

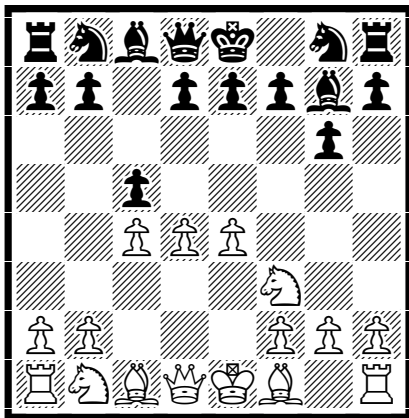
Mini-Lessons From Short Games Of 21st Century

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Opening Up Pandora's Box: ECO A40

The chapter A40 of "Encyclopedia of Chess Openings" (ECO) is truly a Pandora Box. Included here are many variations that are rarely used in practice, such as 1.d4 e5, 1.d4 b6, 1.d4 b5, 1.d4 Nc6 etc. Also included are many variations arising by transposition of moves after 1.c4, but for one of other reason are not included in previous chapters A1, A2 and A3. All this creates confusion and I have found that many games in recent data are wrongly coded.

However, after so long time of existing, something new and important has also come from this Pandora Box. I'm speaking about the original opening idea that arises after the moves 1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.e4



This basic position can also be reached from a much different order of moves. For example 1.c4 c5 2.Nf3 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.e4, or 1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.e4 c5 4.Nf3, or 1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nf3 c5 4.c4 etc., which can be coded differently, but I think should remain in A40 as the most important part of this chapter.

The following selection of games demonstrates some new variations and recent ideas, which can help if you have an interest in this opening.

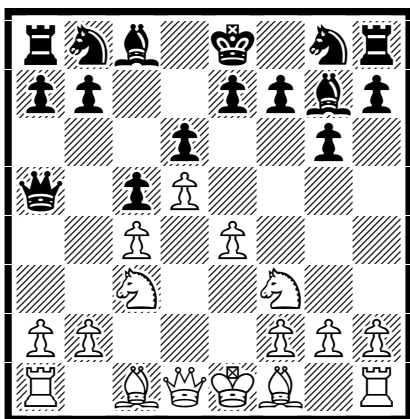
A40 Van Wely – V. Topalov
Frankfurt 2000

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.e4 d6

The most common order of moves of this main line is 4...Qa5+ 5.Nc3 d6.

5.Nc3 Qa5 6.d5

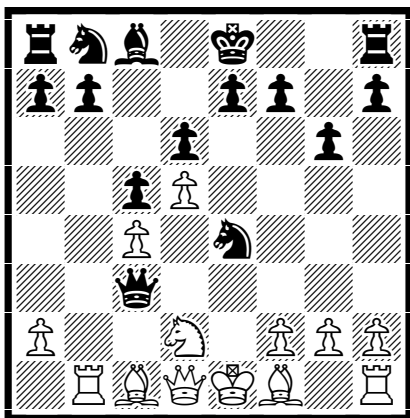
The modern line. The older continuation 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Qd2 Ng4 looks satisfactory for Black.



6...Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 Nf6 8.Nd2

8.Qc2!?, and if 8...Nxe4 9.Bd3 see next game.

8...Qxc3 9.Rb1 Nxe4



10.Bb2??

Critical is 10.Rb3!?, and now 10...Qa5 11.Ra3 Qb4 12.Rb3 Qa5= (Eingorn – Chekhov, Palma de Mallorca 1989), or 10...Qd4 11.Nxe4 Qxe4+ 12.Re3 Qg4 13.Qb3 with compensation (Uhlmann-Holzl, Graz 1991).

10...Qxd2+ 11.Qxd2 Nxd2 12.Bxh8 Nxb1 13.Bd3 f6 14.Bxb1 Kf7 15.Kd2 Bf5 16.Bxf5 gxf5 17.Re1 Nd7 0-1

A40 Z. Ribli - Fogarasi
Hungary (ch team) 2000

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.e4 Qa5+ 5.Nc3

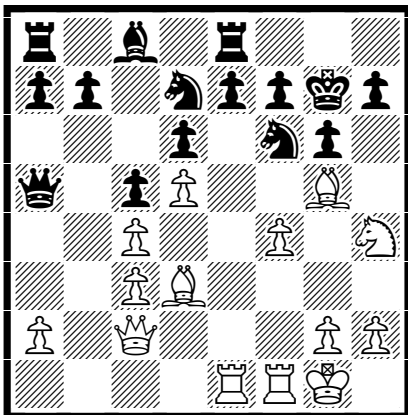
For 5.Bd2 see the next game.

5...d6 6.d5 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 Nf6 8.Qc2!? Nxe4 9.Bd3 Nf6

But not 9...Bf5? 10.g4!

10.O-O O-O 11.Bg5 Nbd7 12.Rae1 Re8 13.Nh4! Kg7 14.f4

White's attacking chances are more than compensation for the sacrificed pawn.



14...b5

If 14...h6?, then 15.Bxg6 hxg5 16.Bxf7, or 15.Bxh6+ Kxh6 16.Bxg6, in both cases with a decisive attack.

15.f5 Qa4

If 15...Ne5 16.fxg6 hxg6 17.Bxg6! Nxc6 18.Bxf6+ exf6 19.Rxe8 Nxc4 20.Qf2 and White wins.

16.Qf2 Ng4

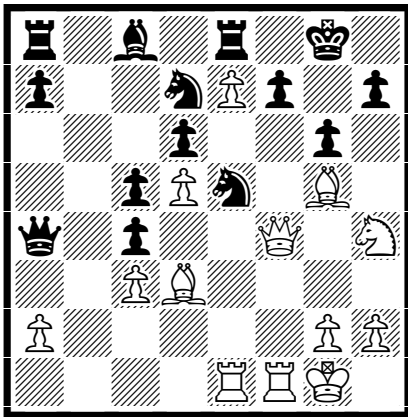
Or 16...bxc4 17.fxg6 cxd3 18.Bxf6+ Nxf6 19.Rxe7! and White wins.

17.Qf4 Nge5 18.f6+ Kg8

Or 18...exf6 19.Bxf6+ Nxf6 20.Qxf6+ Kg8 21.Rxe5 and wins.

19.fxe7 bxc4

Black is already lost.



20.Rxe5! Nxe5 21.Qf6 1-0

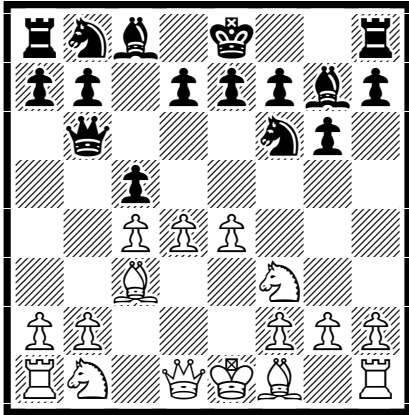
There us no defense against the threat 22.Bh6.

A40 R. Korsunsky – L. Zaid

USSR 1976

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.e4 Qa5+ 5.Bd2 Qb6 6.Bc3 Nf6

According to ECO, after 6...cxd4 7.Bxd4 Bxd4 8.Qxd4 Qxd4 9.Nxd4 White stands slightly better.



7.dxc5?!

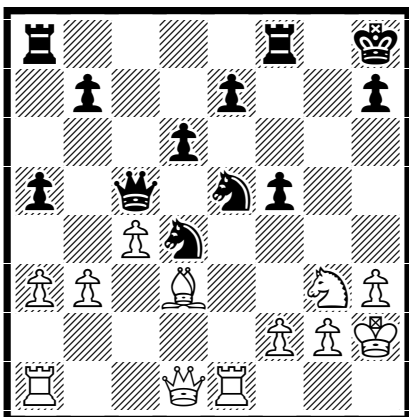
In my opinion, 7.d5 is the correct continuation.

7...Qxc5 8.Bd3 d6 9.O-O Bg4 10.Nbd2 Nc6 11.h3 Bxf3 12.Nxf3 O-O 13.Re1 Nd7 4.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.b3 a5 16.a3 Nde5 17.Nh2?

17.Bf1!?

17...Nd4 18.Nf1 f5 19.exf5 gxf5 20.Ng3 Kh8 21.Kh2??

A blunder in a position that is already worse.



21...Ndf3+! 0-1

A40 J. Baules – C. Pace

Dresden (ol) 2008

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.c4 Qb6

From the order of moves, this game can be coded also as B27.

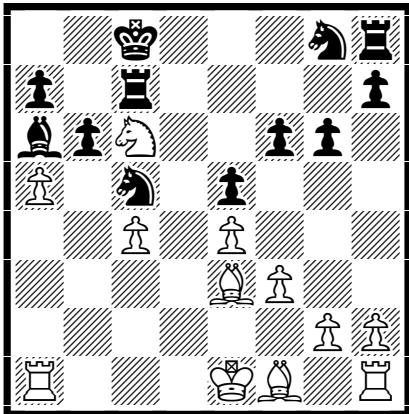
5.dxc5 Qxc5 6.Nc3 Bxc3+?!

6...Nc6!?

7.bxc3 d6 8.Qd4 f6 9.Be3 Qc7 10.c5 dxc5 11.Qxc5 Qxc5 12.Bxc5 b6 13.Be3 Ba6 14.c4!

White stands better.

14...Nd7 15.Nd4 Nc5 16.f3 O-O-O? 17.a4 e5 18.Nc6 Rd7 19.a5 Rc7



20.Nxa7+! Kb7 21.Rb1! Na4 22.axb6 1-0