión en ajedrez del converso Calisto". Perea ediciones. El Toboso 1997. J. Pérez de Arriaga , "El incunable de Lucena, primer arte de ajedrez moderno" Ed. Polifemo. Madrid 1997.]

4. A Spanish chess MS preserved in El Escorial (MS O III) contains important problems of modern chess. It is dated exactly in 1500. Author unknown. No relevant connections to the others, except several hints of relations to Italian chess players. I commented the MS O.III from El Escorial in 1985 for the first time. (7)

[Note 7: Ricardo Calvo "Un nuevo manuscrito de ajedrez del siglo XV" Revista Jaque. San Sebastian Año XV nº 173. 15 de Abril de 1985 pp 252-253. "Ein neues Schachmanuskript aus dem 15. Jahrhundert. Europa Rochade.Maintal 1985 nº 3 S 28. "Un nouveau manuscrit échiquéen du XV siècle" Europe Échecs. BESANÇON nº 319-320 Juillet-Août 1985 pp 434-435.]

The so-called Göttingen MS, from c. 1500, which is almost certainly due to Lucena. This work in Latin proves that the Spanish chess material on modern chess was winding up in Bourgogne.

5. The so-called Paris MS, from the first quarter of the 16th century, is due to Lucena and bears his own signature. Written in French, with strong influences of Spanish idioms.

6. The MS Paris f. allem is almost certainly due to Lucena

7. Only after this, an explosion of works on modern chess takes place with a strong Spanish influence in most of them. In Italy (Damiano, Vida, the lost book of Cardan), in France (the Paris manuscript of Lucena) and in pain (Ruy Lopez, the lost book of Ceron). The purpose of this paper is to prove that the place where modern chess originated was Valencia, inside a well known chess-literary circle.

"Scachs d'amor"

The first recorded game of modern chess appears in a Catalan manuscript towards the end of the XV century in a manuscript entitled "Scachs d'amor. The complete title of the manuscript is: "Hobra jntitulada scachs d'amor feta per don franci de castellvi e narcis vinyoles e mossen bernat fenollar sota nom de tres planetes ço es Març Venus e Mercuri per conjunccio e influencia dels quals fon jventada". So, the names of the players were Castellvi* (white) and Vinyoles* (black), with an arbiter named Fenollar*. The MS bears no date and directly says nothing about the city where the events took place. But Castellvi, Vinyoles and Fenollar were three well-known members of an active literary circle in Valencia, at the end of the XV century, and their works are of paramount importance to the questions of the origins of modern chess. These three chess players and writers enjoyed in Valencia, during the last quarter of the 15th century, a remarkable social prestige and political influence. Catalan scholarship has therefore paid a lot of attention to them (8)

[Note 8: See Salvador Guinot "El ajedrez en la tertulia de mossen Fenollar" *Boletín de la Sociedad Castellonense de Cultura. Castellón de la Plana, 1921, pp. 132-143. Antoni Ferrando Francés "Narcis Vinyoles i la seva obra" Facultat de Filosofia i Lletres. Valencia 1978, Alexandre Bataller y Carme Narbon "Escacs d'amor; una obertura al joc" (A Sol Post. Estudis de Llengua i Literatura. Ed. Marfil 1991)].*

The dating of the MS, and therefore the first appearance of a modern chess game can be done by indirect evidence linked with the biographies of the involved actors. The MS was discovered relatively late, in 1905 but apparently it has disappeared during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). It was found by the Jesuit P. Ignasi Casanovas in 1905 ("Codexs de l'Arxiu del Palau", *Revista de Bibliografia Catalana*, VI, 1905, pp 32-34). In the Real Capilla del Palau (Barcelona) as a legacy from the Counts of Sobradiel. According to him, the MS consists in 13 written folia and 30 blank pages. The size was 290x215. The chess text appears in fol 1-8a and 9b-13. The Catalan chess historian José Paluzie y Lucena (1860-1938) made a review in French ("Notice sur un Manuscrit en langue catalane existant à l'Archive du Palau à Barcelone" *La Stratégie*. Paris 4 de abril 1912. pp. 121-123).

Shortly afterwards, a half page was published by him at the "Deutsches Wochensach" (nº 21, 26 de mayo 1912 p. 189). The enormous importance of the MS found however no international resonance, in spite of Paluzie's insistence in his "Manual de Ajedrez" (J. Paluzie. 6 vol. Barcelona 1912, Reed. 1923-31, 1928, 1930-31, 1943, 1947-58). The first complete edition is due to Ramón Miquel i Planas ("Escachs d'Amor, poema inèdit del XVè segle" in "Bibliofilia. Recull d'estudis, observacions, comentaris i notícies sobre llibres en general i sobre qüestions de llengua i literatura catalanes en particular", Volum primer. Barcelona 1911-1914. pp. 413-440.). Next study was José Ribelles Comín ("Scachs d'amor, feta per don Françi de Castellui, e Narcis Vinyoles e Mossen Fenollar" en "Bibliografia de la lengua Valenciana" (1) Madrid 1915, pp. 275-297). Other Catalans reviewers are Jordi Rubió i Balaguer (*Història de la Literatura Catalana*, 1948), the chapter "Bernat Fenollar i els seus amics" by Martín de Riquer (*Història de la Literatura Catalana*. Vol. IV. Ariel. Barcelona 1980. Pp. 181-224).

Recently, a private edition of the text of "Scachs d'amor" has been published by Salvador Juanpere i Aguiló. Figueras 1992. First, a few words about the game itself. The moves were as follows: (1) e4, d5 (2) ed, Qd5 (3) Nc3 Qd8 (4) Bc4, Nf6 (5) Nf3, Bg4 (6) h3, Bf3 (7) Qf3, e6 (8) Qb7, Nbd7 (9) Nb5, Rc8 (10) Na7, Nb6 (11) Nc8, Nc8 (12) d4, Nd6 (13) Bb5, Nb5 (14) Qb5, Nd7 (15) d5, ed (16) Be3, Bd6 (17) Rd1, Qf6 (18) Rd5, Qg6 (19) Bf4, Bf4 (20) Qd7, Kf8 (21) Qd8 mate.

The game is described in the form of an allegory. Mars, playing with the red pieces, tries to obtain the love of Venus, playing with the green pieces. Mercury acts as an arbiter. The three speak in turn, in Catalan verses, probably improvised, as is possible to see even today in literary contests in Valencian towns. Some scholars wrote that it showed a very primitive level of playing. This is questionable. White has made 21 moves, also 21 strophes in verse. Black has produced 20 strophes. The arbiter, another 20. Altogether, 61. There are 3 introductory strophes (or stanzas) explaining the allegory, which adds up to the sum of 64 strophes, as many as there are squares on the chess board, which was obviously one of the purposes of the allegory. The authors stated it explicitly: "suma lo nombre de les cases, que son sexanta-quatre / a les quals corresponen sexanta-quatre cobles".

In other words, the game was invented and we cannot draw any conclusion about the real playing strength of Castellvi, Fenollar and Vinyoles when a literary purpose clearly dominates the course of such a chess game. The title of the manuscript also uses the word "inventada". Inventions, puzzles and literary contests appear frequently in the activities of these three Valencian poets and chess players. It allows an approximation to the intellectual atmosphere in which modern chess seems to have been born. As a whole, the "Scachs d'amor" poem is extremely charming. A gallant game of love creates an allegorical battle where chess pieces represent different aesthetic, even moralistic, embodiments. Beauty, Reason, Will or Shame play over the board a love game where descriptions of the technical aspects are interwoven with other layers of expression. In a way, the poem is a typical product of Renaissance fashions, mixing chivalrous attitudes with a pragmatic approach "à la bourgeoise".

The Martial Castellvi

The "caualler" Francesc de Castellvi appears as one of the three authors of the "Scachs d'amor" poem. Even though he is the first known winner of a game of modern chess, he is relatively unknown. He was lord of several towns in the area around Jativa. He acted as a close adviser in the Aragonese court of King Ferdinand. He was surely a member of a distinguished Valencian family (9).

[Note 9: I have found a sermon of this period dedicated to a certain Isabel de Castellvi, "a great virtuous lady", and another sermon written by Mossen Galuany de Castellvi. Both references appear in an incunabulum printed in Valencia in 1497 by Nicolaus Spindeler, where a sermon by Narcis Vinyoles is also included. The name Castellvi originated in Bourgogne. A branch went to Aragon, and the coat of arms was "azur, a castle argent with a bordure in argent and azur" (Julio de Atienza, "Nobiliario Español", Aguilar, Madrid, 1948, p. 557)].

The most important fact is that Castellvi died on the 6th of November, 1506, and this is therefore the ultimate limit for the datation of the manuscript, which has no date. Even after the centuries, it is possible to notice some aspects of Castellvi's personality because of literary expressions of a peculiar kind. His attitude reflects a liking for struggle, confrontation against difficulties, will of triumph. It is clearly an expansive and vitalistic mentality of contagious optimism. In a sharp contrast, the cautious Vinyoles acts as a careful conservative in love or war matters. In particular the pairs of stanzas 7-8 and 55-56 are typically opposite.

As a poet, Castellvi, appears mostly in minor poems in collaboration with the other two members of the "Scachs d'amor" trio. One of these poems, published in the "Cancionero General" de Hernando del Castillo (Second edition, Valencia 1514), consists of a "demanda adivinativa", a word puzzle aimed at obtaining the name of a given lady: seven letters, four syllables, the first two syllables being "one of the highest names sounding in the passion of Jesus Christ" and the second two syllables a great award. Fenollar poses the question and Castellvi and Vinyoles found the answer: "Elionor". Eli, lamma sabbactani is one of the cries of Jesus on the cross. Onor means honour. The mute letter "H" was used in a very erratic manner in those times. In the MS "Scachs d'amor" appear words like Honor, Obra or Honestat sometimes with "H", sometimes without it.

Vinyoles explains more: the complete name of this lady was "de Corbera", an aristocratic family with a "speaking" coat-of-arms representing a crow ("corb" in Catalan). Perhaps because of this, in the rhymed praise of the lady which follows, Castellvi and Vinyoles call her "bell papagay" "pagó smaltat", "ffalcó gentil". A feudal lord named Romeu de Corbera came in Valencia as the "Maestre" of the Chivalry Order of Montesa between 1410 y 1445. Elionor de Corbera could have been the muse inspiring a love story which our poets prefer to treat in a delicate way. Could this story have inspired "Scachs d'amor" itself?

Bernat Fenollar, a mercurial organizer

The abbot "mossen Bernat Fenollar" was born in Penaguila, near Alcoy, in the province of Alicante. He belonged to a notable Valencian family (coat-of-arms: or, four bends in sable). The year of his birth is generally estimated as somewhere between 1435 and 1440, and he died in Valencia before 1527. He was in close relationship to King Ferdinand, having acted as his

"escribano de ración" (correspondence secretary) and "capellán y maestro de la capilla" (chapelman and director of the chorus).

Fenollar, as a priest, held a post in the cathedral of Valencia, and in 1510 was also active as a professor of mathematics in the University. The Catalanian title "mossen" was mainly given to clergymen, but not exclusively. As we shall see, Vinyoles also held this title in the later years of his life, even though he was a lay man and a married one.

The importance of the abbot Fenollar lies in his activities as literary patron and organizer of cultural contests in Valencia. He was the soul of the group, and probably not in vain appears in the chess game in the role of Mercury, the arbiter. Most important is the fact that the first printed books in Valencia, and according to several sources in the whole Spain, were introduced by the group around Fenollar. The earliest incunabulum is "Obres e trobes en llaors de la Verge Maria", printed by Lambertus Palmart in 1474 after a literary contest which took place the 24th March of this year in honour of the Virgin Mary. Fenollar acted as the secretary of the jury and there were several contributions by Castellvi, Vinyoles and Fenollar himself.

It is a well-established fact that most of the early printers in Spain were Germans. An exhaustive study on this subject can be found in Konrad Haebler "Geschichte des spanischen Frühdruckes in Stammbäumen", Leipzig, Hiersemann, 1923, "Deutsche Drucker in Spanien und Portugal", in Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen, XI, 1894, pp. 529-564, "Die deutschen Buchdrucker des Xv. Jahrhunderts im Auslande". München 1924. In Valencia, the Mediterranean culture centre of the 15th century, there were many German printers, working alone or in couples. This is relevant to us because it shows his relationship with the printers of the chess books. For us one such duo is extremely important: Petrus Hagenbach and Leonard Hutz, because the latter went afterwards to Salamanca where he printed the chess book of Lucena. For instance, Hagenbach and Hutz printed on the 11th of January 1493 a book by Fenollar: "Istoria de la Passió de N. S. Jesu Christ" which proves a relationship of the chess circle of Valencia with the future printer of the chess book of Lucena (10).

[Note 10: Hutz and Hagenbach, both Germans, both wayfaring printers, appear printing together in 1491 in Valencia, where they produced the following 11 books: (1) Imitatio Christi "Del menyspreu del mon". 16th February 1491; (2) Fenollar, Bernat "Istoria de la Passio del N. S. Jesu Christ". 11th January 1493; (3) Confessionale, "Breu tractat de confessio", 25th February 1493; (4) Furs fets en les corts de Oriola, 6th September 1493; (5) Hores de la setmana sancta segon lo us del archibisbat de Valencia. 21st February 1494; (6) Miravet, Joan de, "Opus artis grammaticae". 8th January 1495; (7) Ludolphus de Saxonia, "Lo quart del cartoxá", 6th November 1495; (8) Despuig, Guillelmus "Commentaria ars musicorum", 11th April 1495; (9) "Libre de les quatre ultimes i mes darrerres coses", 8th June 1495; (10) "La revelació de Sant Pau", 3rd August 1495; (11) Ludolphus de Saxonia. "Lo premier del cartoxá", 13th April 1496.]

The last book of Hutz and Hagenbach in Valencia is dated April 13, 1496. Then, they separated. Hagenbach went to Toledo, where he was still active as a printer in 1505. Hutz went to Salamanca, where he joined Lope Sanz and, together with him, printed the chess book of Lucena. Hutz remained in Salamanca the whole year of 1496, and this is a basic fact in order to date Lucena's work. The list of books printed in Salamanca by Lope Sanz and Leonard Hutz is as follows: (1) Bricot, "Textus abbreviatus logicem Aristoteles", 1496; (2) Villadiego, "Contra hereticam pravitatem", 8th January 1496; (3) Tomas de Aquino, "Commenta in libros Aristoteles de generatione et corruptione", 26th February 1496; (4) "Leyes del estilo o Declaraciones sobre las leyes del fuero ", 10 February 1497; (5) Lucena, "Repeticion de amores y arte de Acedrex", No date, 1496 or most probably 1497.

After 1496 Hutz went to Zaragoza, where he appears printing books with Jorge Cocci (Georg Koch) and Lupus Appentegger in 1499 and 1500. Later, he returned to Valencia, where he was still printing in 1505 and 1506. These facts are relevant because they enable us to establish a solid link, Leonard Hutz, between Lucena and the chess-literary circle of Valencia, where modern chess seems to have been born.

Of special significance for the Renaissance of chess is Lope de Roca "Alemany" (11), a true master of the early printing, because he was one of the printers of the chess book of Vicent.

Lope de Roca "Alemany" printed on the 25th of October 1497 "Lo proces de les olives", a collection of satirical poems which features several contributions by Fenollar and by Vinyoles. The latter is shown in a wood-cut. Pere Trincher (12), the other printer of Vicent, published alone on the 3rd of February 1498 the incunabulum "Obra a llaor de S. Cristófol", or contest of verses in honour of St. Cristopher, also organized by Fenollar.

[Note 11: This famous German printer of Vicent book had probably transformed his original name of Stein into a Spanish version (roca = stein). He started his printing activity in Murcia in 1487 but later settled down in Valencia, where he appears in May 1495 printing the chess book of Vicent together with Pere Trincher. Lope de Roca "Alemany" died in Valencia in 1498. Haebler (Konrad Haebler. "Geschichte des spanischen Frühdruckes in Stammbäumen", Leipzig, Hiersemann, 1923; "Deutsche Drucker in Spanien und Portugal", in Zentralblatt f'r Bibliothekwesen, XI, 1894, pp. 529-564; "Die deutschen Buchdrucker des Xv. Jahrhunderts im Auslande". München 1924) has established solid facts proving the close connection between Lope de Roca, who was the true master of printing, and the printing types used by Hutz and Hagenbach. Several documents prove also a friendly personal relationship among them. Hutz is particularly important because he printed the chess book of Lucena. Salvio made the mistake of considering "L'Alemany" a chess author, instead of a mere printer. The list of the dozen of books printed in Valencia by Lope de Roca "Alemany": during these three years is as follows (1) Vicent, Francesch "Jocs partits dels scachs", 15th May 1495. This is the only book he printed together with Pere Trincher. (2) Aesopus "Fabulae", 28th September 1495; (3) Aesopus "Las fabulas de Laurentio Vali", 13th October 1495; (4) Ludolphus de Saxonia "Vita Christi o Lo quart del cartoxá", 6th November 1495;..(5) Honoratus Saint "Vida de Sant Honorat", 9th December 1495; ..(6) Ludolphus de Saxonia "Vita Christi o La terça part del Cartoxá", Circa 1495; (7) Bernardus Claravallensis, "Floretus", 3th August 1496; (8) Phalaris "Epistolae", 17 September 1496; (9) Carroç, Francesch "Moral consideració contra les persuassions, vicis force de amor". Circa 1496; (10) Villena, Isabel de "Vita Christi", 22th August 1497; (11) Fenollar, Bernat "(I) Jaime Gazull. (II) Lo procès de les olives)", (I) was printed the 14th of October 1497. (II) was printed the 25th of October 1497; (12) Alexander VI Pont. Max. "Bula de indulgencias", 1497.]

[Note 12: A Catalonian of German ancestors, Trincher, Triger or Trinchet began his career as a book merchant in Barcelona. He went to Valencia, where he married Isabel Tenza on the 18th of March 1481, and the documents refer to him as "libretio cive ciutatis barcinone". As late as 1500 he was still in Valencia, but later he returned to Barcelona where he was still active in October of 1513. In Valencia, his main activity was bookselling or "libreter", and not printing. His only book, together with Lope de Roca "Alemany", was the chess book of Vicent. But Trincher printed in Valencia, alone, another book on the 3rd of February 1498, entitled "Obra allaor de S. Cristofol", in which the chess patron Fenollar intervenes. Both publishers of the chess book of Vicent participated in a very concrete Valencian circle of literary activities.]

Research on Fenollar proves an important point: The modern game of chess appears in Valencia, towards the end of the XVth century, in a well known umanistic circle of poets, literary patrons and printers of books.

Vinyoles , the triumph of Venus

"Lo magnífich mossen Narcis Vinyoles", as he was called in his late works, died in Valencia in 1517, at an age estimated between 70 and 75 years. He was a relevant politician and writer in Valencia in the last quarter of the 15th.century. An important side of Vinyoles's personality is his literary productions.

The mentioned poem "Scachs d'amor" should be one of the earliest, if not the first, for several reasons which we shall discuss later. Then there appear a certain number of poems, some of them trivial, satirical or amatory, but others increasingly connected with religious themes, as in the literary contest in honour of the Virgin Mary, St. Catherina of Siena, St. Cristopher, etc. When he was a prominent politician, he wrote in a more grave manner, as shows his printed sermon on Psalm 50, "Miserere mei Deus" or "Have pity of me, oh God", (indeed a proper meditation subject for the first known loser of a chess game). His last work, in 1510, is a translation from Latin to Spanish, of the "Supplementum chronicarum" from Jacobus of Bergamo.

The literary production of Vinyoles suggests in the whole a strong Italian connection. Vinyoles belonged to a family of lawyers, and throughout his long life he occupied high political posts in the city. So Vinyoles can be defined as a losing chess player and a winning politician (13).

[Note 13: As early as 1468, Vinyoles was appointed a member of the City Council, an annual post proposed by a parish. The parish of St. Thomas nominated him in the years of 1468, 1476 and 1492, the parish of St. Andrew in 1469 and St. Mary's parish in 1491. The parishes of San Salvador, St. Bartolomew and St. John elected him for other posts. Twice in his political life of more than 48 years Narcis Vinyoles was appointed for the very important post of "Justicia Civil", the supreme judge in civil cases. And in 1495, a letter from King Ferdinand, speaking about Vinyoles in the most laudatory terms, recommends him for the position of "Justicia Criminal". This letter says: "Lo Rey.- Cambrer e Batle general: Per la bona relació que tenim de la suficiència, disposició, abilitat e probitat del amat nostre Narcis Vinyoles, ciutadà de aquixa nostra ciutat de València, per a regir e exercir qualsevol dels officis de aquella, vos diem, encarregam e manam quant estretament podem que si lo dit Narcis Vinyoles exira en hu dels tres redolins que us seran presentats lo sendemà de Sanct Tomas primer venidor per a la elecció faedora del officí de Justicia Criminal de la dita ciutat per a lany après immediatament següent de Mill.CCCCLXXXV, eligiau i nomeneu aquell per al dit officí axí com Nos en tal cas ara per favors lo elgim e nomenam..." (ARV, Cancelleria Reial, "Diversorum": Fernando II, años 1483-1496, legajo 2, vol 8. F. CCLXIII, Cit por Ferrando Francés, p. 21). Moreover, Vinyoles was for several years the chief administrator of the "Llotja" or New Market (1473, 1496, 1497 and 1516), a significant success in such an important mercantile city as Valencia was in those times. Vinyoles enjoyed the favour of King Ferdinand because he was a reliable servant of the royal politics of centralization. The Kingdom of Aragon was merged with the Kingdom of Castile. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were joining efforts to create an unitarian State, where linguistic differences were not desirable. So, Vinyoles, when translating the "Suplementum chronicarum" into the Castilian, explicitly abjures from Catalan as "a barbaric language." Still today, Catalanian scholars regard Vinyoles as betraying his own cultural roots, and it explains why the research on Vinyoles works is relatively rare.]

This is relevant to the dating of the "Scachs d'amor" manuscript, which seems to belong to the early youth of Vinyoles. First, because it is a manuscript and not a printed book, and the first printed book - "Obres e trobes en llaor de la Verge Maria", by Lambertus Palmart - appears in Valencia around 1474 (containing, by the way, poems of Fenollar, Castellví and Vinyoles). Secondly, because the literary play, where Vinyoles acts as Venus, does not look appropriate to the high politician Vinyoles was during his late years. Thirdly, because the manuscript does not mention the title of "mossen" when referring to Vinyoles and this title is, on the contrary, given to Fenollar alone. Castellvi, at least, has a "don" preceding his name, but Vinyoles is referred to with his name alone. Vinyoles appears with the title "lo magnífich" in 1488, in a literary contest in honour of Saint Christopher. Taken together, these facts point to a probable dating of the manuscript which should be set in the decades of 1470 or 1490 at the latest. In any case, in all probability, the "Scachs d'amor" manuscript must be older than Vicent's printed chess book of 1495.

Interconnections

The political activity of Castellvi, Fenollar and Vinyoles, and their good relationship with King Ferdinand, gives us a very plausible link to Lucena. The Lucenas belonged to the Aragonese crown (14). Juan de Lucena, the father of the chess player Lucena, was ambassador of King Ferdinand, and when the Inquisition prosecuted him, in Zaragoza in 1504, there is a dramatic letter still preserved wherein Juan de Lucena reminds the monarch of all his past services to the crown. It seems likely that chess circle of Valencia was known by the Lucena clan, if not as a group of chess players, as it could be, at least as a team of high ranking officers in Valencia. Also to be remembered is the fact that Lucena the chess player had travelled "in Italy and France" with his father before writing his chess book, and the port of Valencia was the most sensible departure route when going to Italy. Altogether, a probable connection between Lucena and the chess circle of Valencia looks decisively reinforced, and not only limited to the well-established link through the printer Leonard Hutz. The Lucena clan was of Jewish origins, and the "conversos" had a close network of contacts among them. There is a lot of literature about the "conversos". Their special condition must be understood as situated in a peculiar "no

man's land", in ideology as well as in religion. Under the pressure of their entourage, on the one hand, and of their roots, on the other, they were driven to an "escape forward" in a society, the Spanish society, which at the same time tried to destroy them. Seen globally, the conversos were decisive in almost every important event of this time, and Spanish history cannot be correctly understood without this particular fraction of society (15).

[Note 14: Lucena was assuredly not from Salamanca, because he stated so. Almost certainly he came from someplace in the kingdom of Aragon, probably the area close to Medinaceli and Almazán. In 1503, Juan de Lucena suffered again a trial together with his brother, directed by the "Inquisidor General" Hernando de Montemayor. There is a pathetic letter from Juan de Lucena to King Ferdinand describing the terrible situation of his family and reminding Ferdinand of the past services to the Aragonese crown. This letter, dated 26th December 1503, is included in the appendix of the History of the Inquisition by Llorente, and according to him, this letter is preserved in the Royal Library, estante 5, codex 54. (Juan Antonio Llorente "Historia crítica de la Inquisición en España". Madrid 1822. In the letter, written in Zaragoza, Juan de Lucena gives several data permitting us a geographical location of this particular clan of Lucenas and defining some aspects of Lucena's biography. For instance, he says that the Inquisitor had "always hated my family, for many years". This Inquisitor was previously priest in the city of Almazán, near Medinaceli. Juan de Lucena was in those years secretary of the Duke of Medinaceli, so there is a coincidence of clues. To complete the circle, the Court of Prince John was based in Almazán. So, the most probable birthplace, or at least the domicile of the Lucena clan was around Almazán and Medinaceli, which, by the way, had a high percentage of conversos as characteristic of an area on the border between Aragon and Castile. According to the letter, the Lucenas have proved during many years their loyalty to the crown of Aragon, and had served efficiently King Ferdinand in many issues. The brother of Juan de Lucena who was in jail was the man in charge of the confiscation of all properties of the Jews expelled from Zaragoza in 1492. The Lucena clan was submitted to Aragonese laws, in civil as well as in ecclesiastic matters, but with the exemptions derived from his high post in the Court. To this refers the complaining letter of Juan the Lucena when saying that the Inquisitor Hernando de Montemayor "always hated me and my family because he always wanted to have us under his power". When writing the letter, 26th December 1503, Juan de Lucena is in Zaragoza "together with my sons", also including the chess player. In January 1507, as indicated by Cossio in the foreword of the facsimile edition of the "Repetición", Juan de Lucena was already dead, because the Duke of Medinaceli appoints as administrator of Puerto de Santa Maria "Jeronimo de Lucena, son of Juan, to pay the good services of the latter." (R. Calvo "Lucena, La evasión en ajedrez del converso Calisto" Perea Ediciones. El Toboso 1997)].

[Note15: Several historians have pointed repeatedly to this, starting with Américo Castro's "The Historical Reality of Spain". A basic reference is the work of Amador de los Rios ("Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal"). The crucial paradox of the conversos, as Gilman says, is their placement, partly central and partly marginal, inside society. Or, as the converso Hernando de Pulgar, official chronicler of the Reyes Católicos put it: "I do not understand how you manage it. You reject us as relatives, but you choose us as lords". It is altogether amazing to consider the number of conversos in every structure and area of the Spanish society of the time.]

Castellvi was related to conversos, as a son of the "conversa" Violant d'Esplugues. Maybe Fenollar too, because some connotations of his name. Vinyoles was surely connected with another well-known group of "conversos", the famous Santangel clan, and therefore, a relationship between the Lucenas and the Valencian group seems highly probable. Vinyoles had to rescue his wife, who was charged of being "judaizante" from the furies of the Inquisition (16).

[Note 16: Jordi Ventura "Inquisició espanyola I cultura renaixentista al País valencià" Ed. Tres I Quatre, Valencia 1978.]

Part of the political success of Vinyoles could be due to this close connection with an influential family of "conversos", the Santangel family. Luis de Santangel was the most important banker in the Kingdom of Aragon, including the Italian parts of this kingdom. King Ferdinand relied very much not only on his money but also on his advice, and Santangel was the one who

backed financially the first expedition of Columbus. Vinyoles was a relative of Santangel since he married Brianda de Santangel, the niece of the great banker. The couple lived in 1513 in the parish of Saint Valery. Endogamy was a constant among the conversos, and according to Caro Baroja (17) not only because of natural attraction towards persons of the same kind, sharing the same "Weltanschauung" and the same sense of humour, but also for safety (less risk of being betrayed) and in many cases, common properties of material inheritances.

[Note 17: Julio Caro Baroja "Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea". Madrid 1978, III bands.]

The marriage seems to have been one of those dictated by political convenience, with a certain difference of age between Vinyoles and Brianda. Vinyoles died in 1517, but Brianda was still alive in 1543, when she wrote her testament stating that her marriage with Vinyoles had no children. This impression is reinforced by one of the love poems of Vinyoles, when Fenollar asked him a puzzle about the name of Brianda. The answer of Vinyoles was: "Hoynt tal nom, hoy cant de sirena/ Fent-m adormir l'esperit sensual/ Brianda, crech, es de tal font la vena/ Y aquet dins mi, ab voluntat serena/ Viu y viura lo terme natural" ("When hearing such name, I hear a siren chant which makes my sensual spirit sleep. Brianda, I believe, is the vein of this fountain, which, inside me, with serene desire, lives and shall live out its natural term.") Brianda was the daughter of Berenguer de Santangel, brother of Luis. The eldest brother of Brianda, also named Luis, was abbot at St. John of Fiore in Naples in 1511. This branch of the Santangel clan lived in Naples for several years, which explains the Italian connections of Vinyoles. As a matter of fact, Vinyoles spoke not only Catalan, Castillian and Latin, but also Italian, in which he was fluent enough to write verses. One of his poems in the competition in honour of the Virgin Mary of 1474 was in "lingua toscana", beginning with the verse "Dilecta da Dio, obediente ançilla". In the contest in honour of the Immaculate Conception (1486), there is another "Tuscan" poem of Vinyoles, beginning with the verse "Non po sentire lo insensibili morto". So, we can establish yet another relevant link, connecting the Valencian chess circle with southern Italy. This may explain why the Vicent book, with problems of modern chess, was known by Cardan (18) and Salvio (19) as late as the 17th. century. It also explains the Valencian influence, so far completely neglected by scholars, in Italian chess works as important as the famous "Scacchia Ludus" of Vida, where Greek gods also appear playing chess in verses. The rapid spread of the new way of playing chess in Italy can be more easily explained through these links than through the book of Lucena, which remains unmentioned by the later authors from Damiano on.

[Note 18: The physician, astrologist and humanist Girolamus Cardanus (1501-1576). Cardano or Cardan (inventor, among other things, of the wheel transmission known in mechanics as "cardan transmission") gives an important clue about the content of the lost incunabulum of Vicent (1495). A brilliant doctor and mathematician, Cardan spent in Milano most of his life. He was a welcomed guest in many European courts of the time, though always under suspicion of harbouring in himself "a genius and a demon". He left 249 written works, which are collected in the ten volumes of his "Opera Omnia" Lyon 1663. Many other writings went lost. Cardan wrote also a chess book, which likewise disappeared. In Chapter XIX of "De vita propria" Vol. I, p. 14 Cardano complains about the time he lost by playing chess and "io capisco di essere degno di censura per la smodata passione da me risposta negli scacchi e nei dadi. Giocai nell'una e nell'altra maniera per molto tempo, a dli scacchi per più di 40 anni e ai dadi per circa 25.; ne solo per tanti anni, ma, ho vergogna di dirlo, in quegli anni quasi tuttii giorni; e cosi perdei insieme reputazione, denaro e tempo". In his will dated 18th January 1566 gives as advice to Fazio (son of his executed son Gianbattista) to avoid all kinds of games. The chess treatise of Cardanus should have been written between 1521-22 and according to his own words was finished in 1524. The text began with the sentence "Non per vitio alcuno" ("It is not a matter of vice"). Cardanus seems very proud of his achievements, due to the big amount of chess materials included in his book. "40 combinazioni, i tranelli che in esse si possono fare, le regole aritmetiche per vincere e un modo cosi mirabile che i molti i quali lessero il libro, da ciò trassero per noi fiducia in più seri argomenti, ammirandone l'impegno e la meravigliosa abilità". Some of the positions must have been rather complicated: "per quanto io trovi ancora nel mio libro sugli scacchi molte e belle trovate, parecchie tuttavia andarono perdute, essendomi dovuto occupare di altro; ve ne furono poi 8 o 10 che non potei più ricostruire e che mi sembrava sorpassare veramente ogni umana destrezza e ingegnosità di invenzione." The important point is that in his

treatise "De rerum varietate" (1557), Cardanus remarks that he composed his chess book with great effort, and makes several comments about the best way of printing diagrams. The practical problem was to print a black piece on a black square, and Cardan suggests a sensible way of solving it: instead of making the square completely black, it is better to make the square "striped". The Latin paragraph reads: "Loci nigri lineis nigris, quasi cancellis sunt distinguendi...latruncolorum vero figurae nigrae quidem tota superficie atramento tingantur..". Cardan mentions as a bad example that "those who printed the Spanish book confounded everything": "Qui hispanicum librum emiserunt, omnia confunderunt". The question is, which Spanish book is Cardan referring to? Lucena's book contains no mention of his printers, and only typographical research has established recently that the printers were Leonard Hutz and Lope Sanz. But on the contrary, Vicent's book stated clearly in the colophon that the book had been printed by Lope de Roca "Alemany" and Pere Trincher. So, Cardan was obviously referring to Vicent's book, and this book was therefore well known in Italy in the middle of the XVI century. This point suggests that at least part of the 100 chess problems compiled by Vicent were already modern chess. Bibliography: Angelo Bellini "L'autobiografia di Girolamo Cardano" Milano 1929, Adriano Chicco "La vita scacchistica di Girolamo Cardano" en Fortuna degli Scacchi nell 1500, Milano 1946 .Alessandro Sanvito "L. introvabile manoscritto di Girolamo Cardano" en L. Italia Scacchistica N. 1058, January 1994, pp. 6-7 Oye Ornstein "Cardano, the gambling scholar", Princeton 1953, Franco Pratesi "Le intelligenti cavalcate del Cardano" Scacco. Bergamo 1993, Van der Linde. "Geschichte..., II, pp. 49-50. Von der Lasa "Zur Geschichte..." pp. 181-183(19).]

[Note 19: In his very rare book "Il giuoco degli scacchi", Naples 1723, (which had its first partial edition in 1604), Salvio describes a chess match between Michele di Mauro and Tommaso Capputi. The astute Capputi prepared for the match by reading the chess book written by his opponent. On the contrary, Michele di Mauro used for his training other chess books: "...prende il Bove, il Rui Lopes e il Carrera, L'Alemanni, il Gironi e gli altri erranti..." These books are known: "il Bove" (The Ox) is Paolo Boi's book. Ruy López, Carrera and the Spaniard Girón also had chess books in use. But no one knows "L'Alemanni". Chicco deduced that Salvio, who frequently misread names, was referring to Vicent's book, confounding the name of the printer Lope de Roca "Alemany" with the name of the author. So, the book of Vicent was still known and used in Sicily in the 17th century.]

In his very rare book "Il giuoco degli scacchi", Naples 1723, (which had its first partial edition in 1604), Salvio describes a chess match between Michele di Mauro and Tommaso Capputi. The astute Capputi prepared for the match by reading the chess book written by his opponent. On the contrary, Michele di Mauro used for his training other chess books: "...prende il Bove, il Rui Lopes e il Carrera, L'Alemanni, il Gironi e gli altri erranti..." These books are known: "il Bove" (The Ox) is Paolo Boi's book. Ruy López, Carrera and the Spaniard Girón also had chess books in use. But no one knows "L'Alemanni". Chicco deduced that Salvio, who frequently misread names, was referring to Vicent's book, confounding the name of the printer Lope de Roca "Alemany" with the name of the author. So, the book of Vicent was still known and used in Sicily in the 17th century.

Summary

Almost all the early works on modern chess are coming from Spain, and they are related in many ways to the chess circle of Valencia during the last part of the 15th century. In spite of certain reluctances of past chess historians, I don't see any reason to support any other birthplace for the modern game of chess. The origins of modern chess are in Valencia.

Ricardo Calvo,©1998. All rights reserved.