



(Photo – John Henderson)

TWIC THEORY

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SICILIAN DRAGON 10... Qa5 REFUTED

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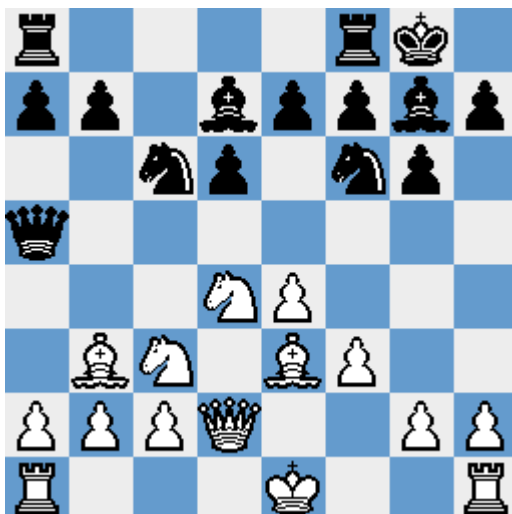
Arizmendi Martinez,Julen Luis (2520) - Etchegaray,Patrice (2344) [B79]

FRA-chT France (6.8),
05.04.2003

We come to what I am sure will turn out to be an emotional subject; the fate of an early ...Qa5 by Black in the Yugoslav Attack.

Let's head straight to the critical position.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 g6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bc4 0-0 8.Bb3 d6 9.f3 Bd7
10.Qd2 Qa5



10...Qa5 was very popular in the sixties and seventies and since then has gone up and down the Dragon chart like a yo-yo. It's a good enough move, connecting Rooks and preparing ...Rfc8 and ...Ne5-c4. Whether it cuts the mustard under the modern theoretical spotlight is another matter entirely.

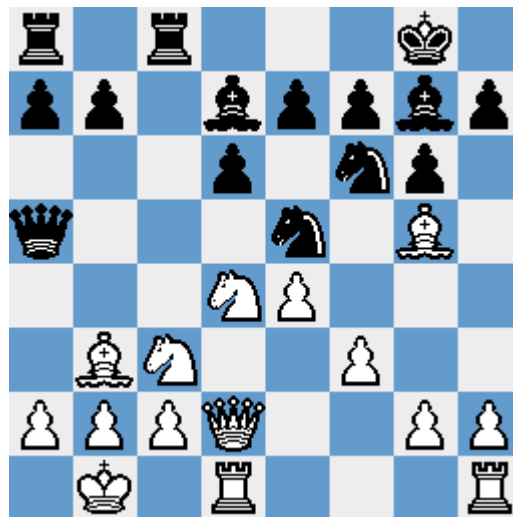
I like 10...Qa5, but I cannot recommend it to you. I think there is a serious problem in one line and I am going to confine myself to that observation. Why should we play the Dragon? To get exciting games, to try to attack and take the game to White.

Black cannot guarantee this any more after 10...Qa5.

11.0-0-0 Rfc8 12.Kb1!

More than a waiting move. White secures his King, prepares Nd5 and forces Black to reveal his hand.

12...Ne5 13.Bg5!

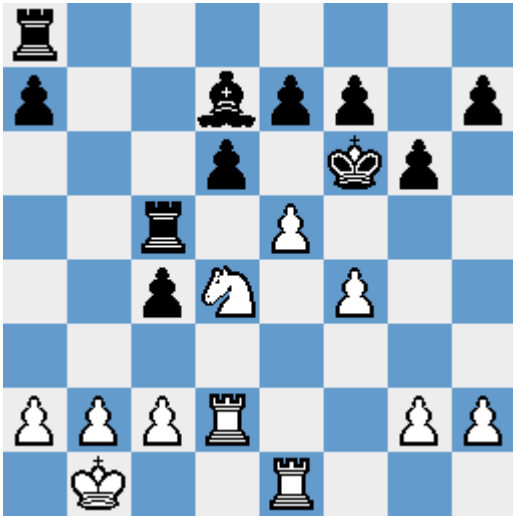


A lot of Dragon specialists are very good, how can I put it, propaganda specialists. They tend to concentrate on the striking Black wins and the exciting lines.

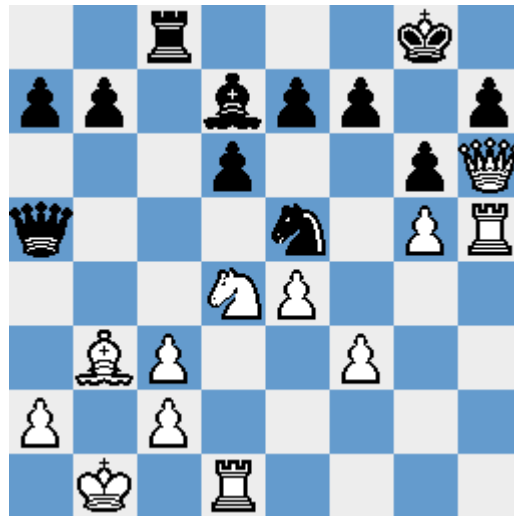
Here, White's approach is not overly exciting but it is very logical. He still keeps the possibility of starting a kingside attack, but at the same time there are a lot of other ideas, connected with Bxf6 followed by Nd5, or Nd5 at once. These are especially effective with black queen on a5.

13...Nc4

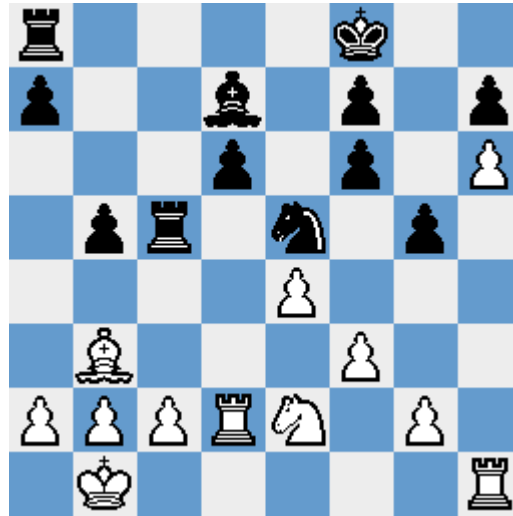
13...Rc5 is played most often and it's recommended in all the books, but I think White has two good moves against it: 14.h4! White protects the Bishop - results have been fantastic. (Or White may play positionally, setting up a favourable endgame by force. 14.Rhe1! b5 (14...Rac8 15.f4! Nc4 (15...Neg4 16.Nf3! Rxc3 17.bxc3 Bc6 18.e5 Ne4 19.Rxe4 Bxe4 20.Bxe7 dxe5 21.Ng5+- Richardson-Dubin in corr 1972-6) 16.Bxc4 Rxc4 17.Nb3 Qa6 18.e5±) 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 (15...exf6 16.Nd5! Qxd2 17.Rxd2±) 16.Nd5 Qxd2 17.Nxf6+ Kg7 18.Rxd2 Kxf6 19.f4 Nc4 20.Bxc4 bxc4 21.e5+!+/=



These positions are prospectless for Black in terms of winning chances. One does not play the Dragon to suffer in this manner.) 14...Rac8!? a) 14...Re8 15.h5 Nxh5 16.Bh6 Bxh6 17.Qxh6 Rxc3 18.bxc3 Rc8 19.g4 Nf6 20.g5 Nh5 21.Rxh5!



A classic breakthrough. White's attack is much stronger thanks to his impressive bishop. 21...gxh5 22.Nf5 Bxf5 23.exf5 Kh8 24.Rh1 Qd8 25.g6 Nxg6 26.Qxh5 Qg8 27.fxg6 fxg6 28.Qh3 1-0 Movsesian,S-Bergez,L/Cappelle la Grande 2002.; b) 14...b5 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Nd5 Qxd2 17.Rxd2 Kg7 18.h5 g5 (18...Bg5 19.f4 Bh6 20.hxg6 Nxg6 21.g3 e6 22.Rdh2 exd5 23.Rxh6 Rh8 24.Nf5+- Guseinov,K-Rajlich,V/Budapest 2001) 19.h6+ Kf8 (19...Kg6 is scary: 20.g3 (or 20.f4 gxf4 21.Nxf4+ Kg5 22.g3)) 20.Nxf6 exf6 21.Ne2±



Guseinov,K-Cernousek,L/Baku 2002 Black's pawns are in very poor shape. ; **c)** 14...h5 15.Bxf6!±; 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Nd5 Qxd2 17.Rxd2 Kg7 18.h5 Bg5 19.f4 Rxd5 20.Bxd5 Bxf4 (compensation) 21.Rdd1 Nc4? 22.Rhf1 g5 23.g3 Nd2+ 24.Rxd2 Bxd2 25.Rxf7+ Kh8 26.Rxe7 Bg4 27.h6+- Balogh,C-Rajlich,V/Budapest 2001 ; 13...b5?! 14.Nd5 Qxd2 15.Rxd2 Nxd5 16.Bxd5 Nc4 17.Rd3 Rab8 18.Bxe7 a5 19.Bg5 a4 20.Bf4 Rb6 21.Rhd1 a3 22.Bxc4 bxc4 23.Rxa3 c3 24.Rb3+- Golubev,M-Raeber,M/Scuol 2001

White went on to win all of these games.

The situation is serious.

13...Qd8 has been frequently played, out of desperation presumably because it doesn't look very inspiring to be going backwards at this moment.

In view of Black's hesitancy, White should sound the charge: 14.h4! with every chance of success: 14...b5 15.h5 Nc4 16.Bxc4 bxc4 (16...Rxc4 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.Qe2! a6 19.Bh6 Bh8 20.Be3 Rac8 21.g4±) 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.Bh6 Bh8 19.Nd5! Nxd5 20.exd5 c3 21.Qf2 Qb6 22.b3 Bf6 23.g4 a5 24.Qh2! a4 25.Be3 Bg7 26.Qh7+ Kf8 27.Ne6+-

Or finally 13...Rab8 as recommended in good old ECO, which in common with most theoretical works on this specific subject, gives very poor coverage: 14.h4 b5 15.Bxf6! Bxf6 16.Nd5 Qxd2 17.Rxd2 Kg7 18.h5!± Am. Rodriguez-Andres Cienfuegos 1975

14.Bxc4 Rxc4 15.Nb3!

15.Bxf6 brings nothing, here is a recent example: 15...Bxf6 16.Nd5 Qxd2 17.Nxf6+ Kg7! 18.Nh5+ Kh6! A well-known motif - Black isn't forced to break the pawn structure. 19.Rxd2 Kxh5 20.Ne2 ½-½ Lobron,E-Cebalo,M/Wijk aan Zee 2003

15...Qd8?

After 15...Qd8? we will see Black fall victim to one of the typical traps in this line where he gets wiped out in the centre.

15...Qe5 is practically the only move, although I am not sure that the resulting positions are satisfactory for Black at all: 16.Rhe1! Rxc3 (16...Qxh2? 17.Bf4 Qh5 18.Rh1) 17.bxc3 Be6 (17...Rc8 18.Be3 Qb5 19.Qd3 Qc6 20.Bxa7 Ra8 21.Bd4 Qa4 22.Kc1 Bb5 23.Qe3±) 18.Be3 Rc8 19.Bd4 Qb5 20.Ka1 Qa4 21.Rb1 Bf8 22.Bxf6 exf6 23.g4± Black is toiling the exchange down.

16.e5!

Of course. The idea is as old as Dragon itself. This was the initial main idea behind the move Be3-g5 (although in different variations).

16...Ne8

16...dxe5 17.Bxf6 Bxf6 18.Qxd7+-

17.Nd5!

Hitting at the weak pawn on e7, a familiar motif.

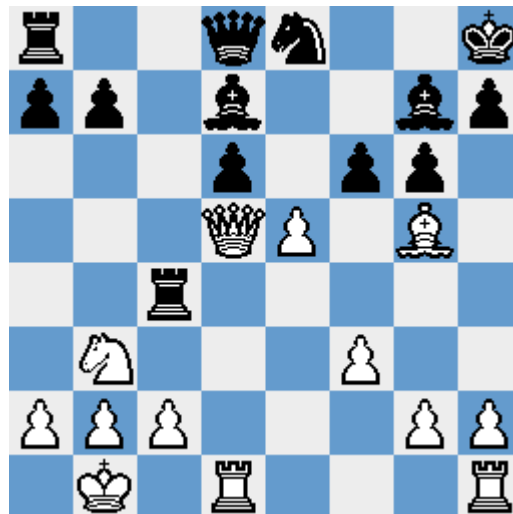
17...f6

17...Bf8 18.Qe2 is also bad for Black

18.Nxf6+!

Crushing!

18...exf6 19.Qd5+ Kh8



20.exf6!

A zwischenzug which decides the game. Black must lose material and limps to the finishing line:

20...Nxf6 21.Qxc4 Rc8 22.Qf4 Bf5 23.Nd4 Qb6 24.Bh6 Bxh6 25.Qxh6 Qc5 26.Nxf5 Qxc2+ 27.Ka1 Qxf5 28.Rxd6 Qe5 29.Qd2 1-0

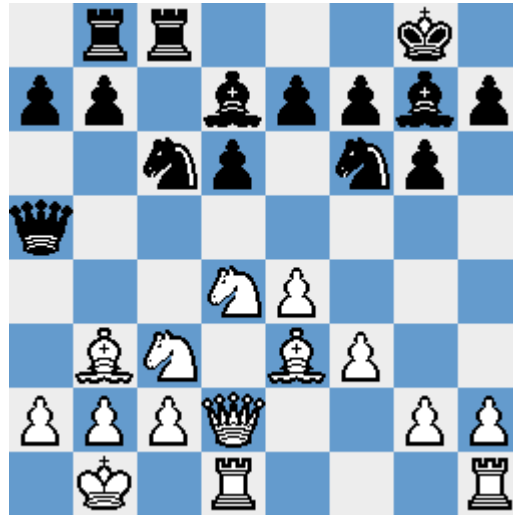
To dismiss one of Black's main lines in one game and some notes seems reckless. But if I could see a way to play for Black in this line which doesn't involve suffering then I would give it. I feel that the variation with 10...Qa5 is inadequate.

Hernandez,Gilberto (2525) - Amura,Claudia Noemi (2365) [B79]

Balaguer op Balaguer, 1997

I come to bury ...Qa5, not to praise him.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bc4 d6 8.f3 0-0 9.Qd2 Bd7
10.0-0-0 Qa5 11.Kb1 Rfc8 12.Bb3 Rab8

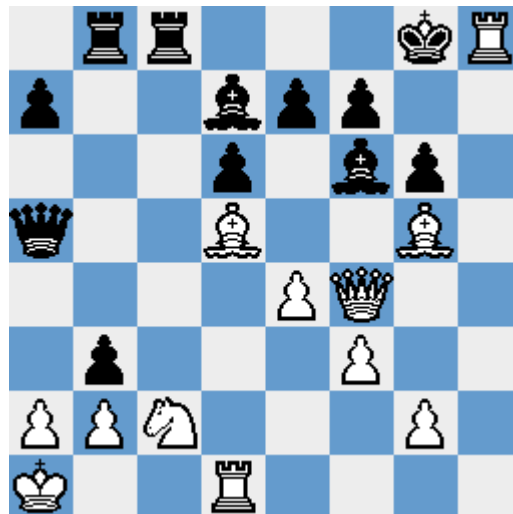


Bobotsov's move, planning b7-b5 and then ...Ne5-c4, recapturing with the pawn on c4. The Rook on b8 then comes into play.

Positional considerations can now be dispensed with; White should just get on with it!

13.h4! b5 14.h5 Nxh5

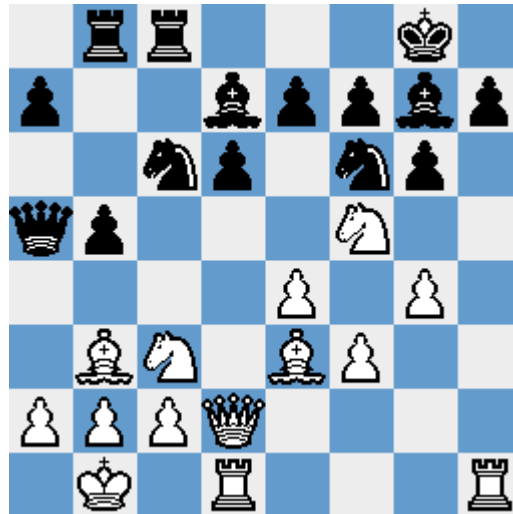
One could call 14...b4 'consistent': 15.Nd5! the traditional recipe of stripping away the piece cover around the Black King. 15...Nxd5 16.Bxd5 Ne5 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.Bh6 Bf6 19.Bg5 Nc4 20.Qf4 heading for h4 and KAPUT. 20...Na3+ 21.Ka1 Nxc2+ 22.Nxc2 b3 23.Rh8+!!



Stoica-Carousa Rumania 1969

A wonderful move, worth a diagram of anybody's money. What a crusher! 23...Kxh8 (23...Bxh8 24.Qxf7#; 23...Kg7 24.Bxf6+ exf6 25.Qh6#) 24.Bxf6+ Kg8 25.Bxf7+ Kxf7 26.Bc3+ Ke8 27.Bxa5 bxc2 28.Rc1+-

15.g4 Nf6 16.Nf5!!



21...Nf8

21...Kxh7 22.Qh2+ Kg8 23.Rh1 f6 24.Qh7+ Kf8 25.Qxg6! and mate to follow.

22.Rh3 f6 23.Be3 e6 24.Qh2 b4 25.Rh8+ Kf7 26.Rh1 e5 27.Nd5 Ke6 28.f4 Nd4 29.Rxf8 Rxf8 30.Qh7 1-0

12...Rab8 is too slow.

I just finished a book on the Dragon and it has been a very interesting experience. Without doubt the Yugoslav Attack is the ONLY way to put any pressure on Black and I found that the way is narrowing for the second player. Perhaps there are one or two lines only that can be recommended. I'm afraid 10...Qa5 isn't one of them.

The fuller truth will soon be out there, and yes, you will have to buy the book!



For comprehensive coverage of the Yugoslav Attack in the Sicilian Dragon.

An excellent CD covering variations in the Dragon in which White castles long. Grandmaster Dorian Rogozenko gives us the benefit of his specialised knowledge as he presents all the latest theory in 95 introductory texts about the individual lines. Over 500 of the approximately 1000 annotated games in the main database have been annotated by the author personally. The final touch in the CD is the provision of two training databases – one from the point of view of White and the other from the point of view of Black.

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