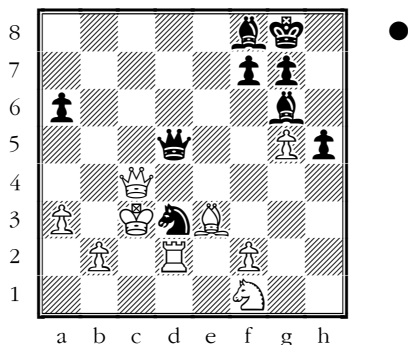


Chess Quiz

Ponomariov - Dearing

World U18 Championship Yerevan



From our annotated game

Book Review

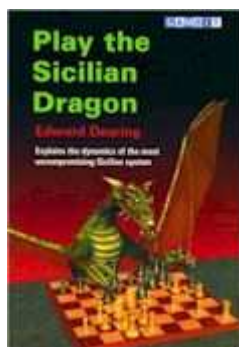
by Mikhail Golubev



Play the Sicilian Dragon by Edward Dearing, Gambit Publications

2004, 256 pages.

After becoming a writer yourself, it is not always easy to evaluate a work, the preparation of which, as you now know, may require a valuable part of not only the author's but even the book editor's life. I hold the view that negative opinions about books in most cases just do not deserve to be expressed in print (well, unless the book under consideration is dangerous for society) – and, as it happens, positive opinions are often too personal and insignificant for others. The comments of readers, who spend their own money on the book are, probably, of most value. But I found it hard to avoid temptation and agreed to review a new Dragon book by IM Edward Dearing for CT. A free copy reached me on 30th December – a true New Year gift, especially taking in account that late on the same day I left for [Kiev](#) to celebrate New Year



there. The Ukrainians are hoping to reach the highest standards in the near future, but there are no TVG trains as of now. So the way from Odessa to our capital is still takes more than 10 hours. My girlfriend is a chess-player and, of course, she did not try to prevent me spending some of our hours on reading.

At this point, I should (finally) confess that the emergence of Dearing's book on the market was slightly puzzling for me. I could not remember any Dragon games, played by the author, and had no idea of what could be expected. Now I see that there are 19 of Dearing's Dragon games in my collection, and (shame!) the reference to one of them was included in my own 1999 book – I did not keep GM Hodgson's young opponent's name in memory at the time.

On the cover of the book, the publisher introduces the author as follow:

"Edward Dearing is an IM, and one of Scotland's top players. He was equal first in the Smith & Williamson Young Masters in 2002, and has represented his country several times in World and European junior championships. He has a degree in law from Cambridge University. This is his first chess book."

A few further facts come from FIDE.com. Eddie Dearing is ranked 6th in Scotland in the Jan 2005 rating list, his current [ELO](#) is 2408. He is 24 years old (was born on 30th October 1980).

What may surprise you after you get the book in your hands, is its size. It is simply a colossal work: **256** pages, and the format of pages is: **172 x 248 mm** (as a reference: the familiar A4 format, most frequently used for printing, etc., is not so much larger – 210 x 297 mm).

Those who open any book at first in the middle, will quickly realise that the author has not attempted to copy blindly someone else's stuff. It is personal and it is written from the heart.

At the very beginning of the work, there is an **Acknowledgements** section (Pages 5–6), which precedes the Bibliography and Introduction and lists more than 50 various people, not all chess-players.

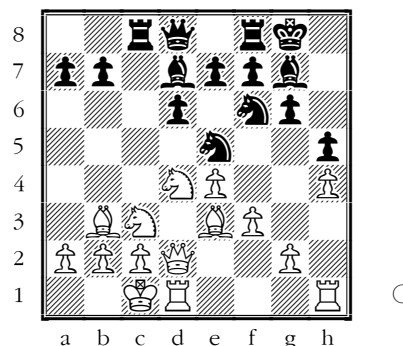
The large **Bibliography** (P. 7) includes all the important printed and electronic sources – with possible, unfortunate exception for our Chess Today. But 50 annotated Dragon games, which we published prior to the end of Dearing's work in September 2004, is not too serious an amount of material, after all. As a good sign, non-chess books are not listed in the Bibliography. So, the remaining pages are devoted to the Dragon exclusively.

The theoretical material is organised in the most standard 'variations tree' format. Still, the author's style can be called a bit eclectic. There are a significant quantity of textual explanations; the evident enthusiasm coincides with lots of analyses and evaluations aspiring for objectivity. The references to previous publications are given here and there (at some cases when the author avoids covering some specific, not too important in his view subline, he just refers to published earlier books!). On many occasions the complete games can be found inside notes.

Dearing discusses in the book all the modern main lines, and without reading the **Introduction** (Pages 8–22), where his concept is explained fully, not everyone will easily understand that this is still a *repertoire book* for Black, even if a very *expanded* one. (But of course, it is.)

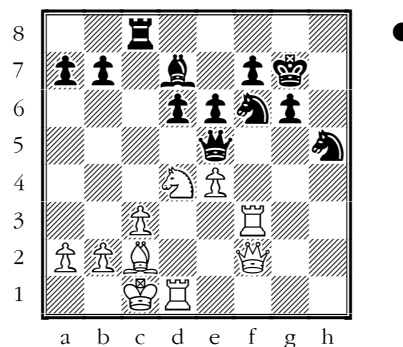
The Introduction also includes the author's own story of playing and studying the Dragon, the typical Dragon themes, and the obscure lines for White (Early Deviations).

In **Chapters 1–12** (Pages 23–148) the author deals with the **9.♙c4** Dragon. The first 10 Chapters are devoted to the Soltis Variation **9...♙d7 10.0–0–0 ♜c8 11.♙b3 ♘c5 12.h4 h5** (D), which also arises after, say, 10.h4 h5, etc.



While the book is, generally, well balanced, this part can be called the strongest. Sometimes it is just a massive contribution to existing theory, as it is the case with the line **13.♙g5 ♜c5 14.f4 ♘c4 15.♙d3 ♘eg4** (P. 87–92).

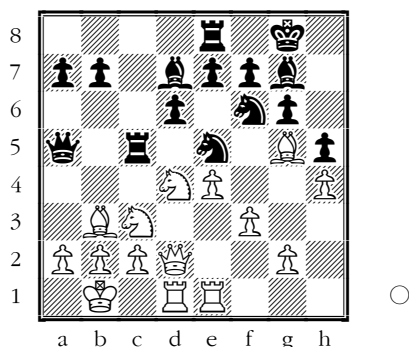
When covering **13.♙g5 ♜c5 14.g4** (P. 93–97) the author, amazingly, at some point spends an entire page, explaining strategic ideas of the following position:



Something not really typical for this book but, nevertheless, remarkable. The idea is: Black should play on the kingside.

In the topical line **13.♙g5 ♜c5 14.♙b1** (Dearing calls it the *Karpov Variation*, while Karpov's coach, GM Zaitsev was probably the originator), the author considers 14...b5 15.g4 a5 first, with not favourable verdict for Black (possibly, 15...hxg4!? deserved more author's attention), but his main recommendation is **14...♞e8** (as

Kasparov played against Anand), and after 15.♘h6 (P. 118–119) 15...♙a5. If instead 15.♞he1 (P. 199–122), then also 15...♙a5 (D).



Atypically, a transposition unnoticed by the author can be found there: the position on the diagram is considered twice, at pages 80 and 120. This line may arise by three routes (the transposition from 12.♝b1 is fixed by the author).

In his book, Dearing speaks highly favourably about the authors of the previous Dragon books, and I am even forced to refute his comment (P. 114) that the fact that I once played the move can be the "significant stamp of approval". In fact, I often experiment in my games or simply forget the theory at some point.

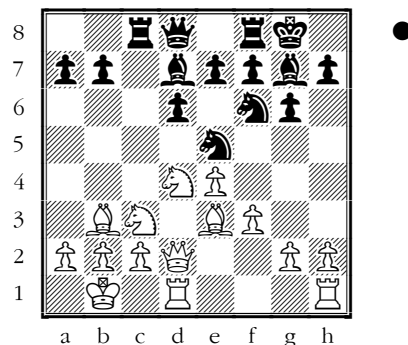
Fortunately, Edward Dearing is at the same time critical of the previously published stuff, – as can be seen at the same P.114, for example.

The alternatives to 13.♘g5, are also considered in sufficient detail. One note is that in the line **13.♝b1** ♖c4 14.♘xc4 ♞xc4 15.♜de2 b5 16.♘h6 b4 (16...♙a5 is the book's main line) 17.♘xg7 ♝xg7 18.♜d5 ♜xd5 19.exd5, some relevant material is ignored (such as a corr. game Oim–Lecroq). As contrary, a reference to Plater–Ropstorff, Krakow 1938 (in the line 13.♝b1 ♖c4 14.♘xc4 ♞xc4 15.♜b3 ♝c7 16.♘d4 ♘c6 17.g4) was, possibly, safer not to include, because, according to some [opinions](#), this game was not really played.

After **13.♘h6**, Dearing recommends 13...♜c4, and also advocates Postema's line 13...♘xh6 14.♝xh6 ♞xc3 15.bxc3 ♝c8!?

After the bizarre **13.g4** (P.42–47) Dearing follows the usual recommendation, 13...hxg4!

In Chapter 11 (P. 123–132), an extremely important, relatively new line 10.0–0–0 ♞c8 11.♘b3 ♜e5 **12.♝b1** is considered. (D)



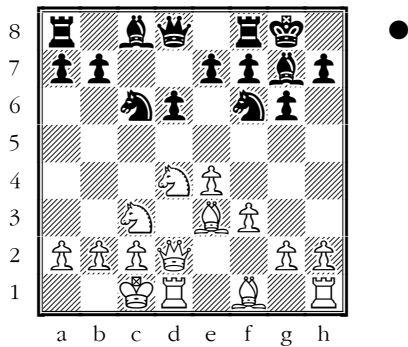
On the whole the coverage is quite decent. The author's main recommendation is 12...♞e8. Small omissions here, possibly, are the unmentioned Milos–Vescovi game (we had it in CT-1388), and also the move 15.h4!? after 12...♜c4 13.♘xc4 ♞xc4 14.g4! ♝c7.

Curiously, the author still considers 12.h4 (and not 12.♝b1) to be a main line (P.12), while his own classification does not quite confirm this.

The Chapter 12 (P. 133–148) deals with the other 9.♘c4 lines. As it should be in a repertoire book for Black, some of Black's deviations (10...♝b8 and 10...♞c8 11.♘b3 ♜e5 12.h4 ♜c4) after **10.0–0–0** are totally ignored. But briefly covered is the 10...♙a5 system (as it seems, Dearing shares the opinion that after 11.♘b3 ♞fc8 12.h4 ♜e5 13.g4!?, 13...b5 14.h5 b4!? is the main hope for Black) and, in more detail, the Topalov's 10...♞c8 11.♘b3 ♜xd4 12.♘d4 b5 and Chinese Dragon 10...♞b8.

Note that the nuances of move order with **10.h4** (P. 137) deserved, perhaps, more author's attention.

The **9.0–0–0** Dragon is covered in **Chapters 13–16** (P. 149–202). (D)



Chapter 16 (P. 193–202) deals with the secondary important Black moves: 9...♖xd4 and 9...Bd7 (Dearing's verdict, which I can share, is that now Black is in trouble there) and in other Chapters the main move 9...d5 is examined. All important subsystems are covered there decently. What the author writes about the Milov's 10.♗b1! is, probably, the best part of his 9.0–0–0 coverage – a lot of new thoughts and ideas at both the main directions, 10...♖xd4 and 10...♖b8.

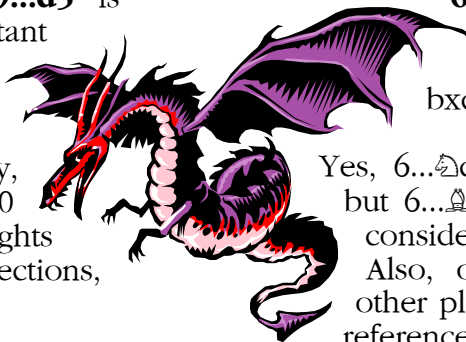
But I will repeat that book is quite balanced and in other lines (e.g. 10.exd5 ♖xd5 11.♖xc6 bxc6 12.♖xd4 e5 13.♖c5 ♖e8 14.♖c4 ♗h4! – Dearing, P.162) fresh analyses can also be found.

Now a bit of criticism: in the known position after 10.♗e1 e5 11.♖xc6 bxc6 12.exd5 ♖xd5 13.♖c4 ♖e6 14.♖e4 ♗c7 15.♖c5 ♖fd8 16.g4 ♖f4 17.♖xe6 (P. 191), Dearing considers only 17...♖xe6 and not 17...♖xd1+ (it deserved a brief explanation, at least). A, unique for this book, error can be noticed on P.161: Tiviakov is confused with Topalov in a game reference. Another small inaccuracy: on P.171 the author states that after 10.exd5 ♖xd5 11.♖xc6 bxc6 12.♖d4 e5 13.♖c5 ♖e6 14.♖e4 ♖e8 15.h4 h6, the move 16.h5! after 16...g5 17.g4 ♗c7 "transposes to the main line", while in fact the main line is 16.g4 ♗c7 and now 17.g5! (not 17.h5).

The move 9.g4 is examined in **Chapter 17** (P. 203–209). The author provides the main reasons of why this White move is no longer fashionable.

Non-Yugoslav Attack lines are in the Chapters to follow: **Chapter 18, The Classical Dragon** (P.209–227), **Chapter 19, 6.♖c4. An improved Classical?** (P. 228–237), **Chapter 20, 6.f4. The Levenfish Variation** (P. 238–244) and **Chapter 21 The Fianchetto Variation** (P. 245– 253). Nowadays White use these lines mainly when wishing to avoid the theory – so, 45 pages is, possibly, quite enough.

I did not notice any problems with the coverage of these lines, with exception for one observation. It is on P.245: (after 6.g3): "the natural 6...♖g7 is actually bad on account of 7.♖g2 ♖c6 8.♖xc6 bxc6 9.e5!".



Yes, 6...♖c6 is the main move, but 6...♖g7 7.♖g2 0–0 is also considered to be playable. Also, on P.231 (as in few other places: P. 142, 166), the reference to the blitz game is given without indication that it was a blitz – hardly a successful idea. Still, the very limited number of these small omissions can only confirm a general impression: it is a real Dragon book.

As I learned in BCM, GM Davies once joked that instead of spending ten years swotting up Dragon theory one may "learn half a dozen new languages" and also "become an authority on astrophysics".

Astrophysics, I conclude, has suffered another huge loss this time. For those players, who consider it possible to buy more than one Dragon book per year I would recommend Dearing's work without a shadow of a doubt. But if one would prefer to wait, then he or she, most probably, will be forced to make the same choice at the end of the year.

Finally, an internet tip. At ChessPublishing [Dragons forum](#) and Chess Scotland [forum](#) one has chance to discuss this interesting new book with the author himself.

Annotated Game

by GM Mikhail Golubev

White: Ruslan Ponomariov (2555)

Black: Eddie Dearing (2210)

World U18 Championship Yerevan
AM (1), 1997

*Sicilian, Alapin's variation (2.c3) -
[B22]*

In 1997, the 13-years old Ruslan Ponomariov won the U-18 World Championship in Yerevan with 9/11 score. His only failure was in the nice game from the 1st round, which was later published at several www sites, but till now did not find its way into major databases.

1.e4 c5 2.c3

In his early games, Ruslan, as a rule, used the Alapin Variation against the Sicilian.

2...d5 3.exd5 ♖xd5 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♗f3 ♗g4

5...e6 is a principal alternative here.

6.♗e2

A topical attempt to exploit certain drawbacks of the Black's 5th move is 6.dxc5! . Nikolai Vlassov and Vladimir Barsky have shared their experience with this move in CT-1099 and CT-1257, respectively

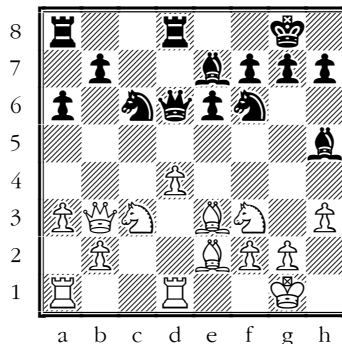
6...e6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.h3 ♗h5 9.a3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗e7 11.♘c3 ♖d6

In comparison with the lines, which arise from other openings (QGA, CK) here the Black's light squared bishop is developed to an active position.

12.♗e3 0-0 13.♖b3 ♖fd8 14.♖fd1

Not 14.♖xb7? ♖ab8 15.♖a6 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♘xd4

14...a6 (D)



This position has been tested dozens of times in practice. White has tried various moves: 15.♖ac1, 15.♘a4, 15.♖d2, but did not manage to pose any real problems for Black.

15.d5!?N

A curious idea.

15...exd5?!

After 15...♗xd5! White hardly has anything better than 16.♗xd5 exd5 17.♖ac1= with compensation for a pawn, which ensures he is not worse.

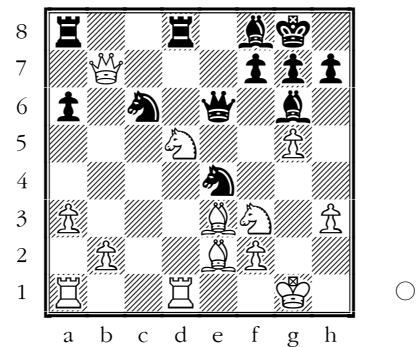
16.g4!

Probably stronger than 16.♗b6 which was recently tried in Jordan-Pecori, Melbourne 2004.

16...♗g6 17.g5!

White seriously weakens his kingside but develops a dangerous initiative in the centre.

17...♗e4 18.♗xd5 ♖e6!? 19.♖xb7 ♗f8 (D)



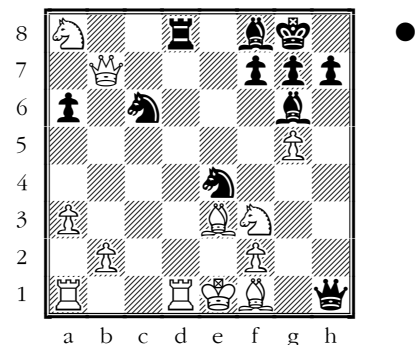
20.♗c7?

20.♗f4!± would have fixed the advantage. Ruslan's move is greedy and wrong, but it was hard to foresee its consequences.

20...♖xh3 21.♗xa8 ♖g4+ 22.♖f1 ♖h3+ 23.♖e1?!

White's best was 23.♖g1!, agreeing to a draw by perpetual check.

23...♖h1+ 24.♗f1 (D)



24...♗g3!!

A fantastic resource. After other moves, Black would have no compensation for a rook.

25.♗h2!

25.fxg3 ♖xf3 26.♖b6 clearly favours Black, who could continue his attack

with, e.g. 26...♖xg3+ 27.♙f2 ♜e8+ 28.♚d2 ♚e5!

25...♗b4!!?

Another, even more beautiful blow.

26.♚c7!

Covering c2. It was the only way to stay in the game. 26.♚xh1? ♗c2#; 26.♚xb4?! ♗xb4+ 27.axb4 ♜xa8 with winning advantage

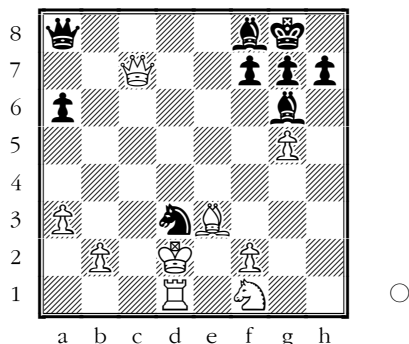
26...♜xd1+ 27.♜xd1 ♗xf1

27...♗c2+!? 28.♚d2 ♗xe3 may look tempting for Black side, but it is hard to offer anything decisive after 29.♚xe3!

28.♗xf1 ♗d3+ 29.♚d2

29.♚e2 is strongly answered by 29...♗h5+! 30.♚xd3 ♗xd1 and Black regains a piece because both White knights are attacked.

29...♚xa8 (D)



The forced line is ended. White has an extra exchange, but, due to permanent problem with his king, Black's chances are better.

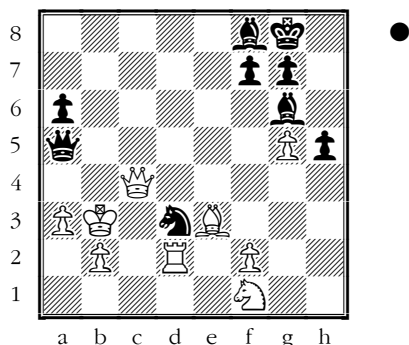
30.♚c3! ♚d5! 31.♜d2 h5!?

31...♚b5 deserved attention too.

32.♚c4?

Both 32.gxh6? gxh6; and 32.♗g3?! ♗d6 33.♚c8+ ♚h7 34.f4 ♗e5+! 35.fxe5 ♚xe5+ would not leave any hopes for White.; The best chance was 32.b4!? with idea 32...a5 33.♗c5

32...♚a5+! 33.♚b3 (D)



33...♗xb2!-+

This is absolutely crushing.

34.♚b4

34.♚xb2 (or 34.♜xb2) 34...♚xa3#

34...♗xb4 35.axb4 ♚b5 0-1

Contact information. Have some comments about Chess Today? [E-mail us](mailto:ababurin@iol.ie) - we appreciate your feedback!

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Editors: GMs Baburin, Scherbakov and Golubev; IMs Barsky, Notkin and Vlassov. Technical editors: Graham Brown and Ralph Marconi.

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