

with unsatisfactory results.

When I state that these works need further study I fear to be misunderstood: I know that many chess historians have already studied these endings, providing a useful outline of their evolution. It suffices here to quote the names of Max Lange, Tassilo von Heydebrand und der Lasa, Antonius van der Linde, H. J. R. Murray (even in this field the greatest contributor), Walter Benary, Adriano Chicco, Gerd Meyer. They had described more and more manuscripts and established how these chess endings globally followed some kind of fashion which I can indicate for short as *true* specimens initially prevailing, then *false*, then *artificial*, then *complex*, and so on. Generally, this is however limited to new endings added to a traditional set which continued to be copied for centuries. For instance, at a given time a kind of fashion induced the composition of many endings with the condition that a first pawn gives check and a second checkmate.

Limits to consider

There are several questions of method to be solved before starting a study on these old chess works. First of all: are we only interested in the history of modern chess? In this case, the known printed references (and what we can speculate about the contents of Vicent) contain most of the information. What can be found in manuscripts is a useful complement, however. For instance, I don't know anything earlier than the endings of Florentine manuscript Cl.XIX.51, which are not present in the printed works known.

Or, are we interested in the history of chess in general, old variants included? In the latter hypothesis, the study of manuscripts becomes essential and the part of the subject matter, which appeared in the early printed books is much poorer in shape and contents.

If we conclude that a systematic study has to include the old variants, we would find soon another discriminating point: must Islamic sources be taken into account? This is the point where my curiosity stopped (I mean for my present life, I have no doubt that whenever I again become a young student this will not represent an insurmountable obstacle). Different from a few great historians - and here we may find the difference between great and not great - I have extended my knowledge reading old Latin and vulgar codices, but not Arabic ones, which are fundamental for chess in earlier times. If necessary, I must be satisfied to check and compare existing transcriptions of their contents.