

**THE MODERNIZED  
GRIVAS SICILIAN**

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**EFSTRATIOS GRIVAS**

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# Key to symbols

!	a good move	±	White has a serious advantage
?	a weak move	∓	Black has a serious advantage
!!	an excellent move	+−	White has a decisive advantage
??	a blunder	−+	Black has a decisive advantage
!?	an interesting move	→	with an attack
?!	a dubious move	↑	with initiative
□	only move	↔	with counterplay
=	equality	Δ	with the idea of
∞	unclear position	⊃	better is
≡	with compensation for the sacrificed material	N	novelty
±	White stands slightly better	+	check
∓	Black stands slightly better	#	mate

# Table of Contents

<b>Foreword .....</b>	<b>11</b>
The Sicilian Defence.....	11
History of the Opening.....	12
<b>Efstratios Grivas .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>17</b>
The Variation .....	17
Statistical Overview .....	18
Why is it the 'Grivas Sicilian'? .....	18
Why play the 'Grivas Sicilian' .....	18
History.....	19
Top GS.....	21
Breakdown of Chapters .....	22
Contributors - Helpers.....	23
<b>Lady Godiva.....</b>	<b>25</b>
My Big Love.....	25
Lady Godiva.....	26
Sound or Not.....	27
<b>Chapter 1 - Move By Move.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Variation A - Medusa B32-B33.....</b>	<b>29</b>
Medusa under the Microscope .....	29
Variation A1 - Medusa - 5.? .....	30
Variation A2 - Medusa - 5.♖e2 .....	30
Variation A3 - Medusa - 5.♗f5 .....	31
Variation A4 - Medusa - 5.♙e3 .....	32
Variation A5 - Medusa - 5.♗f3 .....	39
Variation A6 - Medusa - 5.c3 .....	41
Variation A7 - Medusa - 5.♗xc6.....	46

Variation A8 - Medusa - 5...b5	54
Variation A81 - Medusa - 5...a6	54
Variation A811 - Medusa - 6...a5+	55
Variation A812 - Medusa - 6...d8	60
Variation A82 - Medusa - 5...f6	65
Conclusion	73
<b>Variation B - Eros B32</b>	<b>74</b>
Eros under the Microscope	74
Variation B1 - Eros - 6.f3	74
Variation B2 - Eros - 6...e3	78
Variation B3 - Eros - 6...d3	82
Variation B31 - Eros - 6...e6	83
Variation B32 - Eros - 6...d5	90
Conclusion	97
<b>Variation C - Cyclopes B45</b>	<b>98</b>
Cyclopes on the Microscope	98
Variation C1 - Cyclopes - 7...b4	99
Variation C11 - Cyclopes - 8...a6	101
Variation C12 - Cyclopes - 8...d5	106
Variation C121 - Cyclopes - 10.bxc3	110
Variation C122 - Cyclopes - 10.exd5	111
Conclusion	114
<b>Variation D - Poseidon B33</b>	<b>115</b>
Poseidon under the Microscope	115
Variation D1 - Poseidon - 7...b4	116
Variation D2 - Poseidon - 7...e7	119
Variation D21 - Poseidon - 8...e2	119
Variation D22 - Poseidon - 8...d2	123
Variation D23 - Poseidon - 8...d3	125
Conclusion	132
<b>Variation E - Hestia B33</b>	<b>133</b>
Hestia under the Microscope	133
Variation E1 - Hestia - 8.?	133
Variation E2 - Hestia - 8...e3 (e2)	141
Variation E21 - Hestia - 12...e1	144
Variation E22 - Hestia - 12...f3	147
Variation E3 - Hestia - 8...e3 (d3)	153
Variation E31 - Hestia - 13...h1	161

Variation E32 - Hestia - 13.Ἡἠε1.....	163
Variation E4 - Hestia - 8.Ἡἠ3 (Ἡἠ2).....	167
Variation E41 - Hestia - 13.Ἡἠε2.....	168
Variation E42 - Hestia - 13.Ἡἠf3.....	172
Conclusion.....	176
<b>Variation F - Hera B33.....</b>	<b>177</b>
Hera under the Microscope.....	177
Variation F1 - Hera - 9...?.....	178
Variation F2 - Hera - 9...Ἡἠxc3.....	186
Variation F3 - Hera - 9...Ἡἠe7.....	192
Variation F31 - Hera - 10.g4.....	193
Variation F32 - Hera - 10.e5.....	196
Variation F33 - Hera - 10.0-0-0.....	204
Variation F331 - Hera - 11.exd5.....	204
Variation F332 - Hera - 11.e5.....	210
Conclusion.....	213
<b>Variation G - Fates B33.....</b>	<b>214</b>
Fates under the Microscope.....	214
Variation G1 - Fates - 8...?.....	214
Variation G11 - Fates - 8...Ἡἠxc3.....	219
Variation G12 - Fates - 8...0-0.....	221
Conclusion.....	224
<b>Variation H - Teiresias B33.....</b>	<b>225</b>
Teiresias under the Microscope.....	225
Variation H1 - Teiresias - 7...?.....	225
Variation H2 - Teiresias - 7...a6.....	226
Variation H21 - Teiresias - 8...Ἡἠe3.....	227
Variation H22 - Teiresias - 8.0-0.....	229
Variation H3 - Teiresias - 7...Ἡἠb4.....	231
Variation H31 - Teiresias - 11.e5.....	240
Variation H32 - Teiresias - 11.Ἡἠh5.....	241
Conclusion.....	242
<b>Variation I - Hermes B33.....</b>	<b>243</b>
Hermes under the Microscope.....	243
Variation I1 - Hermes - 9...?.....	243
Variation I11 - Hermes - 10.a5.....	245
Variation I12 - Hermes - 10...Ἡἠe3.....	252
Variation I121 - Hermes - 12.Ἡἠe2.....	254

Variation I122 - Hermes - 12.g4 .....	257
Variation I123 - Hermes - 12.ϥh1 .....	258
Variation I124 - Hermes - 12.ϣf3.....	262
Conclusion.....	267
<b>Variation J - Apollo B33.....</b>	<b>268</b>
Apollo under the Microscope .....	268
Variation J1 - Apollo - 11.ϥd2.....	268
Variation J11 - Apollo - 12.ϣe2.....	274
Variation J12 - Apollo - 12.ϣf3.....	278
Conclusion.....	284
<b>Variation K - Dionysus B33.....</b>	<b>285</b>
Dionysus under the Microscope.....	285
Variation K1 - Dionysus - 8.?.....	285
Variation K2 - Dionysus - 9.?.....	290
Variation K21 - Dionysus - 12.h3.....	296
Variation K22 - Dionysus - 12.f5.....	298
Variation K23 - Dionysus - 12.ϥh1.....	300
Conclusion.....	301
<b>Variation L - Athena B33.....</b>	<b>302</b>
Athena under the Microscope.....	302
Variation L1 - Athena - 10.ϣe2.....	302
Variation L2 - Athena - 11.0-0.....	305
Variation L3 - Athena - 11.0-0-0.....	310
Variation L31 - Athena - 13.ϥb7.....	313
Variation L32 - Athena - 13.ϥb6.....	316
Conclusion.....	318
<b>Variation M - Zeus B33-B88.....</b>	<b>319</b>
Zeus under the Microscope.....	319
Variation M1 - Zeus - 10.ϣf3.....	319
Variation M11 - Zeus - 11.0-0.....	321
Variation M111 - Zeus - 12.ϥh1.....	322
Variation M112 - Zeus - 12.ϥd4.....	327
Variation M113 - Zeus - 12.ϣae1.....	331
Variation M1131 - Zeus - 12.ϥb4.....	331
Variation M1132 - Zeus - 12.ϥd7.....	336
Variation M1133 - Zeus - 12.ϣb8.....	343
Variation M1134 - Zeus - 12..b5.....	345
Variation M114 - Zeus - 12.g4.....	354
Variation M1141 - Zeus - 14.ϣe8.....	358



Variation M1142 - Zeus - 14...♭b4.....	359
Variation M1143 - Zeus - 14...g6.....	361
Variation M1144 - Zeus - 14...♭b7.....	368
Variation M12 - Zeus - 11.0-0-0.....	373
Variation M121 - Zeus - 12...♭b4.....	380
Variation M1211 - Zeus - 16...♭d4.....	390
Variation M1212 - Zeus - 16...♯hf1.....	392
Variation M1213 - Zeus - 16...♯hg1.....	394
Variation M122 - Zeus - 12...♭d7.....	399
Conclusion.....	407

## **Chapter 2 - Typical Middlegame Strategy ..... 409**

Minasian Artashes : Grivas Efstratios.....	410
Cela Altin : Grivas Efstratios.....	415
Kofidis Andreas : Grivas Efstratios.....	419
Kuzmin Gennadi : Grivas Efstratios.....	422
Nunn John : Grivas Efstratios.....	426
Kalesis Nikolaos : Grivas Efstratios.....	429
Anagnostopoulos Dimitrios : Grivas Efstratios.....	432
Bellia Fabrizio : Grivas Efstratios.....	435
Kotronias Vasilios : Grivas Efstratios.....	437
Vouldis Angelos : Grivas Efstratios.....	441
Vouldis Angelos : Grivas Efstratios.....	444
Hector Jonny : Grivas Efstratios.....	446
Motylev Alexander : Polgar Judit.....	449
Svidler Peter : Polgar Judit.....	452
Dominguez Perez Leinier : Polgar Judit.....	453
Dominguez Perez Leinier : Polgar Judit.....	455
Kotronias Vasilios : Haznedaroglu Kivanc.....	460
Carlsen Magnus : Gelfand Boris.....	462
Movsesian Sergei : Grivas Efstratios.....	464
Ermenkov Evgenij : Grivas Efstratios.....	467

## **Chapter 3 - Endgame Technique ..... 467**

Kotronias Vasilios : Grivas Efstratios.....	470
Perdek Miroslaw : Grivas Efstratios.....	472
Alexakis Dimitrios : Grivas Efstratios.....	473

Dervishi Erald : Grivas Efstratios .....	474
Pandavos Panayotis : Grivas Efstratios .....	476
Krajina Davor : Grivas Efstratios.....	479

<b>Chapter 4 - Tactical Motifs.....</b>	<b>481</b>
<b>Solutions .....</b>	<b>486</b>

# Foreword

## The Sicilian Defence

The Sicilian Defence is an opening that commences with the moves **1.e4 c5**.

The Sicilian Defence is the most popular and best-scoring response to White's first move 1.e4. For example, 1.d4, is a statistically more successful opening for White because of the high success rate of the Sicilian Defence against 1.e4.

New In Chess stated in its 2000 Yearbook that of the games in its database, White scored 56.1% in 296,200 games beginning 1.d4, but 54.1% in 349,855 games beginning 1.e4, mainly because the Sicilian Defence held White to a 52.3% score in 145,996 games.

17% of all games between GMs and 25% of the games in the Chess Informant Database, begin with the Sicilian Defence. Almost one quarter of all games use the Sicilian Defence.

Grandmaster John Nunn attributes the Sicilian Defences' popularity to its combative nature since in many lines Black is playing not just for equality, but for the advantage.

The drawback is that White often obtains an early initiative thus Black has to take care not to fall victim to a

quick attack. Grandmaster Jonathan Rowson considered why the Sicilian Defence is the most successful response to 1.e4, even though 1...c5, develops no pieces and the pawn on c5 controls only d4 and b4. J.Rowson writes: *'To my mind there is quite a straightforward explanation. In order to profit from the initiative granted by the first move, White has to make use of his opportunity to do something before Black has an equal number of opportunities of his own.'*

However, to do this he has to make 'contact' with the black position. The first point of contact usually comes in the form of a pawn exchange which leads to the opening of the position.

The thought behind 1...c5 is this: *'OK, I'll let you open the position, and develop your pieces aggressively, but at a price - you have to give me one of your center pawns.'* (Jonathan Rowson, Chess for Zebras: Thinking Differently About Black and White).

By advancing the c-pawn two squares Black asserts control over the d4-square and begins the fight for the center of the board. The move resembles 1...e5, the next most common response to 1.e4, in that respect. Unlike 1...e5, 1...c5 breaks the symmetry of the position which strongly influences both players' future actions.

White, having pushed a kingside pawn, tends to hold the initiative on that side of the board. However, 1...c5 does little for Black's development, unlike moves such as 1...e5, 1...g6, or 1...♘c6, which either develop a minor piece or prepare to do so.

In many variations of the Sicilian Defense, Black makes a number of further pawn moves in the opening (for example, ...d6, ...e6, ...a6, and ...b5). Consequently, White often obtains a substantial lead in development and dangerous attacking chances.

Meanwhile, advancing a queenside pawn has given Black a spatial advantage there and provides a basis for future operations on that flank.

Often, Black's c5-pawn is traded for White's d4-pawn in the early stages of the game granting Black a central pawn majority. The pawn trade also opens the c-file for Black who can place a rook or queen on that file to support the queenside counterplay.

## History of the Opening

The earliest recorded notes on the Sicilian Defense date back to the late 16th century by the Italian chess players Giulio Polerio and Gioachino Greco.

As it was already mentioned above, the Sicilian Defense was analyzed by Giulio Polerio in his 1594 manuscript on chess, though he did not use the term Sicilian Defense.

It was later the subject of analysis by leading players of the day Alessandro Salvio (1604), Don Pietro Carrera (c. 1617), and Gioachino Greco (1623), and later Conte Carlo Francesco Cozio (c. 1740).

The great French player and theoretician André Danican Philidor opined of the Sicilian Defense in 1777, 'This way of opening the game... is absolutely defensive, and very far from being the best... but it is a very good one to try the strength of an adversary with whose skill you are unacquainted.'

In 1813, the English master Jacob Henry Sarratt effectively standardized his English translation of the name of this opening as the Sicilian Defense, referring to an old Italian manuscript that used the phrase, 'il gioco siciliano' (The Sicilian Game).

The Sicilian Defense was fairly popular for much of the nineteenth century as Louis-Charles Mahé de La Bourdonnais, Adolf Anderssen, Howard Staunton, Louis Paulsen, and Carl Jaenisch all played it with some consistency.

In the ninth edition of *Modern Chess Openings*, Walter Korn noted that the Sicilian 'received three of its earliest practical tests, and a big boost in popularity, in the 1834 MacDonnell [sic]-La Bourdonnais match, 1843 Staunton-St. Amant match, and the 1851 London Tournament'.

Staunton wrote of the Sicilian Defense, 'In the opinion of Jaenisch

and the German Handbuch, with which I coincide, this is the best possible reply to 1.P-K4, (1.e4 in algebraic notation) 'as it renders the formation of a center impracticable for White and prevents every attack.'

The opening fell out of favour in the later part of the 19th century when some of the world's leading players rejected it.

Paul Morphy, the world's best player in the late 1850s, decried 'that pernicious fondness for the Sicilian Defence... extending from about 1843 to some time after 1851.'

Wilhelm Steinitz, the first FIDE World Champion, also disliked the Sicilian Defense and rejected it in favour of 1...e5. The death of the opening's two greatest proponents, Staunton in 1874 and Anderssen in 1879 also contributed to its decline.

It has been said that 'these losses almost dealt a knockout blow to the Sicilian because it took a long time to find such important figures to carry the Sicilian's standard.'

George H. D. Gossip, in *The Chess Player's Manual*, first published in 1874, wrote: 'Of late years... discoveries have been made which have the effect of considerably strengthening White's attack, and the Sicilian Defense is now considered by most modern authorities to be a comparatively weak mode of play.'

Freeborough and Ranken, in their treatise *Chess Openings: Ancient and Modern* (1889, 1896), wrote that

the Sicilian Defense 'had at one time the reputation of being the best reply to 1.P-K4, but this has not been confirmed by popular practice. Several eminent players have, however, held to the opinion that it is quite trustworthy.'

The Sicilian Defense continued to be shunned by most leading players at the start of the 20th century, as 1...e5 held center stage. J.R.Capablanca, FIDE World Champion from 1921 to 1927, famously denounced it as an opening where 'Black's game is full of holes.'

Similarly, James Mason wrote: '*Fairly tried and found wanting, the Sicilian has now scarcely any standing as a first-class defence.... [It] is too defensive. There are too many holes created in the Pawn line. Command of the field, especially in the center, is too readily given over to the invading force.*'

Siegbert Tarrasch wrote that 1...c5 'is certainly not strictly correct, for it does nothing toward development and merely attempts to render difficult the building up of a center by the first player... [T]he Sicilian Defense is excellent for a strong player who is prepared to take risks to force a win against an inferior opponent. Against best play, however, it is bound to fail.'

The Sicilian Defense was not seen even once in the 75 games played at the great St. Petersburg 1914 tournament.

However, some leading players such as Emanuel Lasker (FIDE World Champion from 1894 to 1921), Frank Marshall, Savielly Tartakower, Aaron

Nimzowitsch, and later Max Euwe (FIDE World Champion from 1935 to 1937) played the Sicilian Defense.

Even J.R.Capablanca and S. Tarrasch, despite their critical comments, occasionally played the opening. It was played six times (out of 110 games) at New York 1924.

The following year, the authors of *Modern Chess Openings* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) wrote: *'The Sicilian has claims to be considered as the best of the irregular defences to 1.P-K4 at Black's disposal, and has been practised with satisfactory results by the leading players of the day.'*

In this period Black's approach was usually slow and positional, and the all-out attacks by White that became common after World War II had not yet been developed.

The fortunes of the Sicilian Defense were further revived in the 1940s and 1950s by players such as Isaac Boleslavsky, Alexander Kotov, and Miguel Najdorf.

Reuben Fine, one of the world's leading players during this time period, wrote of the Sicilian in 1948, 'Black gives up control of the center, neglects his development, and often submits to horribly cramped positions.

How can it be good? Yet, the brilliant wins by White are matched by equally brilliant wins by Black; time and again the Black structure has been able to take everything and come back for more.'

Later, Bent Larsen, Ljubomir Ljubojević, Lev Polugaevsky, Leonid

Stein, Mark Taimanov and Mikhail Tal all made extensive contributions to the theory and practice of the defence.

Through the efforts of World Champions Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov, the Sicilian Defense became recognised as the defence that offered Black the most winning chances against 1.e4.

Both these great players favoured sharp, aggressive play and employed the Sicilian Defense almost exclusively throughout their careers, burnishing the defense's present reputation.

Today, most leading GMs include the Sicilian Defense in their opening repertoire. In 1990, the authors of *Modern Chess Openings* (13<sup>th</sup> edition) noted that 'in the twentieth century the Sicilian has become the most played and most analyzed opening at both the club and master levels.'

In 1965, in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of that book, Grandmaster Larry Evans observed that: 'The Sicilian is Black's most dynamic, asymmetrical reply to 1.P-K4. It produces the psychological and tension factors which denote the best in modern play and gives notice of a fierce fight on the very first move.'

Note that the research on the played games is up to the end of December 2020.

Efstratios Grivas  
Sharjah, January 2021

## Curriculum Vitae

### Efstratios Grivas



**E**fstratios Grivas (30.03.1966) is a highly experienced chess trainer and chess author. The International Chess Federation (FIDE) has awarded him the titles of International Grandmaster, FIDE Senior Trainer, International Arbiter and International Organizer.

His main successes over the board are Silver Medal (3rd Board) 1998 Olympiad, Gold Medal (3rd Board) 1989 European Team Championship, and 4th place World Junior Championship U20 1985. He has also won 5 Balkan

Medals (2 Gold - 1 Silver - 2 Bronze) and 3 times winner of the international 'Acropolis' Tournament. He has also finished first 28 times in the Greek Individual & Team Championships as well as winning various international tournaments.

He has been awarded six FIDE Medals in the Annual FIDE Awards (Winner of the FIDE Boleslavsky Medal 2009 & 2015 (best author) - Winner of the FIDE Euwe Medal 2011 & 2012 & 2017 (best junior trainer) - Winner of the FIDE Razuvaev Medal 2014 (Trainers' Education) and has been a professional Lecturer at FIDE Seminars for Training & Certifying Trainers. In the period 2009-2018 he served as the Secretary of the FIDE Trainers' Commission. He founded the Grivas International Chess Academy (Athens) in 2012 and has served as the Technical Director of the Sharjah International Chess Academy (Sharjah) since 2019.

He has published a large number of Books & DVDs in Arabic, English, French, Greek, Iranian, Italian, Mongolian, Spanish & Turkish. His 109 books/editions can be indexed in the following categories: Beginners (10), DVDs & E-Books (6), Endgame (5), History (19), Middlegame & Endgame (14), Opening (10), Plan

(8), Strategy (7), Strategy Series (20), and Trainers' Education (10). And his publishers & languages are: Apollon Ektipotiki (Greek), Chess Evolution (English), ChessBase (English), ChessCastle (English), Everyman Chess (English), FIDE (English & French), Gambit Publications (English), Grivas Chess International Academy (English & Greek), IChess (English), Kaissa Chess Center (Greek), Kedros Publishers (Greek), Klitharimos Publishers (Greek), La Casa del Ajedrez (Spanish), Mongolian Chess Federation (Mongolian), New In Chess (English), Prisma (Italian), Russell Enterprises (English), Sabah Chess Academy (English), Sharjah Cultural & Chess Club (Arabic & English), Skyfos Ekdotiki (Greek), Soheil Hooshdaran Chess Academy (Iranian), Thinkers Publishing (English) and Turkiye Santranc Federasyonu (Turkish).

**[www.GrivasChess.com](http://www.GrivasChess.com)**



# SD B33 - The Grivas Sicilian

## Introduction

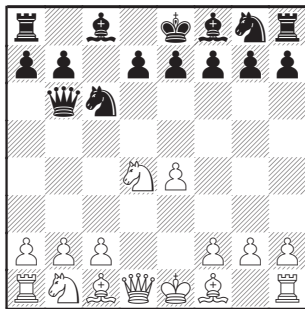
### The Variation

A number of systems in the labyrinth of the Sicilian Defense involve the idea of increasing central pressure by playing... ♖b6.

The main object of this early queen move is to decentralise the strongly placed white knight on the d4 square.

The most direct way to apply this idea is the 'Grivas Sicilian', which arises after the moves:

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♚b6



In this way Black immediately achieves his goal of decentralization of the white knight but this comes at a price.

It will cost a future tempo as the black queen is exposed and will have to

retreat in order to free the b7-pawn to advance and to seek safety.

On the other hand, when the black queen later retreats to c7, Black argues that the white knight was better placed on d4, so no damage has been done.

In most of the games, sooner or later, White brings the knight back to d4 essentially giving Black an extra tempo!

The work in front of you is the fruit of several years of both practical experience and theoretical research. I tried to describe the known lines of the variation, giving my assessments as clearly and responsibly as possible, and generally to create a useful guide.

I must clarify that I took the liberty of changing the move order of many games. In this way it was possible to form an acceptable guide, avoiding confusion with the multitude of transpositions (or mistakes) that have occurred.

Of course, the way you reach a certain position is important, but most important is to examine how you want to proceed. True value comes from knowing what to keep and what to throw away.

## Statistical Overview

The system is classified under ECO (Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings) code B33. Various transpositions can arise and are classified under ECO codes B32, B42, B60, B64, B65 and B82.

The readers using NicBase codes should locate the variation under the SI-34.1 key.

A quick research on the ChessBase MegaBase reveals an interesting statistic: Black scores a good 55.3% based on approximately 8.550 games!

Well, I do not know a lot of systems where White scores so poorly (44.7%) and this simply verifies the validity of the system!

When comes to my official games, the score is even better for Black: 68.2% based on 143 games! Well, experience is quite helpful!

## Why is it the 'Grivas Sicilian'?

I started playing this system regularly more than 35 years ago. During all these years I managed to play it in approximately 150 official games and numerous blitz and rapid games.

At the same time, I was analyzing the variation and trying to systematize the various possibilities and transpositions.

This means that I have already spent a good portion of my life with this variation! In my opinion, I be-

came an expert in it and have offered a lot of new ideas and ways of handling the positions arising from this system.

As the variation had no official name, GM John Nunn decided to baptize it with mine, as he thought that I am the Grandmaster who loves, believes, played and analyzed it more than any other in the world.

I went even further, giving names to each of the sub-variations of the system. For this purpose, I used names from the ancient Greek Mythology, in a way explained in each chapter and this method, in my opinion, suits my purpose well.

I hope that the reader will 'excuse' me for taking the liberty to assign nomenclature in the way described above and will understand and accept my point of view.

It is not important who played a system first, and where. The most important is who made it well-known and popular - Alexander Alekhine.

## Why play the 'Grivas Sicilian'

Many things in chess theory, as in life, are relative and a matter of taste. Actually, there are no 'good' or 'bad' openings. There are openings that you know and understand, and openings that you do not know and do not understand.

This variation offers a lot of possibilities, new ideas and practical ben-

efits that cannot be underestimated in modern chess.

Playing Black can either be fun or a disaster! My opinion is that a serious chess player should master strong weapons against any of White's first moves and try to be a true specialist in these.

He should choose lively variations that not only offer fair chances of winning, but also the possibility of learning new things from every game. Dull positions, where the maximum possible result would be a draw, are not my cup of tea.

Playing the 4... ♖b6 variation is an invitation to a real fight. The main object is to achieve the symbol oo, which means 'unclear position'. Then it does not matter which color your pieces are.

For a player with general knowledge of various Sicilian Defense schemes, it will be much easier to understand the main ideas and variations described in this work. In practice there are unlimited possibilities of transpositions, and an experienced adherent of this variation can make good use of them.

The result will be of great value, as the opponent will be directed to less familiar ground where he may easily be outplayed.

I do not claim that the 'Grivas Sicilian' is a super-strong weapon or that someone can score massively with the black pieces using it. But I do claim that by using this variation you will achieve perfectly playable positions

in which, thanks to your deep knowledge, you can achieve your goals.

I do not claim that everything written in this work is 100% safe and correct. As in every theory book, assessments can easily be changed in the future and at any time.

But I do claim that I wrote the work in all honesty, and I presented everything I know.

Of course, as I already mentioned, there will inevitably be a number of controversial assessments in a variation like this due to the many unclear positions it leads to. So, there is plenty of 'food for thought', double-checking and judgment.

As complex theoretical systems never die, the reader can always discover new roads, new ideas and new moves. Above all, he can be creative.

## History

The history of the variation is partly unknown. The first official game where the system with 4...Qb6, was seen for the first time was back in 1881, in Berlin, between M.Chigorin and L.Paulsen.

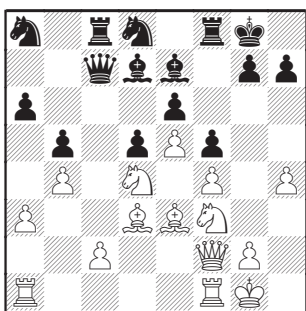
Of course, this game was a disaster for the variation, but we have to admit that Luis Paulsen was not familiar with the subtleties of the system and played it mostly as a surprise weapon. Michael Chigorin played excellently, and the variation did not pass the 'exam'

□ Chigorin Mikhail Ivanovich

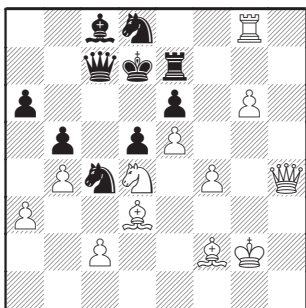
■ Paulsen Louis

B47 Berlin 1881

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4  
 ♚b6 5.♘b3 ♘f6 6.♘c3 e6 7.a3 ♙e7  
 8.♙e2 o-o 9.o-o a6 10.♚d3 ♚c7 11.f4  
 d6 12.♚g3 ♙d7 13.♙e3 ♜ad8 14.♘d2 d5  
 15.e5 ♘e8 16.♘f3 f5 17.♚f2 ♚b8 18.♙b6  
 ♜c8 19.♙d3 ♘c7 20.♘e2 ♘a8 21.♙e3  
 ♘a5 22.b3 b5 23.h4 ♘b7 24.b4 ♚c7  
 25.♘ed4 ♘d8



26.g4 fxg4 27.♘g5 ♙xg5 28.hxg5 g6  
 29.♙g2 ♜b8 30.♜h1 ♜f7 31.♜h6 ♜g7  
 32.♜ah1 ♘f7 33.♜6h4 ♜f8 34.♚g3 ♘d8  
 35.♚xg4 ♘b6 36.♜xh7 ♜xh7 37.♜xh7  
 ♜f7 38.♜h6 ♘c4 39.♜xg6+ ♙f8 40.♙f2  
 ♙c8 41.♚h4 ♙e7 42.♜g8 ♙d7 43.g6 ♜e7



44.♚xe7+!

44... ♙xe7 45.♙h4+ ♙d7 46.♜g7+-.

1-0

In the early seventies GM Eduard Gufeld along with many Yugoslavian players played it quite often, but the variation never really attracted serious attention. Later, GM Vladimir Akopian and GM Bojan Kurajica provided good examples of the vitality of the variation, playing it regularly and achieving excellent results with it.

Even the best player of the world, GM Garry Kasparov, played it once, although this was a blitz game against the German GM Roland Schmalz.

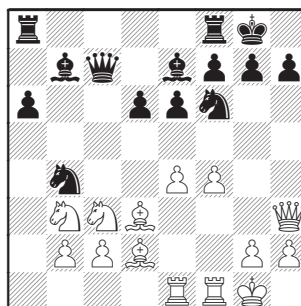
The game contains a lot of mistakes (no time to be accurate!) and has just a historical and statistical value.

□ Schmalz Roland

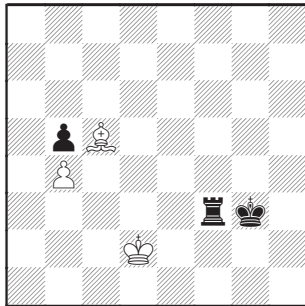
■ Kasparov Garry

B33 Internet 1998

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4  
 ♚b6 5.♘b3 ♘f6 6.♘c3 e6 7.♙d3 ♚c7  
 8.o-o a6 9.f4 d6 10.♚f3 ♙e7 11.♙d2  
 b5 12.a3 o-o 13.♜ae1 ♙b7 14.♚h3 b4  
 15.axb4 ♘xb4



16.e5 ♖xd3 17.exf6 ♗xe1 18.fxe7  
 ♕xg2 19.exf8 ♖+ ♜xf8 20.♖g3 ♕xf1  
 21.♕xe1 ♕c4 22.♗d2 ♕b5 23.♗de4  
 ♕c6 24.♗f6+ ♖h8 25.♖h4 h6 26.♕f2  
 ♖e7 27.♗fe4 f6 28.♖h5 e5 29.fxe5 fxe5  
 30.♖g6 ♖d7 31.♖xd6 ♖xd6 32.♗xd6  
 ♖h7 33.♗c4 ♜f5 34.♕g3 e4 35.♗e3  
 ♜f3 36.♕f2 g5 37.♗e2 ♜f7 38.♗d4 ♕d7  
 39.b4 ♕h3 40.c4 ♖g6 41.c5 h5 42.c6 h4  
 43.♗c4 ♖h5 44.♗d6. ♜f4 45.♗e2 ♜f6  
 46.♗xe4 ♜xc6 47.♕c5 ♜e6 48.♗2c3  
 ♕f5 49.♗d6 ♕d3 50.♖f2 g4 51.♗d5  
 ♜e2+ 52.♖g1 ♜e1+ 53.♖f2 ♜f1+ 54.♖e3  
 ♜f3+ 55.♖d2 g3 56.hxg3 h3 57.♕g1 ♕b5  
 58.♗f4+ ♖g4 59.♗xh3 ♖xh3 60.♗xb5  
 axb5 61.♕c5 ♖xg3



62.♖e2 ♖g4 63.♖d2 ♜a3 64.♖e2 ♖f4  
 65.♖d2 ♖e4 66.♖c2 ♖d5 67.♖b2 ♜d3  
 68.♖c2 ♖c4 69.♖b2 ♜d2+ 70.♖c1 ♖c3  
 71.♕e7 ♜d3 72.♕f6+ ♖xb4 73.♖c2 ♖c4  
 74.♕e7 b4? 75.♕xb4! ♖xb4 76.♖xd3  
 1/2

Among others top chess players there are some games of GM Vladimir Kramnik, although I must mention that he didn't play the system regularly.

## Top GS

My research on top players (who have employed this variation regularly) returned the following result, which I call the Top GS (in alphabetical order):

Andreikin Dmitry (Russia - g), Akopian Vladimir (Armenia - g), Alekseenko Kirill (Russia - g), Alekseev Evgeny (Russia - g), Anastasian Ashot (Armenia - g), Arzumanian Georgy (Armenia - m), Avshalumov Alex (Russia - m), Balashov Yuri (Russia - g), Barlov Dragan (Serbia - g), Bellon Lopez Juan (Spain - g), Boensch Uwe (Germany - g), Cabrilo Goran (Serbia - g), Chirila Ioan (Romania - g), Damjanovic Vladimir (Serbia - f), Danailov Silvio (Bulgaria - m), Djukic Zeljko (Serbia - m), Dobrov Vladimir (Russia - g), Efimov Igor (Italy - g), Fedorov Alexei (Belarus - g), Gasanov Eldar (Ukraine - g), Golod Vitali (Israel - g), Gostisa Leon (Slovenia - m), Grabics Monica (Hungary - wg), Grivas Efstratios (Greece - g), Gufeld Eduard (Russia - g), Hamdouchi Hicham (France - g), Haznedaroglu Kivanc (Turkey - g), Ilic Zoran (Serbia - m), Illner Achim (Germany - f), Ipatov Alexander (Spain - g), Kamsky Gata (USA - g), Kapnisis Spyridon (Greece - m), Karasev Vladimir (Russia - m), Knezevic Bojan (Serbia - m), Kocovski Ivan (FYROM - f), Korneev Oleg (Spain - g), Kononenko Dmitry (Ukraine - g), Korobov Anton (Ukraine - g), Kozul Zdenko (Croatia - g), Kurajica Bojan (Bosnia - g), Kurnosov Igor (Russia - g), Kveinys Aloyzas (Lithuania - g), Lagarde Maxim (France - g), Lucke Norbert (Germany - m), Martinovic Slobodan (Serbia - g), Mihok

Oliver (Hungary - g), Milov Vadim (Israel - g), Morozevich Alexander (Russia - g), Movsesian Sergei (Armenia - g), Nadanian Ashot (Armenia - m), Naiditsch Arkadij (Azerbaijan - g), Nyzhnyk Illya (Ukraine - g), Panno Oscar (Argentina - g), Pap Misa (Serbia - g), Petrov Marijan (Bulgaria - m), Pichot Alan (Argentina - g), Polgar Judit (Hungary - g), Rosen Willy (Germany - f), Scherbakov Ruslan (Russia - g), Skembris Spyridon (Greece - g), Terekhov Andrey (Germany/Russia - f), Urday Henry (Peru - g), Vavra Pavel (Czech Republic - m), Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (India - g), Vokac Marek (Czech Republic - g), Wirthensohn Heinz (Switzerland - m), Yegiazarian Arsen (Armenia - g), Yermolinsky Alex (USA - g).

Games of the above-mentioned players with our subject must be taken seriously into account and serve as instructive examples.

## Breakdown of Chapters

- ☒ Variation A (**Medusa**) deals with White's entire 5th move deviations from the main continuation 5. ♖b3.
- ☒ Variation B (**Eros**) deals with White's entire 6th move deviations from the main continuation 6. ♗c3.
- ☒ Variation C (**Cyclops**) deals with the Fianchetto system (7.g3).
- ☒ Variation D (**Poseidon**) deals with all of White's lines where the move ♕g5 is played, starting with 7. ♕g5.
- ☒ Variation E (**Hestia**) deals with all of White's lines where the move a3 is played, starting with 7.a3.
- ☒ Variation F (**Hera**) deals with the very interesting setup involving 7. ♖e2 and long castling.
- ☒ Variation G (**Fates**) deals with a rare line starting with 7. ♕e2.
- ☒ Variation H (**Teiresias**) deals with the Black's 7<sup>th</sup> move deviations from the main move 7...d6.
- ☒ Variation I (**Hermes**) deals with all of White's lines involving the move a4, starting with 9.a4.
- ☒ Variation J (**Apollo**) deals with all of White's lines where the move ♕d2 is played, starting with 11. ♕d2.
- ☒ Variation K (**Dionysus**) deals with the straightforward and sharp 8.f4.
- ☒ Variation L (**Athena**) deals with the white queen's placement on e2, commencing with 10. ♖e2. In this line White can castle to either side, each option resulting in different types of middlegames.
- ☒ Variation M (**Zeus**) deals with the white queen's placement on f3, commencing with 10. ♖f3. As in the previous chapter, also in this line White can castle to either side, resulting in different types of middlegame.

This is actually the most popular variation of the system and the one that leads to the sharpest positions and the most unclear assessments.

The reader should analyse it carefully and understand it in depth, in order to have a fair share of success.

### Contributors - Helpers

During all the years that I have played and analyzed the variation, there were certain people who offered me great help. These were:

*Nikolai Andrianov (Russia - m), Suat Atalik (Turkey - g), Kivanc Haznedaroglu (Turkey - g), Spyridon Skembris (Greece - g), Andrey Terekhov (Germany/Russia - f) and Antonios Vragoteris (Greece - f).*

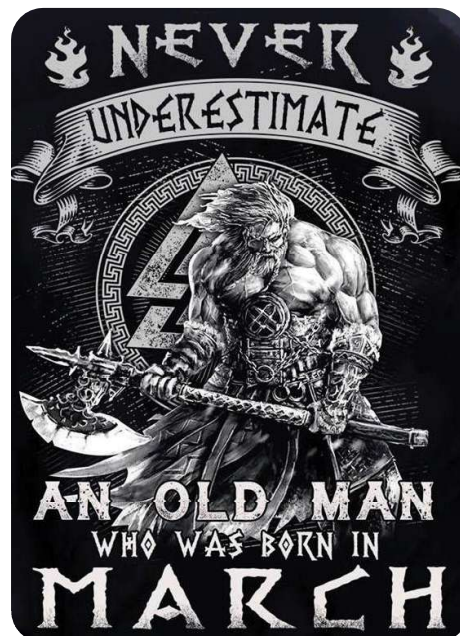
Significant help for preparation of this work was provided by a team of people who checked, analyzed and offered me their ideas and their general opinions. These were:

*Nikolaos Gavrilakis (Greece - m), Spyridon Kapnisis (Greece - m), Sotirios Logothetis (Greece), Anastasios Michailidis (Greece), Ioannis Simeonidis (Greece - f), Andreas Tzermiadianos (Greece - m) and Robert Zysk (Germany - m).*

I would like to thank all these chess players for their trust and their valuable help.

### [www.ChessBomb.com](http://www.ChessBomb.com)

This is the famous Grivas Sicilian with  $4...♙b6$ , rightly named after the famous trainer Efstratios Grivas who deeply explored it in the early 90s. The main idea of this early queen move  $4...♙b6$  is to decentralise the strongly placed white knight on the d4-square. In this way Black immediately achieves his goal.







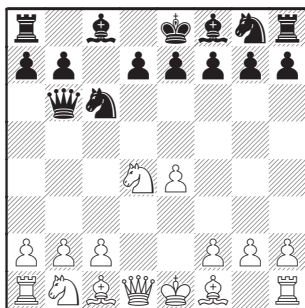
# Lady Godiva

## My Big Love

Many chess players fall in 'love' with certain openings. The reasons are unknown and it's not really of any great value to deeply research it. After all life is all about choices and preferences...

In my chess life I fell in love with a certain opening - a Sicilian branch - which is identified by the moves

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♙b6**



This affair even started at a very early stage of my chess life; just some months after I learned the moves of the game.

And for the wrong reasons! I had just finished reading a survey on isolated pawns and as I was playing the Sicilian Defense, I became afraid that after the moves **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4**, White threatens **5.♘xc6**,

either destroying my possibilities of castling after **5...dxc6** or leaving me with a weak isolated pawn on a7 after **5...bxc6**.

Yes, I was young and naive, but this is why I played **4...♙b6**, so that I could recapture on c6 with my queen!! Maybe it is not so bad to be naive after all...

So, here is my first ever game with my 'love', just for the record:

□ Klebetsanis Kiriakos

■ Grivas Efstratios

B32 Athens 1979

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♙b6 5.♙e3 ♙xb2 6.♘b3 ♙e5 7.♘1d2 ♘f6 8.f4 ♙c3 9.♙f2 ♘g4+ 10.♙xg4 d5 11.♙d1 d4 12.♙xd4 ♘xd4**  
½-½

A very bad game indeed, but please forgive me that I was not much more than a beginner - even GMs are at a certain point of their chess life!

After some years I found this variation to be quite interesting and I inserted it in my openings arsenal. It served me well as I played it in approximately 150 official games (and numerous other games), scoring well over 70% which is an extremely good figure for the black pieces.

I always called it the ‘<sup>W</sup>b6 Sicilian’, until 2004, when I agreed to write an opening book about it. GM John Nunn thought that it deserved to be called the ‘Grivas Sicilian’ and from that time this name was adopted.

Keep in mind that I was not the first to play it, but I am the one who loves, believes, played, and analyzed it more than any other in the world.

I went even further, giving names to each of the sub-variations of the system. For this purpose, I used names from ancient Greek Mythology!

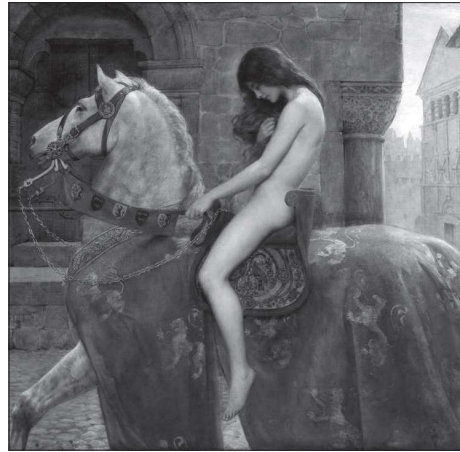
## Lady Godiva

Imagine my surprise when some years later I discovered that some sources were calling it the ‘Godiva’ variation. But what the heck is ‘Godiva’ I wondered. A quick search in Wikipedia revealed the following ‘truth’:

Godiva (old English: Godgifu), known as Lady Godiva, was an 11th-century Anglo-Saxon noblewoman who, according to a legend dating back at least to the 13th century, rode naked through the streets of Coventry in order to gain a remission of the oppressive taxation imposed by her husband on his tenants.

Lady Godiva was the wife of Leofric, Earl of Mercia. They had one proved son Aelfgar, Earl of Mercia. Lady Godiva’s name occurs in charters and the Domesday survey, though the spelling varies.

The Old English name Godgifu or Godgyfu meant ‘gift of God’; Godiva was the Latinized version.



*Lady Godiva by John Collier, c. 1897*  
Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

The legend of the nude ride is first recorded in the 13th century, in the Flores Haustorium and the adaptation of it by Roger of Wendover; despite its considerable age, it is not regarded as plausible by modern historians, nor mentioned in the two centuries intervening between Godiva’s death and its first appearance, while her generous donations to the church receive various mentions.

According to the typical version of the story, Lady Godiva took pity on the people of Coventry, who were suffering grievously (maybe here we find a root for my surname - Grivas...) under her husband’s oppressive taxation.

Lady Godiva appealed again and again to her husband, who obstinately

refused to remit the tolls. At last, weary of her entreaties, he said he would grant her request if she would strip naked and ride through the streets of the town.

Lady Godiva took him at his word and, after issuing a proclamation that all persons should stay indoors and shut their windows, she rode through the town, clothed only in her long hair.

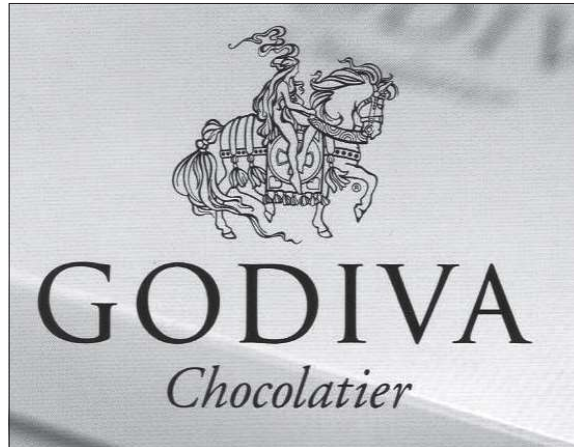
Just one person in the town, a tailor ever afterwards known as Peeping Tom, disobeyed her proclamation in one of the most famous instances of voyeurism. In the story, Tom bores a hole in his shutters so that he might see Godiva pass and is struck blind. In the end, Godiva's husband keeps his word and abolishes the onerous taxes.

The famous Godiva Chocolatier is named after Lady Godiva and features a stylized rendition of her ride as its logo.

Now, compare the above diagram (the black queen and the black knight standing together in front of their army) with the painting (a noble woman and her knight out in the village streets).

I really liked this story and I do not care if you call the variation either 'Godiva' or 'Grivas Sicilian', please do what makes you feel better!

More to the point now! As I was an expert in this variation, I tried to



teach it to my trainees. But very few of them took the risk of playing a rather razor-style opening where any result is possible and sometimes in a quick and cruel way.

But of course, I never insist, as it is not nice for a trainer to try to force his own 'loves' on his trainees - keep that in mind - the Mysterious Mr. X would certainly disagree!

### Sound or Not

My general advice is not to 'play' the 'Grivas Sicilian'! You need a lot of general and concrete knowledge; you need to be a mature player before all.

I have noticed that it is easier to play it with White as the moves and plans (attack!) are easier to find and to play.

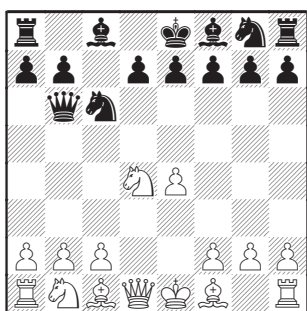
The variation is sound and offers rich possibilities allowing Black to play for a win as well.



# Chapter 1 - Move By Move

## Variation A - Medusa B32-B33

The next diagram 'identifies' the turning point of the Medusa variations which after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♙b6**



includes everything else than the 'usual' **5.♗b3**. Although **5.♗b3**, has always been the main continuation, some alternatives come into consideration.

These alternatives seem mostly innocent, but they require sufficient knowledge from Black to avoid been tricked.

These lines are mostly played to avoid home preparation, but even though they are successful from time to time, in the long run they have to be discarded in favour of more dangerous lines.

I have to admit that the A8 line is the most interesting of all, although it doesn't seem to promise White any advantage.

But before we go on, let's see why I named the variation after the ugliest creature of ancient Olympus' Mountain.

### Nomenclature Medusa under the Microscope

Medusa was an ugly creature, daughter of Phorkys and Keto, the children of Gaia (Earth) and Okeanos (Ocean). She was one of the three sisters known as the Gorgons.

The other two sisters were Sthenno and Euryale. Medusa was the only mortal of the three and used to be very beautiful. She lived far up north, where the sun didn't shine.

Being very curious, she wanted to see the sun, and thus asked the Goddess Athena for permission to visit the south. Athena refused, but then Medusa got angry and dared to claim that Athena hadn't given her permission because she was jealous of her beauty.

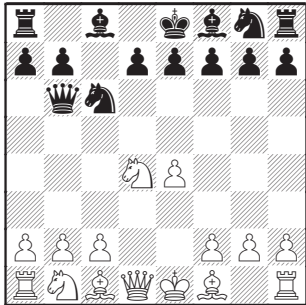
Athena was angered and punished her by turning her hair into snakes and placed a curse on her, making her so ugly that whoever looked into her eyes would turn into stone.

Medusa was a dangerous creature but if you knew how to handle her she was harmless.

Now let us look at the above diagram and review White's alternatives to 5. ♖b3.

### Variation A1 - Medusa - 5.?

1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♚b6



5. ♖c3?

Of course we have come across the same blunder by the 'alternative' 5. ♙d3? ♖xd4 (5... ♚xd4 0-1 Joksimovic, L-Kocovski, I Boskovic 2004) 6. ♙e3 ♚xb2 7. ♖d2 ♖c6 8. ♖c4 ♚c3+ 9. ♙d2 ♚f6-+ Henriques, S-Almeida, J Benedita 1998.

5... ♚xd4

5... ♖xd4, will also do the job: 6. ♙e3 e5 (6... ♖xc2+? 7. ♚xc2± De la Pena Lleranti, A-Rey Farina, A Ferrol 2002) 7. ♖d5 ♚a5+ 8.c3 ♖e6-+.

6. ♙d3

6. ♚xd4 ♖xd4 7. ♙d3 a6 8. ♖d5 ♖e6-+ Dimitrov, V-Veselinov, S Sofia 2007.

6... ♚b6

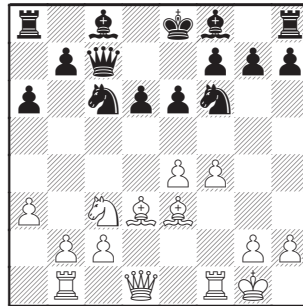
Or 6...e6 7. ♙e3 ♚b4 8.0-0 a6 9.a3

♚a5 10. ♖h1 ♖f6 11.f4 d6 12.b4 ♚c7-+ Hoegy, K-Iwanziw, N Heusenstamm 2009.

7.0-0

7. ♖d5 ♚d8 8. ♙f4 d6 9.0-0 e6 10. ♖e3 ♖f6 11. ♙g5 ♙e7-+ Kamara, A-Kigigha, B Monrovia 2017.

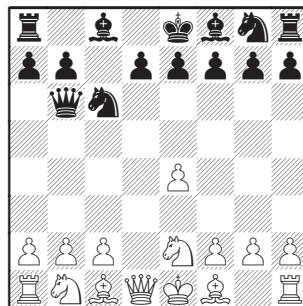
7...e6 8.a3 a6 9. ♚b1 ♖f6 10. ♙e3 ♚c7 11.f4 d6



And Black wins as in Biszof, H-Pazdziora, M Rewal 2006.

### Variation A2 - Medusa - 5. ♖e2

1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♚b6 5. ♖e2



A very passive move, allowing Black to obtain an excellent position without much trouble.

### 5...♘f6

5...e6, is possible as well: 6.♘bc3 ♘f6 7.h3 ♕b4 (7...d5 8.♕e3 ♕c5) 8.♕e3 ♕xc3+ 9.bxc3 (9.♘xc3 ♜xb2 10.♖b5 (10.♕d2 o-o 11.♕d3 d5) 10...♘xe4) 9...♜a5 Sanchez Antunez,A-Pedraza Fernandez,M Malaga 2012.

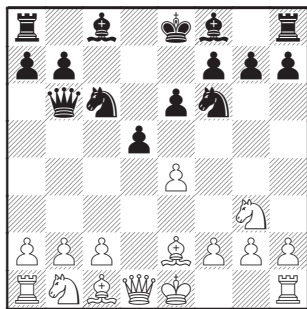
### 6.♘g3

After 6.♘bc3? ♘g4! White faces problems!

### 6...e6

Interesting is the active 6...h5!?, but it remains untested.

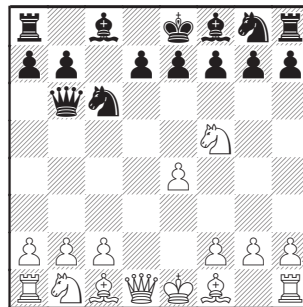
### 7.♕e2 d5



And Black has already the slightly better prospects, as in Fehr,R-Ilic,Z Bern 1990.

## Variation A3 - Medusa - 5.♘f5

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♜b6 5.♘f5

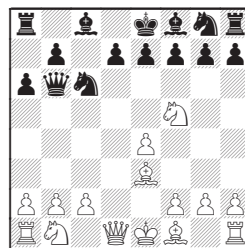


This does not seem like a 'natural' move and I could even call it a mistake. Anyway, Black should react actively.

### 5...d5

The alternatives

5...♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 (6...♘xe4!? 7.♘xe4 ♜a5+ 8.♕d2 ♜xf5 9.♕d3 ♜e5 10.o-o d5) Butti,E-Bassan,R Buenos Aires 2009) 7.♕d3 g6 8.♘e3 ♕g7 9.o-o o-o= Preuschoff,M-Rosen,W Germany 2005, and 5...a6 6.♕e3



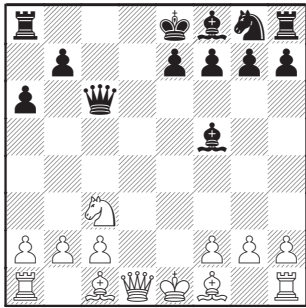
6...♜d8? (6...♜xb2 7.♘d2 ♜c3) 7.♘d4? (7.♘c3 ♘f6 8.♕c4) 7...♘f6 8.♘c3 e5 9.♘f5 d5 10.exd5 ♖b4= Shabalov,A-Yermolinsky,A North Bay 1994 are not bad for Black either, while

5...e6 6.♘d6+ ♕xd6 7.♖xd6 ♘f6 8.♗d3 ♖b4+, is just equal.

### 6.exd5

Not of course 6.♗e3? ♖xb2-+, but possible is 6.♖xd5 ♘f6 7.♖d3 ♘xe4 (7...♗xf5!? 8.exf5 ♗d8 9.♖b5 ♖c7) 8.♖xe4 ♖a5+ 9.♗d2 ♖xf5=.

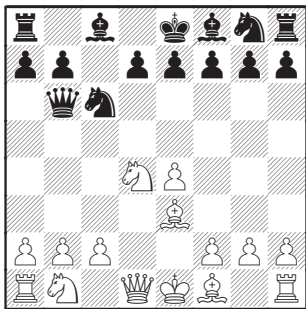
6...♗xf5 7.dxc6 ♖xc6 8.♘c3 a6



And Black has achieved an excellent Sicilian Defence middlegame.

### Variation A4 - Medusa - 5.♗e3

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♖b6 5.♗e3



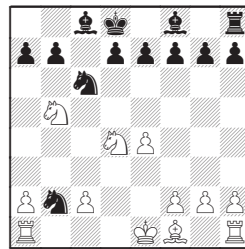
An aggressive but not fully correct

idea. By sacrificing the b pawn, White tries to grab the initiative. Compared to similar Sicilian lines, this one is not an easy case for White.

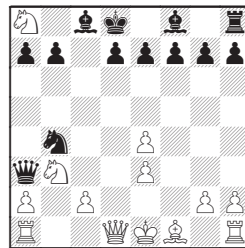
### 5...♖xb2

It seems that Black can also go for 5...♘f6? 6.♘c3

a) 6...♘g4?! 7.♘d5! (7.♖xg4? ♖xb2 8.♘b3 ♖xc3+ 9.♗d2 ♖xc2) 7...♘xe3 (7...♖a5+ 8.♗d2 ♖d8 9.♘b5 1-0 Neelakantan,N-Nagendra,R India 1988) 8.fxe3! (8.♘xb6? ♘xd1 9.♘xa8 ♘xb2 10.♘c7+ ♘d8 11.♘cb5



11...♘xd4 (11...e5 12.♘xc6+ dxc6 13.♗b1 cxb5 14.♗xb2 a6) Muslija,I-Martic,Z Pula 1996) 12.♘xd4 ♘a4 Vitolinsh,A-Akopian,V Daugavpils 1989) 8...♖a5+ (8...♖d8 9.♘b5+-; 8...♖xb2 9.♘c7+ ♘d8 10.♘xa8 ♖c3+ 11.♘f2+-) 9.b4! ♘xb4 10.♘b3 ♖a3 (10...♘xc2+ 11.♘f2) 11.♘c7+ ♘d8 12.♘xa8

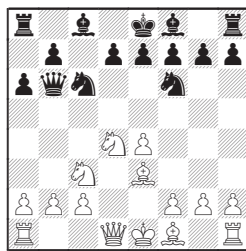


12...g6 (12...♘c6 13.♖d2 g6 14.♗b5 ♗g7



15.c3 d6 16.o-o ♜f8 17.♞ad1 ♔d7 18.c4 ♘c8 19.c5+- Zaitsev,I-Torbin,K Moscow 2000) 13.c3 ♖c6 14.♙b5 ♙g7 15.o-o ♗e5 16.♗h1 b6 17.♞d4+- Areshchenko,A-Arzumanian,G Kramatorsk 2003.

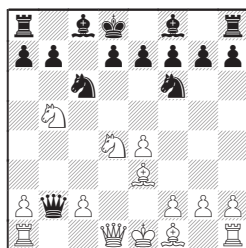
b) 6...a6



7.♗xc6 (7.♗b3 ♞c7 8.♗d5 ♞e5 9.♗b6 ♞b8 10.♙d3 d5 11.f4 ♞xb2 12.♙c1 ♞c3+ 13.♙d2 ♞b2 14.♙c1 ♞c3+ 15.♙d2 ♞b2 16.exd5 ♙g4 17.♗c4 ♞xb3 18.axb3 ♙xd1 19.dxc6 ♙g4 20.cxb7 ♞xb7 21.♞xa6+- Hansen,M-Olesen,M Copenhagen 1990) 7...♞xc6 8.e5 ♗e4 9.♗xe4 ♞xe4 10.♞d4 ♞xd4 11.♙d4 e6 12.g3±.

c) 6... ♞xb2

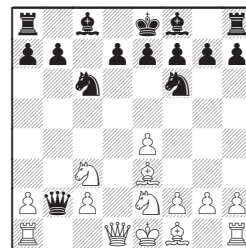
c1) 7.♗cb5?! ♞b4+ (7...♗d8?)



8.a3! (8.♞b1 ♞xa2 9.♞a1 ♞b2 10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.♙d4 ♞xa1 12.♞xa1 cxb5 13.♞a5+-) 8...♗e5 9.♗e6+ fxe6 10.♙d4+-) 8.♙d2 ♞a4 9.♗c7+ ♗d8 10.♗xc6+ (10.♗xa8!? ♗xd4

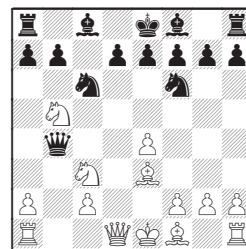
(10...♞xd4? 11.♙a5+ b6 12.♞xd4 ♗xd4 13.♗xb6 ♗xc2+ 14.♗d2 axb6 (14...♗xa1 15.♗xc8+ ♗xc8 16.♙a6+ ♗b8 17.♞b1+ ♗a8 18.♙c7+-) 15.♙xb6+ ♗e8 16.♗xc2 ♗xe4 17.a4+-) 11.♙d3 b6) 10...♗xc7 Votava,J-Voloshin,L Czech Republic 1999.

c2) 7.♗de2?



7...♗b4! (7...♞b4 8.♞b1 ♞a5 9.♞d3 e6 10.♞b5 ♞d8 ♠ Schweinberger,J-Frech,J Schwarzach 2001) 8.♞c1 e5 ♠.

c3) 7.♗db5 ♞b4

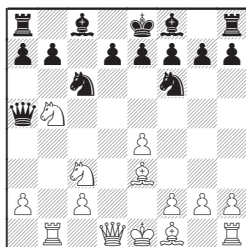


When he seems to hold. But this is not the case:

c31) 8.♙d3 ♞a5 9.♞b1 (9.♙d2 ♞d8 10.a4 e6 11.o-o ♙e7 12.f4 a6 13.♗a3 d5 14.e5 ♗d7 15.♞g4 g6 16.♗e2 ♗c5 ♠ Dobias,R-Petrik,S Bratislava 1994) 9...e6 10.♙d2 (10.o-o ♙e7 11.f4 d6 12.♗h1 o-o ♠ Sime,D-McInally,P Grangemouth 2000) 10...♞d8∞

Judewicz,A-Piscicelli,D Mar del Plata 1995.

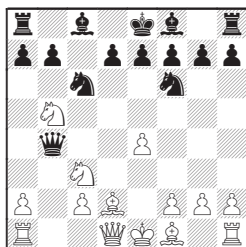
**c32)** 8.♖b1 ♖a5



9.♞d2 (9.♙d2 ♞d8 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.exd5 a6 12.♗a3 ♗e5 13.f4 e6 ♞ Schroeder,C-Deisz,A ICCF 1990) 9... e6 (9...a6? 10.♙b6! ♗xe4 11.♘c7+ ♗d8 12.♗xa8+ ♞xb6 13.♘xb6 ♘xd2 14.♗xd2+- Danker,F-Stock,U Schwabstedt 1994) 10.♙c4 ♙e7 11.0-0 0-0 ♞ Swiercz,D-Gajewski,G Warsaw 2005.

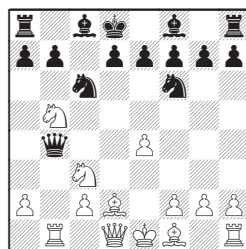
**c33)** 8.♞d2 ♞a5 9.♘d5 ♞xd2+ (9...♘xd5? 10.♞xa5 ♘xa5 11.exd5+- Ngo Trung Tin-Ninh Cong Quyen Ho Chi Minh City 2005) 10.♗xd2 ♗d8 11.♘b6 ♞b8∞ Lapinski,K-Kryzstofiak,M Kolobrzeg 2007.

**c34)** 8.♙d2!



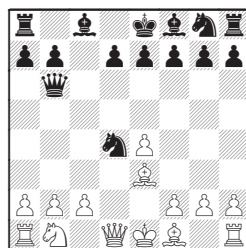
8...♞b8 (8...♞a5 9.♘d5+- Kirk,J-

Smith,J Dos Hermanas 2004; 8...♘xe4 9.a3 ♘xc3 10.axb4 ♘xd1 11.♘c7+ ♗d8 12.♗xa8+- Rada Equiza,M-Vavra,P Brno 2006; 8...♗d8 9.♞b1



9...♞a5 (9...♞c5 10.♙e2 d6 11.♙e3 ♞e5 12.f4 ♞e6 13.♘d4± Popov,I-Torbin,K Sochi 2015) 10.♙c4 e6 11.0-0+-) 9.♞b1! (9.e5? ♗e4 (9...♘xe5!?) 10.e6 fxe6 11.♞b1 ♘xc3 12.♘c7+ ♗d8 13.♘xe6+ dxe6 14.♙xc3+ ♞d6+- Huckaby,M-Milovanovic,R Dallas 1999) 9...♞a5 10.e5! (10.♘d5 ♞a4 11.♘bc7+ (11.♘b4!±) 11...♗d8 12.♘c3 ♞d4∞ Lastin,A-Kononenko,D Dagomys 2009) 10...♘xe5 11.♞e2 d6 12.f4+-.

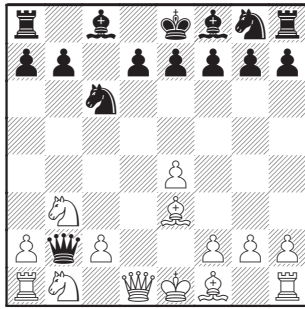
Also 5...♘xd4?



Is out of the spirit of the variation:

6. ♖xd4 (6. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 7. ♖xd4 ♜f6 8. ♖d3?! (8. ♜c3!) 8...d6 9. o-o e5 10. ♖e3 d5= Keleti,D-Tar,B Budapest 2010) 6... ♜c7 7. ♜c3 e6 8. ♖d3±.

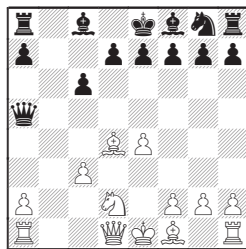
6. ♜b3



Another critical line is 6. ♜xc6, where it seems that Black can grab the exchange:

a) 6...bxc6

a1) 7. ♖d4 ♜b4+ (7... ♜b8 8. ♜c3 (8. e5 d6 9. f4 ♜h6 10. ♜a3 ♜b4+ 11. c3 ♜xa3 o-o-1 Aksakal,B-Sadikhov,U Konya 2016) 8... ♜f6 9. ♖b1 ♜c7 10. ♖c4 d6 ♖c3 ♜a5 9. ♜d2

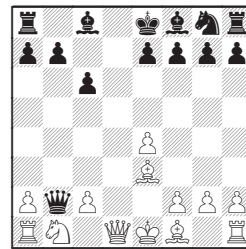


9... ♜c7 (9...d6 10. e5 d5 11. ♖d3 ♜h6 12. ♜f3 e6 13. o-o ♖a6 14. ♜b3 ♜a3 15. c4 ♖e7∞ Badmatsyrenov,O-Namgilov,S Ulan Ude 2006) 10. ♖c4 c5 11. ♖e3 e6 12. o-o∞ Pieris,T-Toh,T Asia 1989.

a2) 7. ♖c4 e5 8. ♜d2 ♜f6 9. o-o ♖e7 10. f4 exf4 11. ♖xf4 d5 ♖ Stonehouse,T-Aptekar,L Auckland 1977.

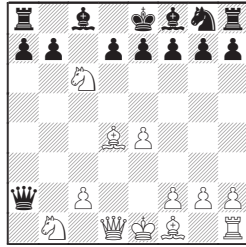
a3) 7. ♜d2 d6 (7... ♜b8!? 8. ♖b1 ♜c7 9. ♖d3 e5 10. o-o ♜f6 11. f4 d6 Reppen,E-Tsifanskaya,L Plovdiv 2010, seems also fine for Black; 7... ♜f6 8. ♖b1 ♜e5 9. f4 ♜c7 10. c4 d6 ♖ Argandona R.,I-Starostits,I San Sebastian 2019; 7... ♜c3 8. ♖b1 ♜f6 9. ♖d3 e6 10. o-o d5 11. ♖b3∞ Le Corre,B-Wirig,A Luxembourg 2016) 8. ♖b1 ♜c3 9. ♖d3 ♜f6 10. o-o∞ Van der Wiel,J-Kouatly,B Cannes 1990.

b) 6...dxc6!



7. ♖d4 (7. ♜d2 ♜f6 8. ♜c4 ♜c3+ 9. ♖d2 ♜d4 10. f3 g6 ♖ Bako,I-Reck,J Erlangen 2020) 7... ♜b4+ 8. ♜c3 ♜f6 9. ♖b1 ♜a5 10. e5 ♜d5 11. ♖c4 e6 ♖ Heuer,V-Gusev,Y Novgorod 1961.

c) 6... ♜xa1 7. ♖d4! (7. ♜xa7 ♜xa2 8. ♜b5 ♜a5+ 9. ♜c3 e6 (9...g6 10. ♖d2 ♜d8 11. ♖f4 ♖g7 12. ♖c7+ ♜xc7 13. ♜xc7 ♖xc3+ 14. ♜e2 ♜xc7 15. ♜d5 ♖f6-+ Mostertman,X-Decoster,S Hengelo 2005) 10. ♖c4 ♖b4 11. ♖d4 ♜e7-+; 7. ♜b4? e6 o-o-1 Estevez,C-Acevedo,J Columbia 2009) 7... ♜xa2

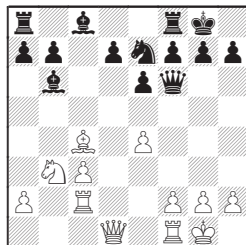


8. ♖c3! (8. ♖b4? ♜a5 9. ♞d2 e5+ Mader, K-Bier, R Internet 2008) 8... ♞e6! 9. ♖xa7 (9. ♖e5 ♞d6 (9... a6? 10. ♙c4 d6 11. ♙xe6 dxe5 12. ♙xc8 exd4 13. ♙xb7 ♖b8 14. ♙c6+ ♗d8 15. ♞xd4+ ♗c7 16. ♞d7+ ♗b6 17. ♖a4+ ♗a5 18. ♞c7+1-o Moeller, R-Bartels, J Hanerau 2015) 10. ♖b5 ♞b8 11. ♖xf7! ♞) 9... ♖f6 (9... ♖xa7 10. ♙xa7 ♖f6 11. ♞d4 Sahl, S-Orlova, Y Khanty-Mansiysk 2010) 10. ♖ab5 ♞.

So, probably the most secure is the old b line.

6. ♖d2?, is one of these 'quick' blitz moves (or we might call them mouse slips?) that can be good for a bullet game but not anything more and they are just losing a piece after 6... ♖xd4:

a) 7. ♙xd4 ♞xd4 8. ♙d3 (8. ♖c1 e6 (8... ♖f6 9. c3 ♞e5 10. ♙d3 e6 11. o-o ♙e7 12. ♖e1 o-o+ Grossman, D-Szentgyorgyi, S Budapest 2013) 9. c3 ♞f6 10. ♙c4 ♙c5 11. o-o ♖e7 12. ♖b3 ♙b6 13. ♖c2 o-o

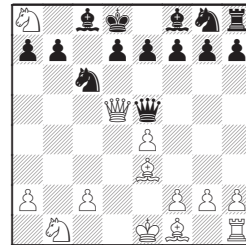


14. ♖e1 ♖g6 15. ♙b5 a6 16. ♙xd7 ♖d8 17. ♖d2 ♙xd7 18. ♖xd7 ♙xf2+ o-1 Skof, S-Stern, U Nova Gorica 2019; 8. ♖f3 ♞xe4+ 9. ♙e2 g6 10. o-o ♙g7 11. ♞d3 ♞xd3 12. ♙xd3 ♙xa1 o-1 Nunez Villavicencio, J-Abdulrahman, A Al Ain 2013) 8... ♞d6+ Bellahcene, M-Tsirekidze, N Batumi 2010.

b) 7. ♖b3 ♖xc2+ 8. ♞xc2 ♞xc2 9. ♖c1 ♞xe4 10. ♖c3 e6 11. f3 ♞b4+ Shreyas, S-Grivas, E Dubai 2019.

c) 7. ♖c4 ♖xc2+ 8. ♗d2 ♞xa1 9. ♞xa1 ♖xa1+ Burg, N-Grieb, L Oberhof 2010.

6. ♖b5?, is bad as well: 6... ♞xa1 (6... ♗d8? 7. ♖1c3 a6 8. ♖b1 Marcziter, A-Guntermann, E Internet 2020) 7. ♖c7+ ♗d8 8. ♖xa8 ♞e5 9. ♞d5

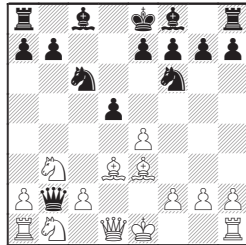


9... ♞b8 (9... e6? 10. ♞xe5 ♖xe5 11. ♙g5+? (11. ♙xa7 ♗) 11... ♙e7 12. ♙xe7+ ♖xe7+ Stubben, U-Becker, E Wesel Undeloh 2016) 10. ♞xf7 ♖h6+.

### 6... ♞e5

The threat 7. c3 and 8. Bc1 is strong so the main alternative is 6... ♖f6 (6... ♞f6 7. ♙d3 e6 8. o-o ♞ Obrusnik, M-Dutkowski, W Raciborz 2008); 7. ♙d3

(7.c3? ♖xe4 8.♔c1? ♜xf2#) 7...d5

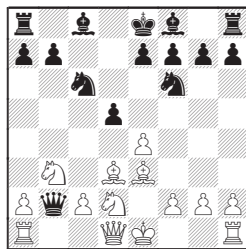


a) 8.♔c1?! ♜e5 9.f4 ♜c7 10.e5 ♔g4 11.♜d2 ♖e4-+ Sulskis,S-Kanep,M Finland 2009.

b) 8.c3?! ♔g4 (8...dxe4 9.♔b5 ♔g4♠) 9.f3?! (9.♜d2 ♜xd2+ 10.♖1xd2♠) 9...♜xg2 10.♞f1 dxe4-+ Liebscher,H-Rosen,W Eckernfoerde 2010.

c) 8.♔d2 ♖xe4 9.♔xe4 ♜e5 10.o-o ♜xe4♠ Da Silva,A-Ribeiro,L Porto Alegre 2018.

d) 8.♖1d2



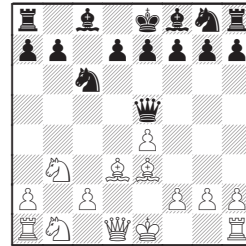
8...e5 (8...♖xe4 9.♖xe4 dxe4 10.♔xe4 ♜c3+ 11.♔d2 ♜c4 Florescu,C-Tsyhanchuk,S Internet 2020) 9.o-o ♔g4 10.f3 ♔e6♠.



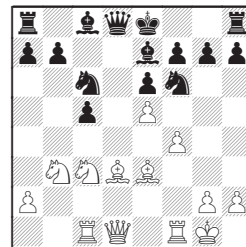
7.♖1d2

Alternatives are:

a) 7.♔d3



a1) 7...♖f6 8.o-o (8.f4 ♜c7 9.c4 d6 10.♖c3 ♜d8 11.♔e2 g6 12.o-o ♔g7♠ Harutjunyan,G-Alekseev,E Minsk 2015) 8...e6 9.f4 ♜c7 10.c4 (10.♖c3 d6♠ Suta,A-Cop,J Otocec 2015) 10...d6 11.♖c3 ♔e7 (11...b6 12.♞c1 ♜b8 13.♖d5!?! Reis,L-Rodriguez Lopez,R Ourense 2007) 12.♞c1 ♜d8 13.c5!?! (13.♜f3 o-o 14.♞cd1 e5♠ Sulskis,S-Yegiazarian,A Kolkata 2002) 13...dxc5 14.e5

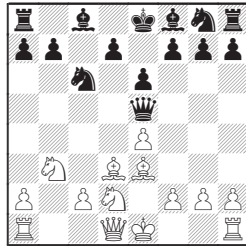


14...♖d5 (14...♖d7!?! 15.♔e4 o-o 16.♜e2 f5 17.♔xc6 bxc6 18.♖a4! 15.♖xd5 exd5 16.♔xc5 o-o 17.♔xe7 ♜xe7 18.♔b5 ♖b4 19.♞f2 a6 20.♔f1 ♔f5♠ Sulskis,S-Kanep,M Tallinn 2010.

a2) 7...g5 8.o-o ♔g7 9.♖1d2 ♜c7 10.♞c1! Almasi,Z-Dobrov,V Riadh 2017.

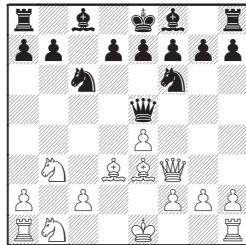
a3) 7...g6!? 8.o-o ♔g7 9.♖d2 ♗b8  
10.♘c3 ♘f6.

a4) 7...e6 8.o-o (8.♘1d2



8...♘f6 (8...♙b4?! 9.o-o ♔c3 10.♘f3 ♗f6  
11.♗b1± Conte,K-Dutra,L Florianopolis  
2018) 9.o-o ♔e7 10.♗e1 ♗c7 11.♘f3 d6  
12.h3 o-o 13.♗d2 a6± So,B-Le Minh  
Hoang Da Nang 2008) 8...♗b8 9.c4 d6  
10.♘c3 ♘f6 11.f4 ♔e7 12.♗c1 b6!± Cao  
Sang-Chirila,I Plovdiv 2008.

b) 7.♗f3?! ♘f6 8.♔d3



8...♗c7 (8...d5 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.o-o  
e6 11.♘1d2 ♔d6± Lobo,P-Martins,N  
Luso 2016) 9.o-o d6 (9...e6 10.♘c3 a6  
11.♔g5? ♘e5 12.♗f4 ♗xc3+ Vsetulova,V-  
Garska,L Kouty nad Desnou 2015) 10.♘c3  
♘e5 11.♙b5+ ♔d7 12.♔xd7+ ♘fxd7+  
Habinski,D-Guntermann,E Internet  
2020.

7...♘f6

Black can also continue with 7...e6 8.f4  
♗c7 9.e5?! d6 10.♘d4 dxe5 11.♘b5 ♗d8  
12.♗f3 a6 13.♘c3 ♘ge7+ Cifuentes  
Goncalves,L-Martinez,R Dos Hermanas  
2003, or 7...♗c7 8.f4 d6 9.♔d3 ♘f6  
10.h3 e6 11.o-o ♔e7± Kalogiannidis,I-  
Gor,O Akhisar Manisa 2009.

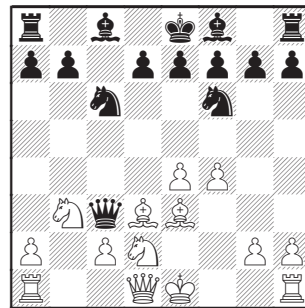
8.f4

8.♔c4 ♘xe4 9.o-o e6± Lacinova,J-  
Boskova,L Plzen 1993.

8...♗c3

The proposal of IM Zoran Ilic, 8...♗c7,  
looks like a fair alternative as the white  
knights have no access to the valuable  
squares b5 and d5.

9.♔d3



Wrong would be the optimistic  
9.♔f2?, due to 9...d5+ (9...♘g4+?  
10.♗xc4 d5 11.♗d1 (11.♗f3!+-) 11...d4∞  
Klebetsanis,K-Grivas,E Athens 1979).

9...d5

Alternatives give White compensation:  
a) 9...♘b4 10.♗e2 ♘xc2+ 11.♔xc2  
♗xc2 12.♘d4 ♗c7 13.o-o± Kang Mei  
Yin-Stefany,J Czech Republic 1996.