

Understanding Maroczy Structures

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**Adrian Mikhalchishin
& Georg Mohr**

Thinkers Publishing 2019



Key to Symbols

!	a good move	±	White stands slightly better
?	a weak move	∓	Black stands slightly better
!!	an excellent move	±	White has a serious advantage
??	a blunder	∓	Black has a serious advantage
!?	an interesting move	+−	White has a decisive advantage
?!	a dubious move	−+	Black has a decisive advantage
□	only move	→	with an attack
N	novelty	↑	with initiative
⊙	lead in development	↔	with counterplay
⊙	zugzwang	Δ	with the idea of
=	equality	△	better is
∞	unclear position	≤	worse is
∞	with compensation for the sacrificed material	+	check
		#	mate

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Preface

"Geza Maroczy left a strange legacy: the discovery that certain pawn formations can impose a near decisive cramp on one's opponent."

Robert James Fischer

Aron Nimzowitsch wrote that studying the middlegame in chess means studying typical positions. Typical positions means typical pawn structures, and studying pawn structures means studying strategy. Middlegame strategy literature is rather poor. We have worked hard trying to provide the best possible material with different colleagues: *Isolani Strategy* by Alexander Beliavsky/Adrian Mikhalchishin/Oleg Stetsko, *Hanging Pawns* by Adrian Mikhalchishin, and *The Center* by Adrian Mikhalchishin/Georg Mohr. Other important books were written by Sergey Shipov, with his two-volume *The Complete Hedgehog*, and Ivan Sokolov, with his series *Chess Middlegame Strategies*.

So, here is another try at researching typical plans. The authors, both long-term chess trainers, decided to research ideas that are important in the Maroczy structure for both sides. The Maroczy structure was played by such greats as Bobby Fischer, Tigran Petrosian, Bent Larsen and many others.

We would like to present this topic in a slightly different way. Chess players and also trainers usually do not think as deeply as they should in order to achieve better results. We would like to present ideas for both White and Black and this book is written without any bias as to colour.

We hope that our study will help players and readers improve their understanding of chess. The authors do not imagine that our book will cover every aspect of the presented topic. Knowledge about this structure is so important and wide that it is virtually impossible to explain every detail in a single book.

Moreover, there are countless different perspectives on particular problems or procedures in this structure and we could not take into account every one of them. However, we have wished to write a book which would offer a 360-degree view of the Maroczy structure, enable individual study by any aspiring student, and help trainers in their work. Advice from experienced coaches (we have boldly put ourselves into this category) is always welcome for successful chess training.

Dear readers, we would like to believe that after you have read this book, you will make your own contribution with your games and analyses to the development of this system...

Yours,

Adrian Mikhalchishin and Georg Mohr

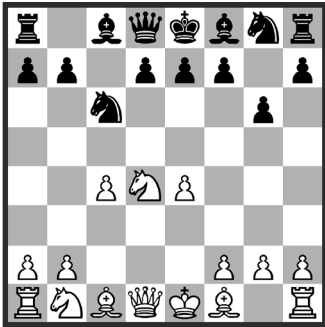
Part I

Introduction to the Maroczy



What is the Maroczy Structure?

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♗c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 g6 5. c4



Position after: 5. c4

Above one can see the structure which has been given the name Maroczy. Here it has arisen from Simagin's variation of the Sicilian Defence, more commonly known as the Accelerated Dragon.

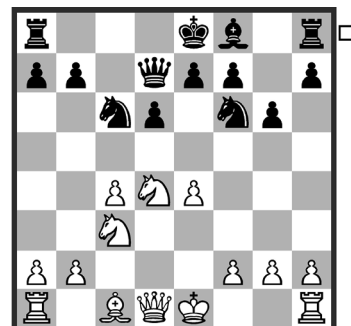
After the move 5.c4 White enters the Maroczy Variation; with this move, White neglects the development of pieces, and instead strives to gain space in the centre whilst limiting Black's counterplay. Black, with his last move (4...g6) has generously given White free rein in the centre. This would not have been possible if Black had played the more conventional 4...♗f6, but Black is not yielding the centre out of courtesy – he is looking for a fight!

Rapid development of opening theory led the Maroczy structure to be at the forefront of many opening variations, producing typical positions which we will analyse later.

The Maroczy structure is defined first and foremost by White's pawns occupying both the e4 and c4 squares. The advanced pawns lead to White gaining a spatial advantage, but White's pawns equally pose a problem for himself, as they limit the activity of the light-squared bishop and the dark squares may become weak. Black's counterplay may seem to be limited, since White controls the centre; however, Black can carry out various pawn advances such as ...f7-f5 or ...b7-b5 trying to undermine White's centre. The Maroczy structure is also defined by Black's pieces, a fianchettoed bishop on g7, a position without a c-pawn (after d2-d4, cxd4), and a knight on c6.

As mentioned above, this structure can emerge from various different openings. We know many transpositions from the Sicilian and King's Indian Defences and the English Opening.

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. ♖b5+ ♗d7 4. ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 5. c4 ♗f6 6. ♘c3 g6 7. d4 cxd4 8. ♗xd4 ♗c6



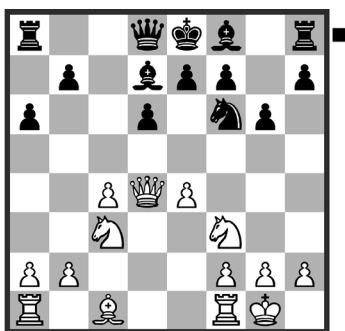
Position after: 8... ♗c6

(see diagram previous page)

The Moscow Variation in the Sicilian Defence.

Another way to reach the Maroczy structure from the same variation:

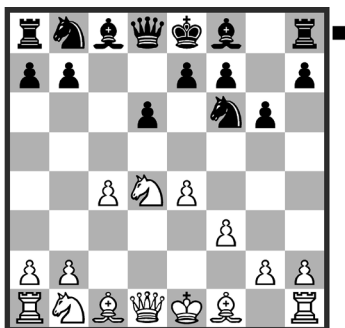
1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bb5+ Nd7 4. d4
5. cxd4 6. Qxd4 a6 7. Bxd7+ Qxd7 8. 0-0
9. Nf6 10. c4 g6 11. Nc3



Position after: 9. Nc3

Or another Sicilian that is popular nowadays:

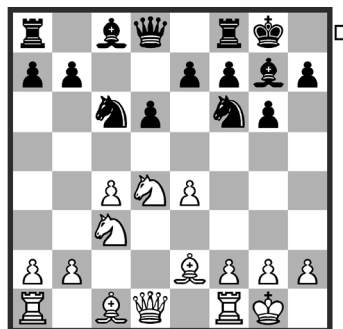
1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4
5. Nf6 6. f3 g6 7. c4



Position after: 6. c4

The King's Indian Defence:

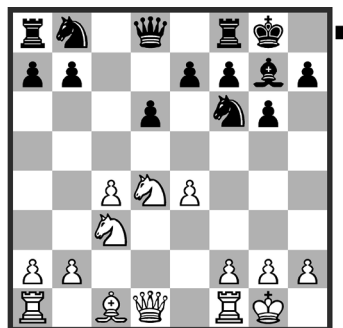
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6
5. Nf3 0-0 6. Qe2 c5 7. 0-0 cxd4 8.
9. Nxd4 Nc6



Position after: 8... Nc6

Or:

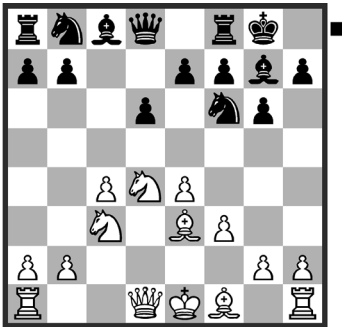
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6
5. Nf3 0-0 6. Qe2 Ng4 7. Ng1 Qxe2
8. Nxe2 c5 9. 0-0 cxd4 10. Nxd4



Position after: 10. Nxd4

Or:

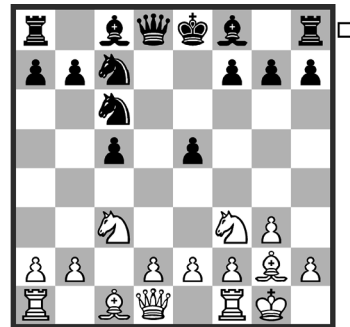
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6
5. Nf3 0-0 6. Qe3 c5 7. Nge2 cxd4 8.
9. Nxd4



Position after: 8. Nxd4

Transpositions from other openings are also possible. Finally, there are Maroczy structures with colours reversed, like this one from the English Opening:

1. c4 c5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. Nf3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. g3 Nc6 6. Bg2 Nc7 7. 0-0 e5



Position after: 7... e5

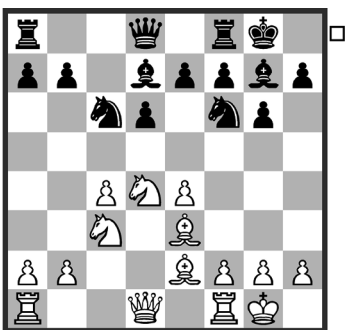


Typical Positions

By studying the typical positions that regularly occur in the Maroczy structure one can learn and design plans for many positions. In the opening Black aims to immediately put pressure on the d4 knight with moves such as ... Nc6 and ... Bg7 . At this moment White faces the first turning point in the game: whether to defend the knight in the centre or retreat. If moved back, the knight will usually go to c2 but other retreats are possible, such as b3 or e2 (Moscow Variation in the Sicilian Defence).

White defends the knight on d4

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. c4 Bg7 6. Qe3 Nf6 7. Nc3 0-0 8. Qe2 d6 9. 0-0 Qd7



Position after: 9... Qd7

In this position White plays for a spatial advantage. It is too early to decide on a final plan (see part II “Typical methods

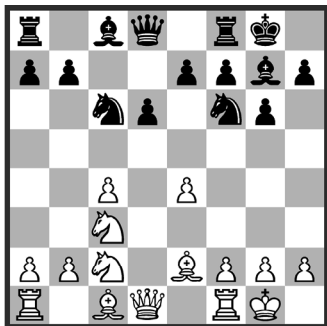
of play for White”) so he is advised to keep his options open. As a rule, Black usually aims to exchange on d4 with the move ... Nxd4 , and this will be followed by ... Qc6 . This “mini plan” both puts pressure on the centre and fights against White’s space advantage. Black will then aim to manoeuvre his knight to the queenside starting with the move ... Nd7 . The knight will then, after the move ...a7-a5, be placed on c5. As soon as possible White should secure his pawns in the centre with f2-f3 and b2-b3, preparing to play on both flanks, whilst finding time to move a knight to the outpost d5. As a rule, Black aims to exchange the dark-squared bishops.

White has to solve yet another problem: Black is usually threatening to play ... Ng4 . The possible move h2-h3 unnecessarily weakens the defence around the white king, while Qxg4 also has its demerits; it is not to everybody’s liking to play without the pair of bishops.

Black can also opt for ... Ng4 in the following way: 1.e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Bg7 6. Qe3 Nf6 7. Nc3 Ng4 !, which exploits the undefended position of the opponent’s knight on d4. After 8. Qxg4 Nxd4 9. Qd1 Ne6 Black somewhat reduces White’s space advantage; in such positions the exchanges of pieces will always favour the side which has less space to play with.

White retreats the knight to c2

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4
g6 5. c4 ♗g7 6. ♘c2 ♘f6 7. ♘c3 0-0 8.
♗e2 d6 9. 0-0



Position after: 9. 0-0

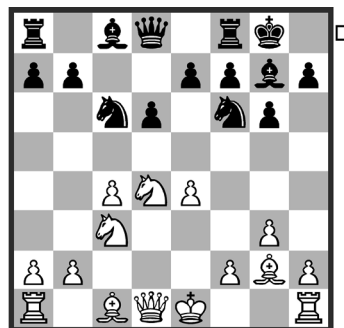
Following this move White seriously engages in the fight for the d5-square, where he attempts to establish a stronghold for the knight (♘c3-d5). After an exchange on d5, the other knight will take his partner's place. In order to carry out this plan, White will need to spend considerable time, therefore, he may face some difficulties defending his pawns. Firstly the c4-pawn: White should be reluctant to play b2-b3 as this will weaken the long diagonal, and so he must defend c4 with pieces. Black will sometimes develop the g8-knight to h6, where it supports the ...f7-f5 thrust attacking White's centre. This knight move also gives a free hand to the dark-squared bishop. Black can afford to limit the activity of the knight, when the bishop will have the added option of capturing the knight on c3, crippling

White's queenside pawns.

Bishop development to the g2-square

Another important decision for White is connected with the development of the light-squared bishop. While it is common to develop this piece to the e2-square, on occasion White may deploy the use of a kingside fianchetto.

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4
♗g7 5. c4 ♘f6 6. ♘c3 d6 7. g3 0-0 8.
♗g2 ♘c6



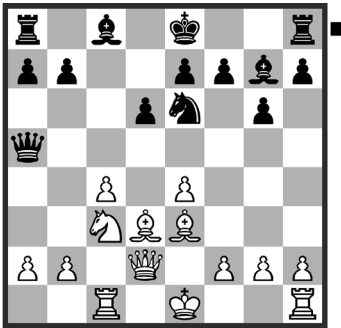
Position after: 8... ♘c6

This was the favoured method of development used (80 years ago!), by the sixth World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik, whereas today this system is rarely seen in practice.

There is no advantage in developing the bishop to such a square since on e2 the bishop is capable of carrying out a greater number of useful operations, such as safeguarding the weak c4-pawn.

Bishop development to the d3-square

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4
g6 5. c4 ♙g7 6. ♙e3 ♘f6 7. ♘c3 ♘g4
8. ♚xg4 ♘xd4 9. ♚d1 ♘e6 10. ♖c1
♚a5 11. ♚d2 d6 12. ♙d3

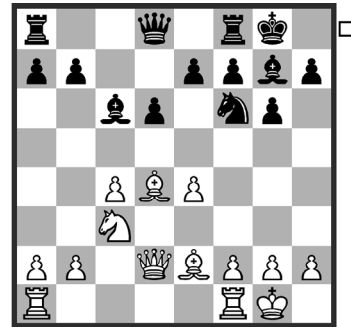


Position after: 12. ♙d3

This system is connected with direct action on the kingside: White desires to carry out the f2-f4-f5 thrust as soon as possible, looking for attacking chances in a tactical confrontation. However, this way of developing the bishop causes substantial trouble when faced with the unpleasant ...♘c5 jump, when to save his light-squared bishop White must spend another tempo retreating it.

Choosing between f3 and ♙d3

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4
g6 5. c4 ♙g7 6. ♙e3 ♘f6 7. ♘c3 d6 8.
♙e2 0-0 9. 0-0 ♙d7 10. ♚d2 ♘xd4 11.
♙xd4 ♙c6

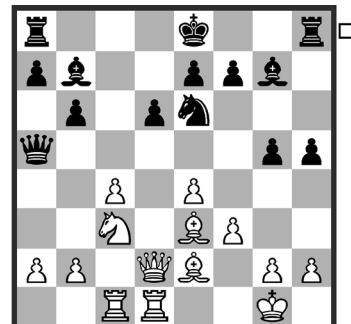


Position after: 11... ♙c6

White now stands at an important crossroads: should he defend the e4-pawn with f2-f3, a slower approach where White will look for queenside expansion, or with the more aggressive ♙d3, leading to plans connected with the kingside.

Dark-square strategy (...♚a5 and ...g5)

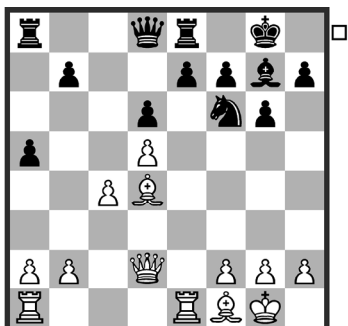
1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4
g6 5. c4 ♙g7 6. ♙e3 ♘f6 7. ♘c3 ♘g4
8. ♚xg4 ♘xd4 9. ♚d1 ♘e6 10. ♚d2
♚a5 11. ♖c1 d6 12. ♙e2 b6 13. 0-0
♙b7 14. f3 g5 15. ♖fd1 h5



Position after: 15... h5

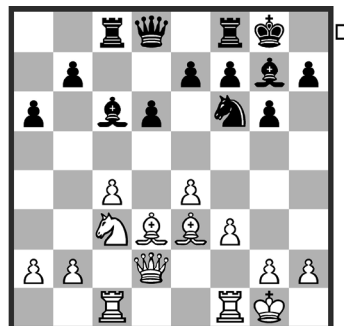
The classical variation with ...♔a5 and the attempt to establish a blockade on the dark-squares. Black will place either the queen or the bishop on the e5-square and will aim for breakthroughs in the centre. Against this blockade White will seek opportunities on the queenside with ♞d5, b4, etc.

Capturing exd5

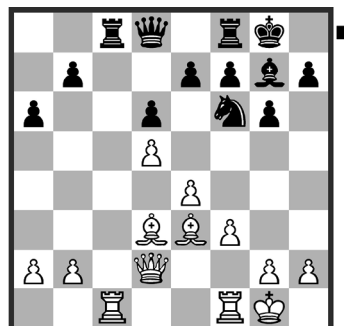


Yet another typical position. White holds the pair of bishops and mounts pressure on the open e-file. Black will aim to carry out an exchange of dark-squared bishops, leading to an endgame with “good knight vs bad bishop”. The result of the game is usually linked closely with the e-file: as long as Black can successfully defend the e-file there are no threats; if White can dominate there, however, he will prevail.

Capturing cxd5



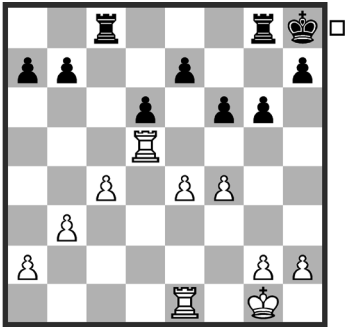
1. ♞d5 ♗xd5 2. cxd5



Position after: 2. cxd5

Once Black has weakened his queenside with a-pawn or b-pawn manoeuvres White will usually capture cxd5, allowing the bishops to prepare a breakthrough along the c-file. Typical endgames are closely linked to the middlegame. Here we will consider only two endgames, which will demonstrate the vital needs of the opposing sides in the Maroczy structure.

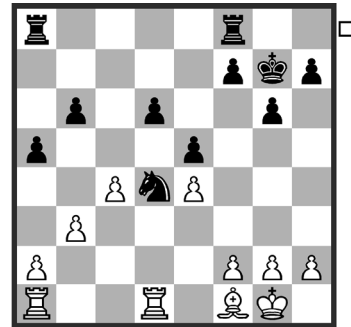
Capturing with a piece on d5



A classical game (Botvinnik – Toran, Palma de Mallorca 1967, which will be analysed in detail later), presenting a fantastic position for White, who has achieved a considerable spatial advantage, which is only reinforced by the absence of minor pieces. Black is completely lifeless and must simply wait for the e4-e5 advance. This central break will cause serious changes in the pawn structure, leading to further weakness in the Black ranks. It is hard to predict the final outcome, but such a position is generally enough for White to stand victorious. As Black isn't eager to cooperate in the depressing reality of hoping for a draw, he will work hard to maintain a pair of minor pieces on the board.

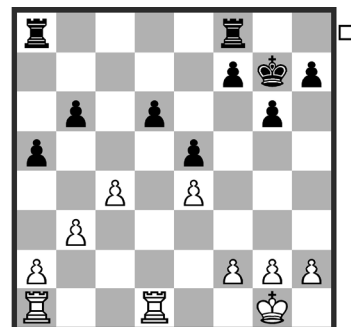
A fabulous position for Black

(see diagram next column)



Black has what can only be described as a dream position; a practically invincible knight, which can only be neutralized if White were to sacrifice a rook. The knight dominates the bishop, while the presence of queens in such a position is not particularly important. Black has exchanged all the minor pieces except for a single pair. This gives the position a totally new dimension. The position on the previous diagram without the minor pieces turns the evaluation upside down.

A fabulous position for White





History

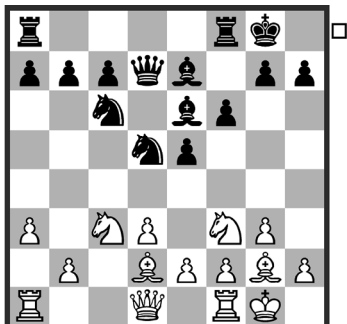
Mikhail Botvinnik recalled that he mastered play in positions with the Maroczy pawn structure by studying fundamental games of the great Akiba Rubinstein, a master of positional play. It was only after some years that Botvinnik found out, to his surprise, that Mikhail Chigorin, who was as great a player as Rubinstein, had also played the same way, albeit two decades before and with reversed colours! Chigorin had also demonstrated the correct way in which to play. It is quite amazing that no database or collection of games has yet been able to produce a single game played by Geza Maroczy as White, despite the system having received the name of the great Hungarian master...

♁ Mieses, Jacques

♁ Chigorin, Mikhail

♁ Barmen 1905

1. g3 e5 2. c4 ♘c6 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. d3 d5
5. cxd5 ♘xd5 6. ♙g2 ♙e6 7. ♘f3 ♙e7
8. 0-0 0-0 9. ♙d2 ♚d7 10. a3 f6

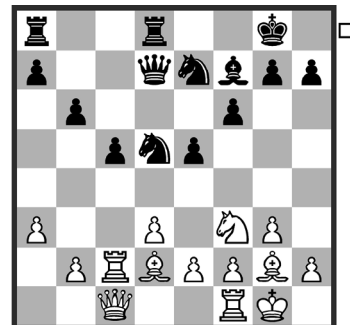


Position after: 10... f6

11. ♘e4 ♙f7 12. ♚c1 ♚fd8 13. ♘c5
♙xc5

This exchange favours Black very much, since Black will continue by placing his pawns on the dark squares, when they will not now restrict the dark-squared bishop.

14. ♚xc5 ♘ce7 15. ♚c1 b6 16. ♚c2 c5



Position after: 16... c5

A typical Maroczy structure. White may be missing the knight on c3 but has his pawns placed exactly as in a classical Maroczy variation.

17. h4?

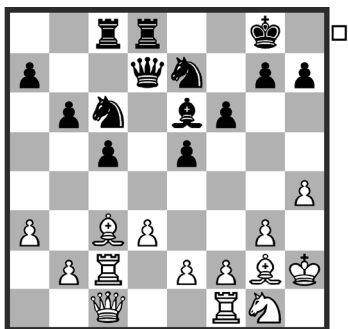
In such positions, it is recommended to employ wing advances against the Maroczy structure. The plan should be to undermine the pawn centre with the help of f2-f4, b2-b4 or e2-e3 and d3-d4.

Botvinnik recommended here 17. b4 cxb4 18. axb4 a5 19. bxa5 bxa5 20. ♚a3 a4 21. ♚b1, with unclear and complicated play. White decided otherwise.

17... ♖ac8 18. ♙c3?

Again, it would be better, according to Botvinnik, to play 18. b4. Better late than never!

18... ♞c6 19. ♚h2 ♙e6 20. ♞g1 ♞de7



Position after: 20... ♞de7

Here Black has a choice of three typical plans:

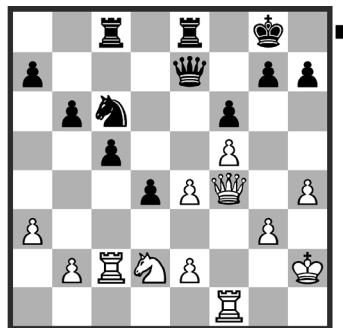
A) ...f6 –f5 –f4.

B) ...♞d4, ♙xd4, ...cxd4, with the opening of the c-file.

C) ...♞d4, ♙xd4, ...exd4, with the opening of the e-file, and then starting an attack against the weakness on the e2-square.

In case of options B and C Black should not hesitate, but should immediately move the knight to d4.

21. f4 ♞d4! 22. ♙xd4 exd4 23. ♙e4 ♙d5 24. f5 ♞c6 25. ♚f4 ♖e8 26. ♞f3 ♙xe4 27. dxe4 ♚e7 28. ♞d2



Position after: 28. ♞d2

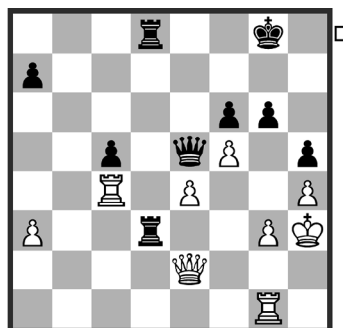
28... ♖cd8

Botvinnik considered 28... ♞e5 to be better, with a significant advantage.

29. b4 ♞e5 30. bxc5 bxc5 31. ♚h3 h5
32. e3 dxe3?

Botvinnik recommended 32... d3!.

33. ♚xe3 ♖d3 34. ♚e2 ♖ed8 35. ♞c4 ♞xc4 36. ♖xc4 ♚e5 37. ♖g1 g6!



Position after: 37... g6!

38. ♚f2 ♖8d4 39. ♖xd4 ♚xd4 40. ♚a2+?

It would have been better to exchange

on d4, however, Black would maintain an advantage here as well.

40... c4 41. fxe6 ♖d7+

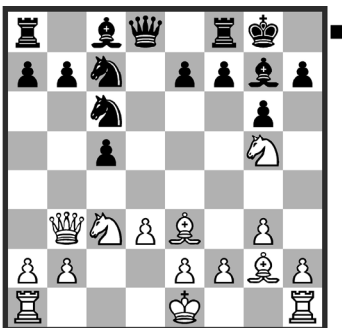
0-1

Rubinstein usually played the move ...♘d4 with somewhat different intentions; his games are hard to place among classical examples of the Maroczy structure.

Let us see how the great Akiba invented this plan for the first time!

- ♁ Zubarev, Nikolay
- ♁ Rubinstein, Akiba
- ♁ Moscow 1925

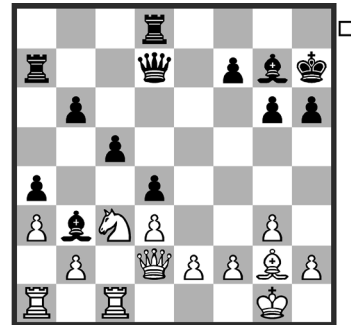
1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. ♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5 5. g3 g6 6. ♙g2 ♙g7 7. ♚b3 ♘c7 8. ♘g5 0-0 9. d3 ♘c6 10. ♙e3



Position after: 10. ♙e3

10... ♘d4 11. ♙xd4 ♚xd4 12. ♘f3

♚b4 13. 0-0 a5 14. ♜ac1 ♙e6 15. ♚c2 a4 16. ♘d2 ♜a7 17. a3 ♚d4 18. ♘d1 b6 19. ♘f3 ♚d7 20. ♜e1 ♙b3 21. ♚d2 ♜d8 22. ♘c3 h6 23. ♙f1 ♚h7 24. ♙g2 ♘b5 25. ♜a1 ♘d4 26. ♜ec1 e5 27. ♘xd4 exd4



Position after: 27... exd4

28. ♘d1 ♜e8 29. f4 ♚e6 30. ♙f3 ♜ae7 31. ♘f2 ♙d5 32. ♙xd5 ♚xd5 33. ♜e1 ♚h5 34. ♚d1 ♜xe2 35. ♜xe2 ♚xe2 36. ♚xa4 ♜e6 37. ♜b1 ♚f3 38. ♚d1 ♜e2 39. ♚f1 c4 40. b4 cxd3 41. ♜b3 ♜xf2

0-1

The first classical game concerning our topic remains Botvinnik's masterpiece, played in 1927. The sixth World Champion was barely 16 years old at the time, however, he still managed to play the game in emphatic style. Despite the fact that the game remained obscure to the wider world, Botvinnik placed it in his famous book, and Robert Fischer held it in high esteem.

♁ Botvinnik, Mikhail
 ♚ Kholodkevich, Khrisogon
 🌐 Moscow 1927

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6
 5. g3

Nowadays this appears rarely in practice.

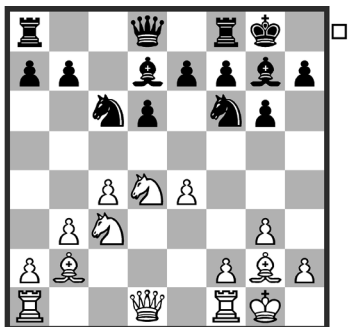
5... 0-0 6. ♙g2 ♘bd7 7. ♘ge2 c5

More logical would be 7...e5, aiming to block in the g2-bishop.

8. 0-0 cxd4

This move is premature, since Black only strengthens his opponent's light-squared bishop.

9. ♘xd4 ♘e5 10. b3 ♙d7 11. ♙b2
 ♘c6



Position after: 11... ♘c6

Here we encounter the classical Maroczy structure, where White has developed with a double fianchetto. White,

as in many Maroczy positions, has a space advantage, but does this mean he is better?

12. ♘d5!

Here this positional manoeuvre is applied, and later it becomes typical for similar situations. "In those years (and in a couple of years that followed), I employed this manoeuvre, which I learned from one of Rubinstein's games, with good results" -- Botvinnik.

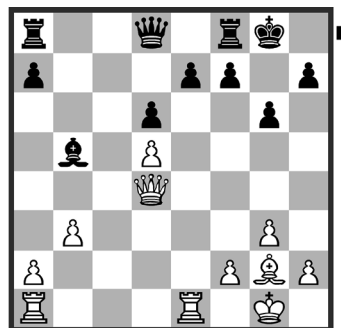
12... ♘xd5 13. exd5

13. cxd5 would be unreasonable since the c-file offers no squares where White can penetrate.

13... ♘xd4 14. ♙xd4 b5 15. ♙xg7
 ♙xg7 16. ♙d4+ ♙g8 17. cxb5

A bit unoriginal and standard, better and by all means more principled would have been 17. c5.

17... ♙xb5 18. ♙fe1



Position after: 18. ♙fe1

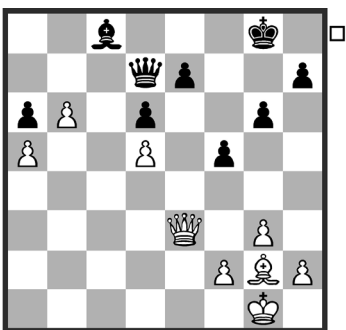
18... ♔d7?

Black would be better off attacking immediately with 18...a5 followed by 19...a4. In reality, Black finds himself without any real counterplay.

19. ♖e3?!

It appears as though both players have failed to understand the situation. That is quite understandable, this being one of the first games featuring the Maroczy structure. Considerably better and closer to the spirit of the position would have been 19. a4 ♘a6 20. b4, with the idea of b4-b5.

19... f5 20. a4 ♘a6 21. ♖ae1 ♗f7 22. b4 ♘b7 23. b5 a6 24. b6 ♖c8 25. a5 ♗c5 26. ♖c3 ♖xc3 27. ♔xc3 ♗f8 28. ♔e3 ♗e8 29. ♖c1 ♖c8 30. ♖xc8+ ♘xc8



Position after: 30... ♘xc8

31. ♔e6+!

White is winning, and soon realized his advantage.

31... ♔xe6 32. dxe6 ♔g7 33. b7 ♘xb7 34. ♘xb7 ♔f6 35. ♘xa6 ♔xe6 36. ♘c8+

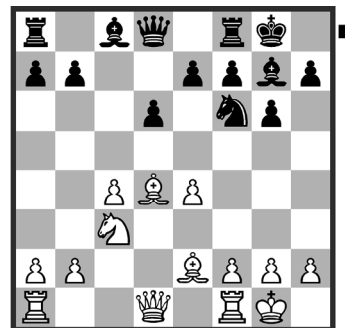
1-0

Prior to Botvinnik other leading players also encountered the Maroczy structure, and in their games they have generated important plans and ideas. Especially useful are the plans which they chose in the following game.

♟ Tartakower, Saviely

♞ Mieses, Jacques

♜ Vienna 1908



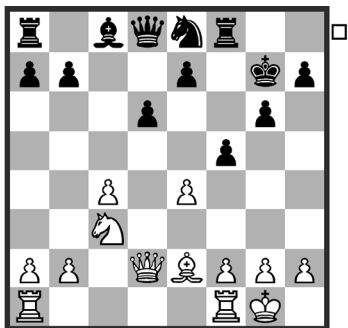
10... ♞e8?

Just think about the way grandmasters could play at that time! Correct is the far more natural, 10... ♞d7.

11. ♘xg7

Better was 11. f4.

11... ♔xg7 12. ♔d2 f5!



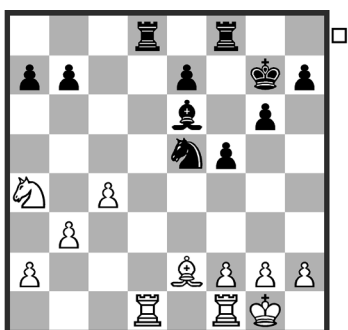
Position after: 12... f5!

The correct plan of play against the pawns at c4 and e4.

13. e5

Stronger is 13. f4, and later 14. ♖ae1, increasing the pressure along the e-file.

13... ♙e6 14. ♖ad1 ♚b6 15. exd6 ♘xd6 16. b3 ♜ad8 17. ♚f4 ♘f7 18. ♘a4 ♚a5 19. ♚e3 ♚e5 20. ♚xe5+ ♘xe5



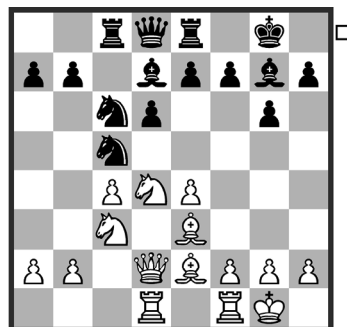
Position after: 20... ♘xe5

Black gradually equalized and eventually drew the game.

½-½ (47)

♙ Nimzowitsch, Aron
♚ Capablanca, Jose Raul
🌐 Karlsbad 1929

1. c4 ♘f6 2. ♘c3 c5 3. ♘f3 ♘c6 4. d4 cxd4 5. ♘xd4 g6 6. e4 ♙g7 7. ♘c2 0-0 8. ♙e2 d6 9. 0-0 ♘d7 10. ♙e3 ♘c5 11. ♘d4 ♙d7 12. ♚d2 ♜c8 13. ♜ad1 ♜e8?



Position after: 13... ♜e8?

Preparing to face the possible ♘d5 advance, but better would be 13... ♘xd4 followed by ...a7-a5.

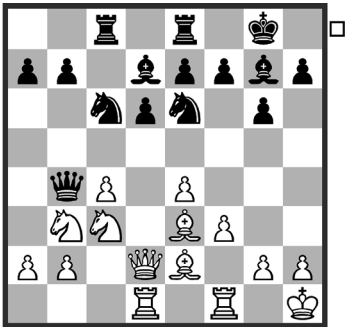
14. ♚h1?

Correct is 14. b3, with positional play, or 14.f4.

14... ♚a5 15. f3 ♘e6

A modern master would continue with 15... ♘xd4 16. ♙xd4 a6, with the plan of developing an initiative on the queenside with the advance ...b7-b5.

16. ♘b3 ♚b4



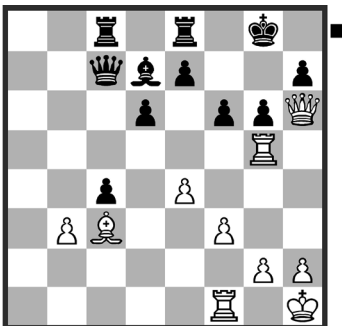
Position after: 16... ♔b4

17. ♔c2

A) The trap 17. c5? dxc5 18. ♔xd7 ♖ed8 is too obvious.

B) More to the point would be 17. f4 and f4-f5, attacking the knight on e6.

17... ♖a5! 18. ♖xa5 ♔xa5 19. ♖d5 ♖c5 20. ♙d2 ♔c7 21. ♙e1 ♖e6 22. b3 ♖d4 23. ♔d2 ♖xe2 24. ♔xe2 a6 25. a4 b5 26. axb5 ♙xc3 27. ♙xc3 axb5 28. ♔d2 bxc4 29. ♔h6 f6 30. ♖g5



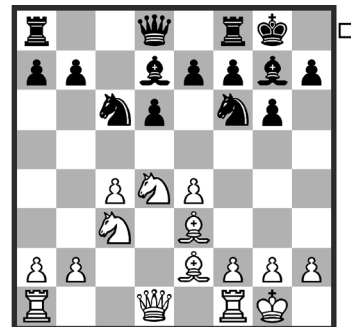
Position after: 30. ♖g5

Both White and Black have played this important position exclusively in a tac-

tical way, remaining unaware of the strategical aspects altogether!

½-½

♙ Tarrasch, Siegbert
♚ Rosselli del Turco, Stefano
♁ Trieste 1923



It is rather curious to examine the case, where such a renowned giant as Dr Siegbert Tarrasch failed to find the way out of the position emerging from the Maroczy structure.

10. h3?

We surely know that this move weakens the position in the direct vicinity of the king, probably not advised.

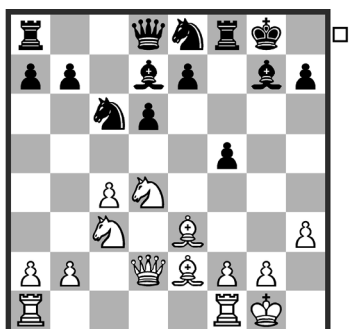
Stronger is 10. ♔d2!

10... ♖e8?

We also know this move to be rather inferior. The correct move was 10... ♖xd4

11. ♖xd4 ♗c6, with the attack on the enemy's e4-pawn and so White is in immediate trouble. After 12. f3? White would have weakened the dark squares to an irreparable extent. White, therefore, has only 12. ♖c2 and 13. ♖ad1 left, with a minimal advantage.

11. ♖d2 f5 12. exf5 gxf5



Position after: 12... gxf5

13. ♗xc6?

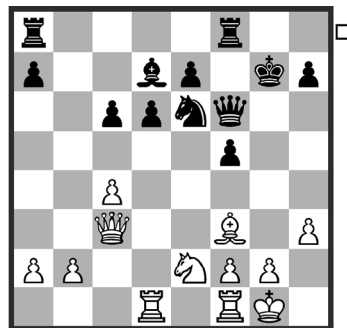
A totally pointless move. Instead, more logical would have been 13. f4. Capturing on c6 almost never leads to improvements; bringing more Black forces into the centre of the board is simply counterintuitive.

13... bxc6 14. ♖ad1 ♗c7 15. ♗h6 ♗e6
16. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 17. ♗f3 ♖e8 18. ♗e2
♖g6 19. ♖c3+ ♖f6

(see diagram next column)

With excellent prospects for Black.

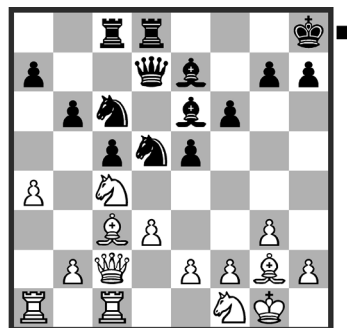
0-1 (48)



Position after: 19... ♖f6

One full step ahead of his contemporaries was Mikhail Botvinnik, who demonstrated his famous plan in the following game: a leap to d4 and capturing with the e-pawn.

♗ Lisitsin, Georgy
♗ Botvinnik, Mikhail
♗ Leningrad 1932



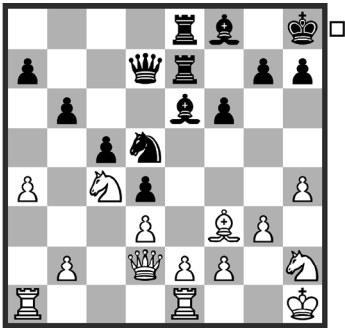
20... ♗d4 21. ♖d1 ♗g4!

With this move Black forces the exchange of his knight on the d4-square.

22. ♗xd4 exd4 23. ♖d2 ♗f8

The position becomes almost conventional: withdrawing the pieces from the e-file, followed by a doubling of the rooks.

24. ♖e1 ♜e8 25. h4 ♙h3 26. ♙f3
♜e7 27. ♘h2 ♜ce8 28. ♚h1 ♙e6!



Position after: 28... ♙e6!

Not even in his worst nightmare could Black allow g3-g4.

29. b3 ♘b4

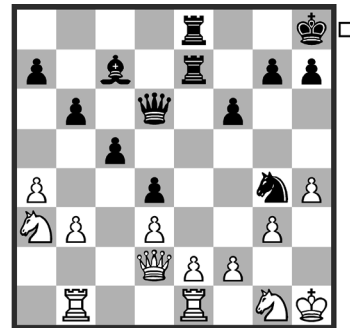
In case of 29... ♘c3? White has the tactical shot 30. e4!.

30. ♙g2 ♙d5 31. ♘f3 ♜f7!

Black skilfully manoeuvres with threats,

transferring his pieces from the e-file to the kingside, while White is completely helpless due to the absence of counterplay on the queenside.

32. ♚h2 ♙d6 33. ♙h3 ♚d8 34. ♜ab1
♜fe7 35. ♘g1 ♙c7 36. ♘a3 ♙b7 37.
♙g2 ♙xg2 38. ♚xg2 ♘d5 39. ♘c2
♚d6 40. ♘a3 ♘e3+ 41. ♚h1 ♘g4



Position after: 41... ♘g4

Black went on to win the game. Strangely, one cannot discover a great deal about the Maroczy structure by studying games of the classics. The only exception being the games of Botvinnik, who at his time was closer to understanding the position than anyone.

0-1