

ples, add a few new endings. It would be very anachronistic to think of an author compiling a new collection consisting of original endings.

We apparently can expect the evolution of *the* book of chess endings, a single encyclopedic collection preserved and modified during both its oral and written transmission in the course of time. We may meet with the establishment of rather fixed contents, but this *traditional* text was the result of several amendments and additions - and in its turn it had to be further modified.

In this long tradition, we find nevertheless the names of several *authors* quoted: at least king Alfonso X and two pseudonyms, well known to all chess historians, Bonus Socius and Civis Bononiae; they must be further commented on.

Early European tradition

Apart from Arab texts, what existed before the works due to Alfonso X or Bonus Socius? Probably the Archinto manuscript, now in the Cleveland Library, may provide useful indication. Different from most early sources, with about two hundred endings, it contains just a score of them, following in large part Islamic patterns. The famous collection of 1283 due to King Alfonso X was founded on Islamic basis, both for chess endings and for other boardgames - the location itself, in Sevilla, strongly suggests an Islamic influence. Even the collection ordered by the King could not be an original work, with nothing of the same kind previously existing. On the other hand, this collection - kept in the treasury of Spanish kings and bishops - could hardly serve as a source for following selections.

It is not certain whether the Bonus Socius collection was earlier than Alfonso X's codex. In particular, it is hard to distinguish which differences may be connected to place and which to time. There is however something certain which connects Alfonso X and early Bonus Socius codices, the carefulness of the compilation and making of the manuscripts. The codex of Alfonso X is apparently a royal specimen; everybody is touched by the beauty of its images. A step lower are the most ancient manuscripts of Bonus Socius; however, several of them (for instance, the two Paris manuscripts of Flemish provenance) are much above usual standards and only comparable to the best productions in the church or court domain. Since this *gold-age* period, which can roughly be fixed in the beginning of the 14th century, no comparable chess work did appear, certainly not among the printed works, which usually did not have