

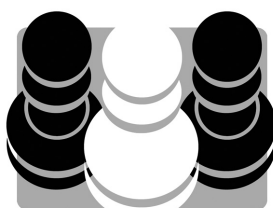
Kotronias on the King's Indian 1

Fianchetto Systems

By

Vassilios Kotronias

To my Parents



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Preface

What you are holding in your hands is the first volume of an ambitious and elaborate work on the King's Indian.

It is ambitious because it aims at nothing more and nothing less than exposing myths and truths about this popular opening, while offering a sound black repertoire based on dynamic and imaginative play.

It had to be elaborate, because our times demand accuracy and concrete analysis rather than abstract ideas. The only miracle I know is hard work; the only doubting Thomas I know is the one who has not witnessed it.

This first volume is dedicated to systems involving an early g2-g3 from White. I deemed it right to deal first with the most annoying of strategies, that challenges head-on our wish to complicate the game. White's popular set-up, used in the past by no lesser players than Botvinnik, Korchnoi and Karpov, involves an early kingside fianchetto and thus significantly reduces our attacking chances against the enemy king.

However, there is good news from Black's point of view as well. In adopting such a strategy White renounces his own chances of an early queenside onslaught. Play takes on a delicate semi-positional nature as the centre remains in most cases fluid, with guerrilla tactics and trench warfare becoming the rule rather than the exception in this type of battlefield. Thus, my feeling is that the position does not lack dynamic elements and King's Indian players will often have the possibility for a tactical skirmish, provided they are a bit more patient than usual.

I have chosen to base our repertoire on systems where Black places his queen's knight on d7, a method of development favoured by such legendary players as Bronstein, Najdorf and Geller, and subsequently honed into a formidable weapon by the 13th World Champion Garry Kasparov. Don't ask me whether or not this system is objectively better than developing the knight on c6; everyone has his own personal style and chess philosophy. Please also bear in mind that in chess, just as it so often happens in life, our choices are influenced by relative factors. We regularly have to settle for a satisfactory solution rather than search for a perfect one. Ideally I would have liked to have presented both major systems here, but that would have pushed the already stratospheric page count to one of astronomical proportions.

I would like to draw your attention to a key issue of primary importance. The supporting analysis presented in this book **should not** and indeed **cannot** be memorized in its entirety by anyone in the world. It is intended to widen your thinking horizon, to expand your positional and tactical arsenal, and to show that there are always solutions, even in the most difficult situations. By going through the analysis you will enhance your instincts and bolster your confidence, in both the correctness of Black's set-up and your own ability to find the right solutions at critical moments.

Having said that, of course there are certain lines that do have to be memorized more thoroughly, but they are pointed out by yours truly and are not too numerous.

To conclude this short introduction I would like to thank several people, but right now only three names spring to mind:

Jacob Aagaard, for putting on the table the idea for a lifetime repertoire on the King's Indian Defence.

Ioannis Simeonidis, my close friend and chess associate, for rechecking a few important lines in non c2-c4 systems.

And last, but not least...

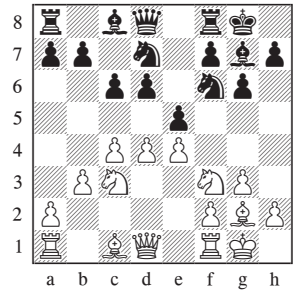
Andrew Greet, for bringing to my attention sources and ideas that I was not aware of, and doing a wonderful editing job of which very few in the chess world are capable.

Vassilios Edmilson Kotronias

Athens, 27 May 2013

Chapter 29

8.e4 c6 without 9.h3



9.b3

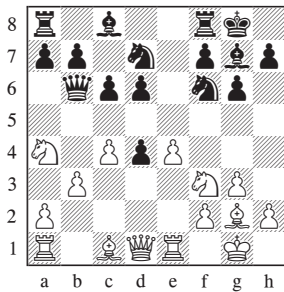
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘f3 d6 6.♘c3 ♘bd7
7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.b3

9...♙b6

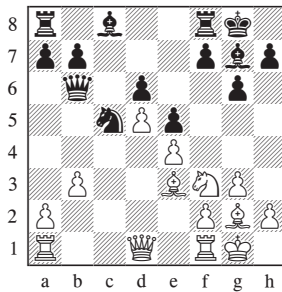
A) 10.♗e1	489
B) 10.dxe5	490
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E12) 12.♗b1	498
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A) after 11.♘a4



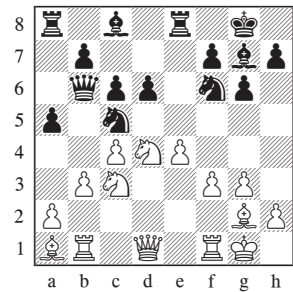
11...♙d8!N

C) after 13.cxd5



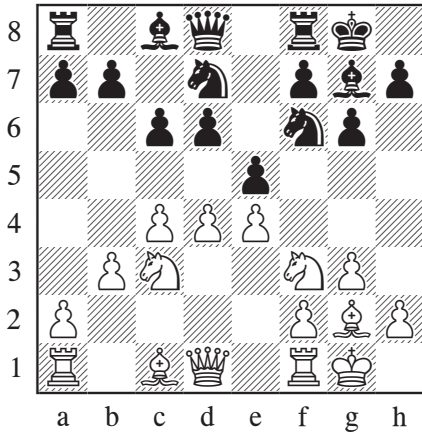
13...♙g4!N

E12) after 14.♙a1!?



14...a4!N

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0–0 5.♖f3
d6 6.♗c3 ♗bd7 7.0–0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.b3



This is the most important alternative to 9.h3, and comes with a solid reputation. White defends the c4-pawn, traditionally a weak point in this system, while extending the range of possible squares for the c1-bishop.

9...♙b6

I suggest this queen sally, just like in the main 9.h3 line. The idea is of course to put pressure on d4 and induce some kind of concession from White. We will analyse five main responses here: A) 10.♞e1, B) 10.dxe5, C) 10.d5, D) 10.♞b1 and E) 10.♙b2.

10.h3 is analysed later via the move order 9.h3 ♙b6 10 b3; see variation B of Chapter 31 on page 540.

A) 10.♞e1

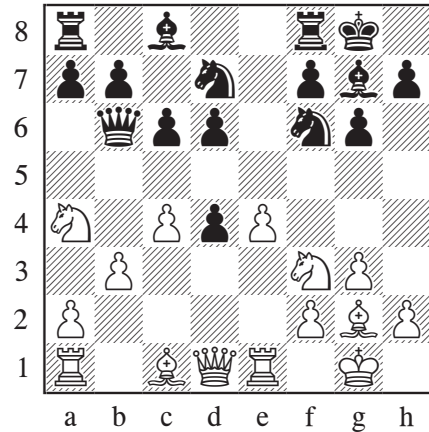
This unusual move has scored highly, but I can offer a simple solution.

10...exd4 11.♗a4□

11.♗xd4?! is worse: 11...♗g4 12.♙xg4 ♙xd4! (In Panno – Kotronias, Buenos Aires 1997, I let my opponent off with 12...♙xd4 and eventually drew.) 13.♙e3N (13.♗a4 was played in Magg – Schlenker, Krumbach 1991, and here Black could

have won outright with: 13...♗c5!N 14.♗xb6 ♙xg4 15.♗xa8 ♙xa1–+) 13...♗c5 14.♙f3 ♙xc3 15.♙xc5 ♙a5! 16.b4 ♙xb4 17.♙xb4 ♙xb4

The text move was played in Dorfman – Vasiukov, Ivano Frankovsk 1982, and a few subsequent games. Here I found a surprising improvement for Black:

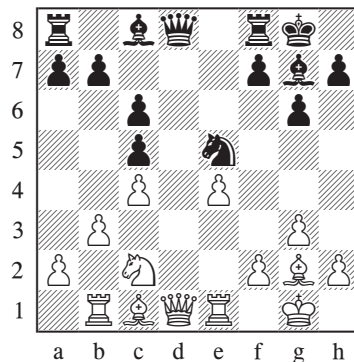


11...♙d8!N

So far Black has only put the queen on a5, but it actually has better prospects on its original square.

12.♗xd4 ♗c5! 13.♗c3

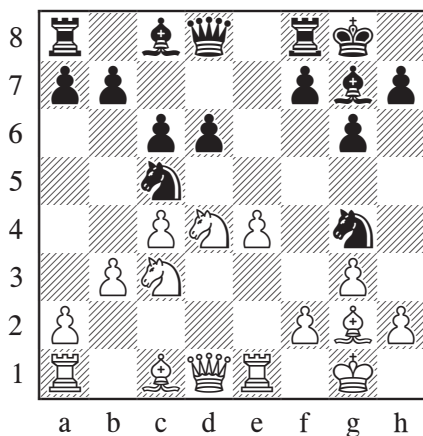
13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.♗c2 ♗d7! 15.♙b1 ♗e5 gives Black more than enough activity to offset his doubled pawns, for instance:



16.♙xd8 (16.♙b2 ♙g4!; 16.♙e2 ♗d3 17.♙d1 ♗xc1 18.♙bxc1 ♙a5) 16...♙xd8 17.h3

(17.♙g5 ♖e8) 17...♙e6↑ Intending to strike with ...b5, while the weak d3-square remains a constant source of concern for White.

13...♘g4!



14.♖f1!

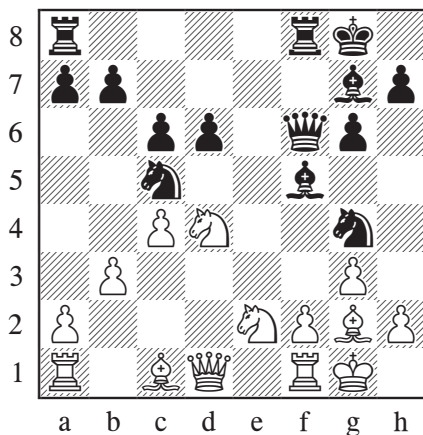
14.♙b2 ♗f6 15.♘f3 ♘e5 16.♘xe5 dxe5 17.♗c2 ♘e6 is at least equal for Black.

14...f5 15.exf5

15.h3 ♗f6 16.♘ce2 ♘e5=

15...♗f6 16.♘ce2 ♙xf5

Losing the bishop pair is not terribly important, as Black gets plenty of activity for his pieces.



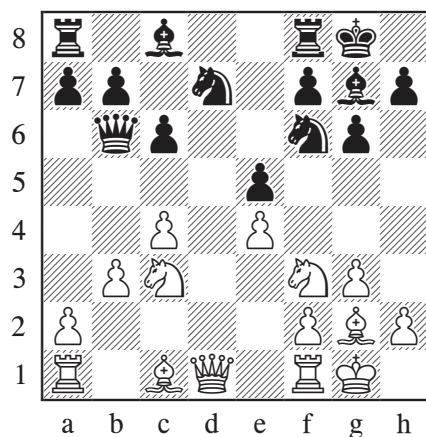
17.h3 ♘e5 18.♘xf5 ♗xf5 19.♙e3 ♗ac8=

B) 10.dxe5

This exchange does have its points: the black queen feels a bit awkward on b6 in the ensuing structure, while the c4-pawn is now protected, making recapturing with the knight slightly less desirable than in some of the previous lines we have seen involving the early pawn exchange.

10...dxe5

Despite the previous comment, 10...♘xe5 is also playable. White should respond with either 11.♘d4 as in Autenrieth – Seibold, Zirndorf 1985, or 11.h3!?N, with unclear play in both cases.



11.♙e3

This is the only way to annoy Black, trying to prevent the standard regrouping with ...♘c5, ...♘fd7 and ...♘e6.

In the event of 11.♗c2, as in Andreeva – Trofimova, Sochi 1998, Black carries out his plan with 11...♘c5N 12.h3 (12.♙e3 ♘g4) 12...♘fd7 13.♙e3 ♗c7 14.b4 ♘e6∞ when he is more than fine.

11.♙a3N ♖e8 12.♙d6 ♙f8= also gets White nowhere.

11...♗c7 12.h3

Golovenchits – Gugin, St Petersburg 2005. Now Black has to modify his plan slightly, but can achieve a good position as follows.

12...♖e8N 13.♔c2 ♕f8 14.a3 a5!

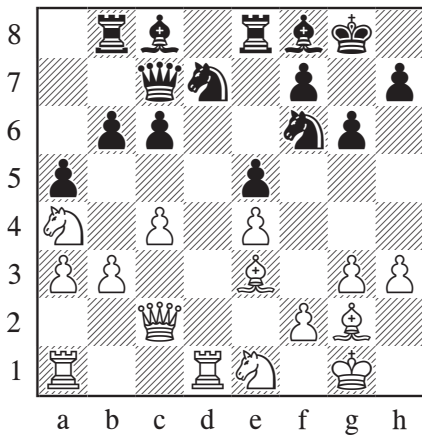
Holding back White's queenside expansion. The position does not lend itself to exact analysis from here, so I offer an illustrative line showing a few typical manoeuvres.

15.♟a4 b6 16.♞fd1 ♞b8!

This strong move is directed against any c4-c5 ideas.

17.♞e1

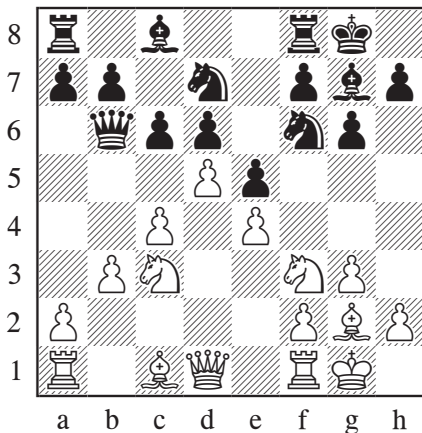
The knight will be well placed on d3.



17...♟h5! 18.♞d3 ♟g7☞

Black's knight will make it to e6 after all, and the game is dynamically balanced.

C) 10.d5



This move seems to have a bit more point here than on the previous turn, as White can try to attack the queen on b6. However, Black may also have chances to put that move to positive use as we will shortly see.

10...♞c5 11.♕e3

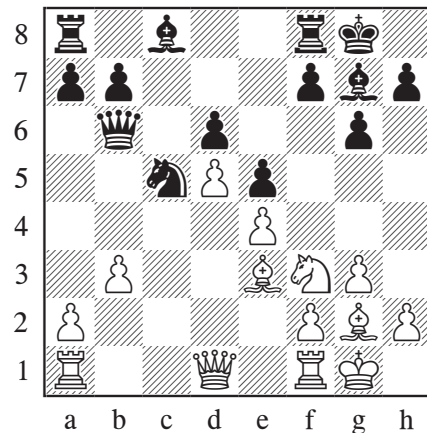
11.♖e1N cxd5 12.cxd5 ♟g4!↑ immediately shows the value of the queen on b6.

11...cxd5 12.♞xd5

12.cxd5N is well met by 12...♟g4 with ...f5 to follow.

12...♞xd5 13.cxd5

At this point I am proud to offer what I consider one of the best positional novelties of this book.



13...♕g4!N

The idea for this move was born after a game I played in 2009 against Grigorov in the Greek Team Championship. The following fragment will show exactly why the text move is needed.

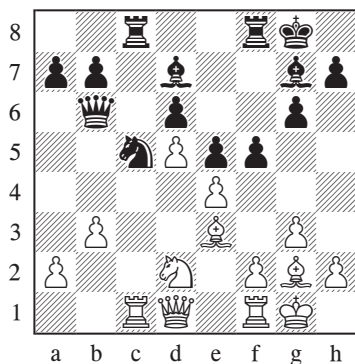
13...♕d7 14.♞d2 ♞ac8

Logically keeping the other rook in place to support kingside play with ...f5. Unfortunately the plan contains a flaw here.

15.♞c1 f5?!

15...♖a6N was better, with the possible continuation 16.♕xc5 ♞xc5 17.♞xc5 dxc5 18.a4 ♕h6 intending to take on d2 followed by ...♖d6, with good chances to hold.

After the text move my opponent missed a powerful idea.

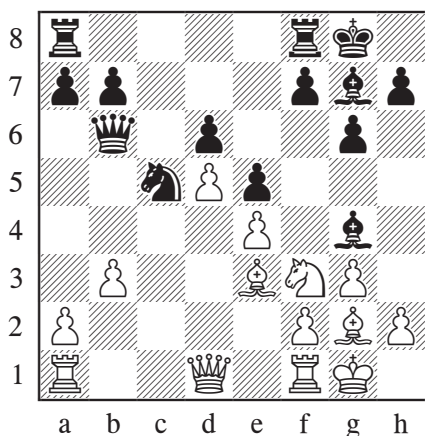


16.♘h3!N

Now Black has no attack and is at a serious risk of being gradually outplayed on the light squares. A sample line is:

16...♙a6 17.♙xc5 dxc5 18.a4 ♖f6 19.♖c4↑

Once I discovered this improvement for White, everything became clear to me: White should be stripped of the h3-square for his bishop, and that's how the present novelty sprang to mind. This is what I consider to be a logical continuation.



14.♖c1 ♖ac8 15.h3

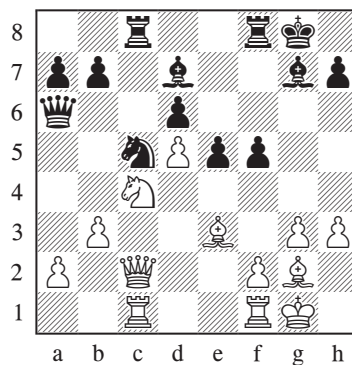
15.♖e1 ♙a5 16.♙d2 ♙a3 17.♖c4 b5 18.♙xc5 ♖xc5 19.♖xc5 ♙xc5 20.♖c1 ♙b6 21.♖c6 ♙b8 22.♙b4 ♖c8 looks equal to me.

15...♙d7! 16.♖d2 f5!

Now this is fine, and all because of the white pawn occupying the h3-square.

17.exf5

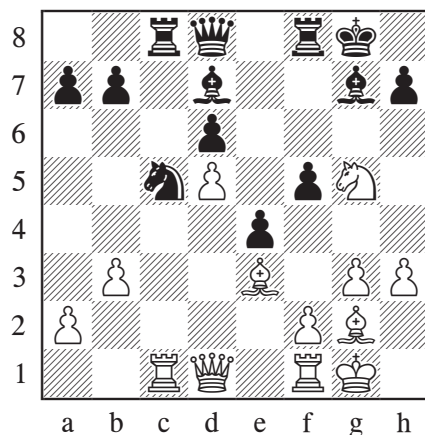
17.♖c4 ♙a6 18.exf5 gxf5 is fine for Black, for instance: 19.♙c2 (19.♖c2 b5 20.♖d2 e4 21.f3 exf3 22.♖xf3 ♖e4∞)



19...f4! 20.♖d6 fxe3 21.♖xc8 ♖xc8 22.fxe3 ♙h6 23.♙d2 e4 24.♖h2 ♙d3 25.♙xd3 exd3 26.b4 ♖a4±

17...gxf5 18.♖f3 ♙d8! 19.♖g5 e4∞

Black has good chances in this complex position. Here is a nice line I analysed:



20.f3 ♙b5!! 21.♖f2 ♖d3 22.♖xc8 ♖xf2 23.♖xd8 ♖xd1 24.♖xf8† ♖xf8 25.♙xa7 e3 26.f4 ♙g7 27.♖f3 ♙c3↑

Black has full compensation for a pawn and the endgame is more dangerous for White.