

CADOGAN chess

easy guide

to the

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Graeme Buckley

Easy Guide to the Queen's Gambit Accepted

Graeme Buckley

CADOGAN

chess

LONDON, NEW YORK

First published in 1998 by Cadogan Books plc,
Gloucester Mansions, 4th Floor, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 8HD
in association with Gambit Publications Ltd,
69 Masbro Road, London W14 0LS.

Copyright © 1998 Graeme Buckley
The right of Graeme Buckley to be identified as the author of this work has been
asserted in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a
retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic,
electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise,
without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 85744 523 6

Distributed in North America by The Globe Pequot Press, 6 Business Park Road,
P.O. Box 833, Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-0833.
Telephone 1-800 243 0495 (toll free)

All other sales enquiries should be directed to Cadogan Books plc,
Gloucester Mansions, 4th Floor, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 8HD
Freephone 0800 328 0242

CADOGAN CHESS SERIES

Chief Advisor: Garry Kasparov
Series Editor: Murray Chandler

Edited by Graham Burgess and typeset by Petra Nunn for
Gambit Publications Ltd.

Printed in Great Britain by Redwood Books, Trowbridge, Wilts.

Contents

Symbols	4
Bibliography	5
Introduction	6
1 Introducing the Queen's Gambit Accepted	8
2 Central Variation: 3 e4	19
3 White Plays ♖c3 and e4	40
4 Classical Variation with a Quick e4	51
5 White's Queenside Fianchetto	65
6 Classical Variation with a4	75
7 Queenless Middlegames	86
8 White's Isolated d-Pawn	92
9 Other Systems	105
Index of Variations	123

Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
x	capture
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
Ch	championship
Cht	team championship
Wch	world championship
Ct	candidates event
IZ	interzonal event
Z	zonal event
OL	olympiad
ECC	European Clubs Cup
jr	junior event
wom	women's event
mem	memorial event
rpd	rapidplay game
corr	correspondence game
qual	qualifying event
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
1/2-1/2	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(<i>n</i>)	<i>n</i> th match game
(<i>D</i>)	see next diagram

Bibliography

Books

New Ideas in the Queen's Gambit Accepted (Flear)
Queen's Gambit Accepted (Varnusz)
The Queen's Gambit for the Attacking Player (Burgess/Pedersen)
The Queen's Gambit Accepted (Neishtadt)
BCO
ECO (Volume D)

Magazines, Journals and Periodicals

British Chess Magazine
ChessBase Magazine
Informator
Chess Monthly
The Daily Telegraph
New in Chess (magazine)

Introduction

Before writing this book, *Easy Guide to the Queen's Gambit Accepted*, I asked myself two questions. Why is the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) a good opening to play? And why should any player choose to play the QGA against 1 d4 rather than any other opening? Indeed, at all levels of chess it is possible to see the opening being employed and with a good success rate too. Most notable for me was Nigel Short's success with the QGA in his Candidates victory over Anatoly Karpov in 1992.

Quite honestly, playing Black can sometimes be a difficult task. Some of the ultra-solid defences to 1 d4 have a reputation of being dull. On the one hand, against dogged black defence, White has great difficulty obtaining any real advantage. The other side of the coin is that if White plays sensibly then Black cannot create winning chances either. The other extreme for Black is to choose an aggressive opening which is highly analysed and also contains a large element of risk. On occasions, the positions and sacrifices in these openings are not even understandable but are played solely as a result of having done extensive home analysis.

The QGA is a half-way house. The opening is understandable. It is built around basic principles that every player learns about as a newcomer to chess. The opening is reliable and solid yet it is rich as there are a vast number of possibilities. In short, there is room for homework and creativity in both attack and defence in practical play.

In writing this book, I have concentrated on the opening phase of the game from Black's point of view. On occasions, I have given a choice of lines for Black to play. Sometimes, strictly speaking, I have recommended non-QGA lines. At times, the difference between the QGA and, for instance, the Chigorin, is small. I have indicated the merits of each approach so that the reader can choose the line that best suits his style or tournament situation. I have included relevant up-to-date games and highlighted areas of importance. However, as this is an Easy Guide book, I have also, for the benefit of both players, explained in words what is going on rather than drown the reader in reams of analysis. I have also included other relevant non-opening themes.

I have used a large database together with relevant literature in writing this book. In this age, where large amounts of information are so readily available, it

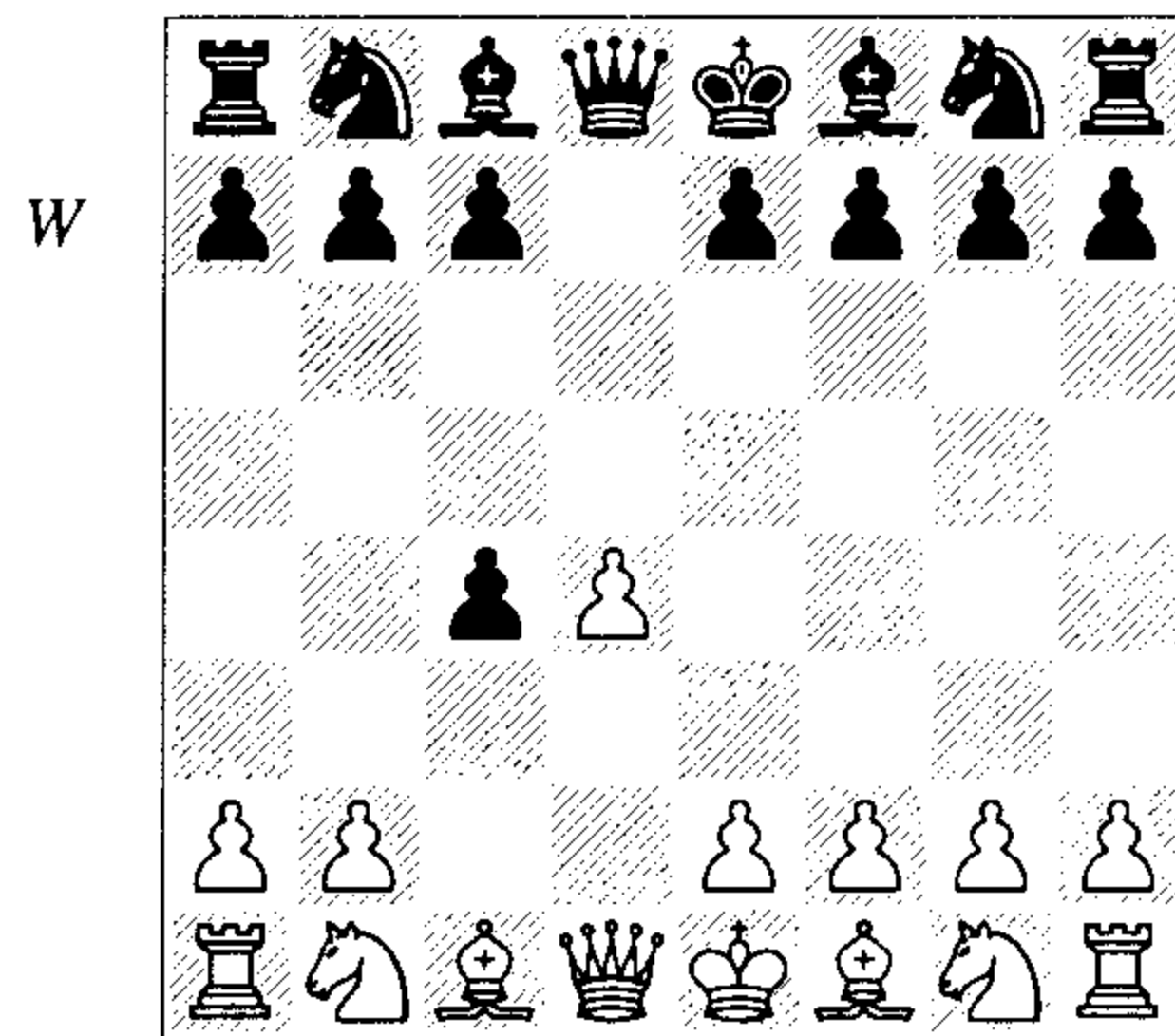
is often difficult to know who first assessed a position or had an idea. Thus, I have rarely given credit to other analysts. In a sense, this does not matter because the comments in this book are my own. Naturally, I have been able to draw on the knowledge of others and often I can only agree with their conclusions, but on numerous occasions I have seen conflicting assessments or I have simply disagreed with an expressed opinion. For those readers who can also draw on other works, I believe that my comments and fresh approach will give additional insight into positions.

It only remains to say that I hope you, the reader, will find that this is a well-balanced, enjoyable book which will be of benefit to you and which will enable you to play QGA positions with success.

Graeme Buckley
Wolverhampton 1998

1 Introducing the Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 (D)



Before looking into the theory of the opening and actual examples, we shall begin in this first chapter by explaining what this book and the QGA are about.

At the most straightforward level, the QGA is an opening which Black chooses by playing the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4. After this, however, there is the problem of transposition. Many of the examples in this book did not actually start with the moves played in the exact order that is implied in the chapter or section heading. Many games start with 1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 Nf6 3 c4 dxc4 and thus the ability to play the QGA proves valuable even if the opponent

opens with 1 Nf3 . A further example of transposition appears in the Classical Variation, which most commonly starts with the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 e6 5 Bxc4 c5. However, it is easily possible that some of the moves can be played in an inverted order. It is even possible that some Classical games started with the moves 1 c4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e3 e6 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bd3 dxc4 6 Bxc4 c5, thereby taking an extra move to reach a normal position of the Classical Variation. Throughout this book, I have not made a point of stopping each time to point out such transpositional details. There are also other examples in this book which verge on the territory of other openings such as the Slav and Chigorin. In some instances the difference between these various openings is small.

With his second move, 2...dxc4, Black concedes an extra central pawn to White. This is small but significant. White will often look to take control of the centre and to manufacture a spatial advantage. Black will commonly rely on queenside expansion as a means of creating counterplay. The upshot of this is that the positions are

rarely symmetrical and that a fight will take place.

Throughout this book I will present, along with the opening theory, examples which illustrate the good and the bad points of the QGA. The examples from middlegame and endgame play will give a more complete picture of the QGA than just showing opening moves. They will show recurring and common themes and how to deal with them. The situations where Black gets a hard time of it are not meant to serve as a deterrent from playing the QGA; they are merely examples of how White should play if Black gets it wrong and how not to play with Black. We shall now look at some typical positions and break the rest of this first chapter into five sections:

- Queenside Expansion
- Isolated Queen Pawn Positions
- Pressure on the c-file
- White's e5-pawn
- Central Tension and Active Piece Play

The chapter is broken into sections like this for simplicity although quite clearly the ideas in each section overlap into one another.

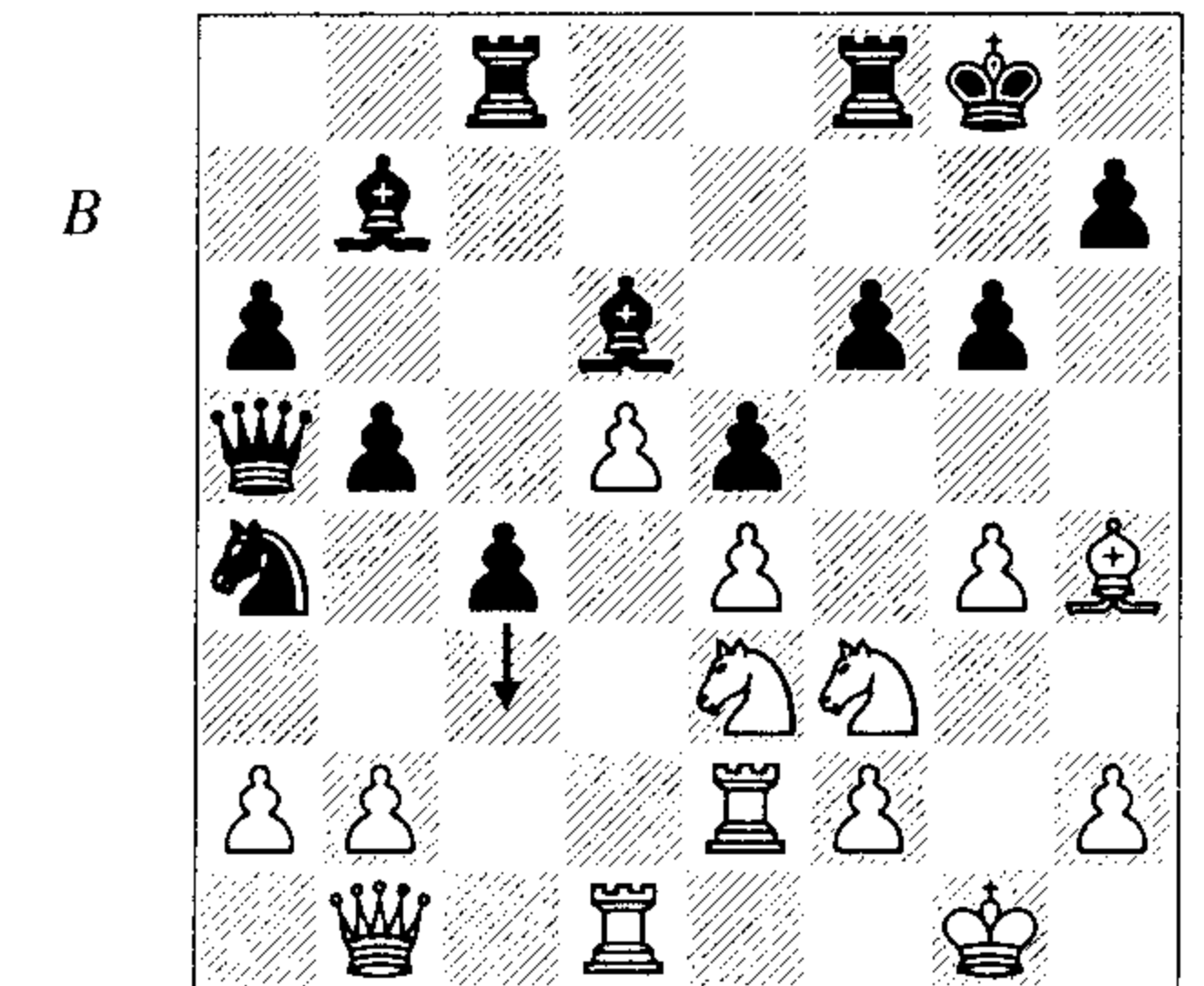
Queenside Expansion

The advance of the black queenside pawns to create counterplay is one of the key ideas in the QGA. Timing is essential and the following two examples provide some insight as to how to play these positions, what to look for

and what to aim for. The section is divided into two:

- Blocked Centre
- Flexible Centre

Blocked Centre



Kupila – Binham
corr. 1981

Black has played well. He rejected the capture ...cxd4 at an earlier stage and has advanced his queenside pawns and given White a permanent central pawn advantage. However, he has done it safe in the knowledge that he could exchange White's light-squared bishop for his own knight. It is almost a 'golden rule' only to advance the c-pawn to c4 if this exchange is possible. The centre is blocked and now the game is decided with a neat tactic.

24...c3 25 b3

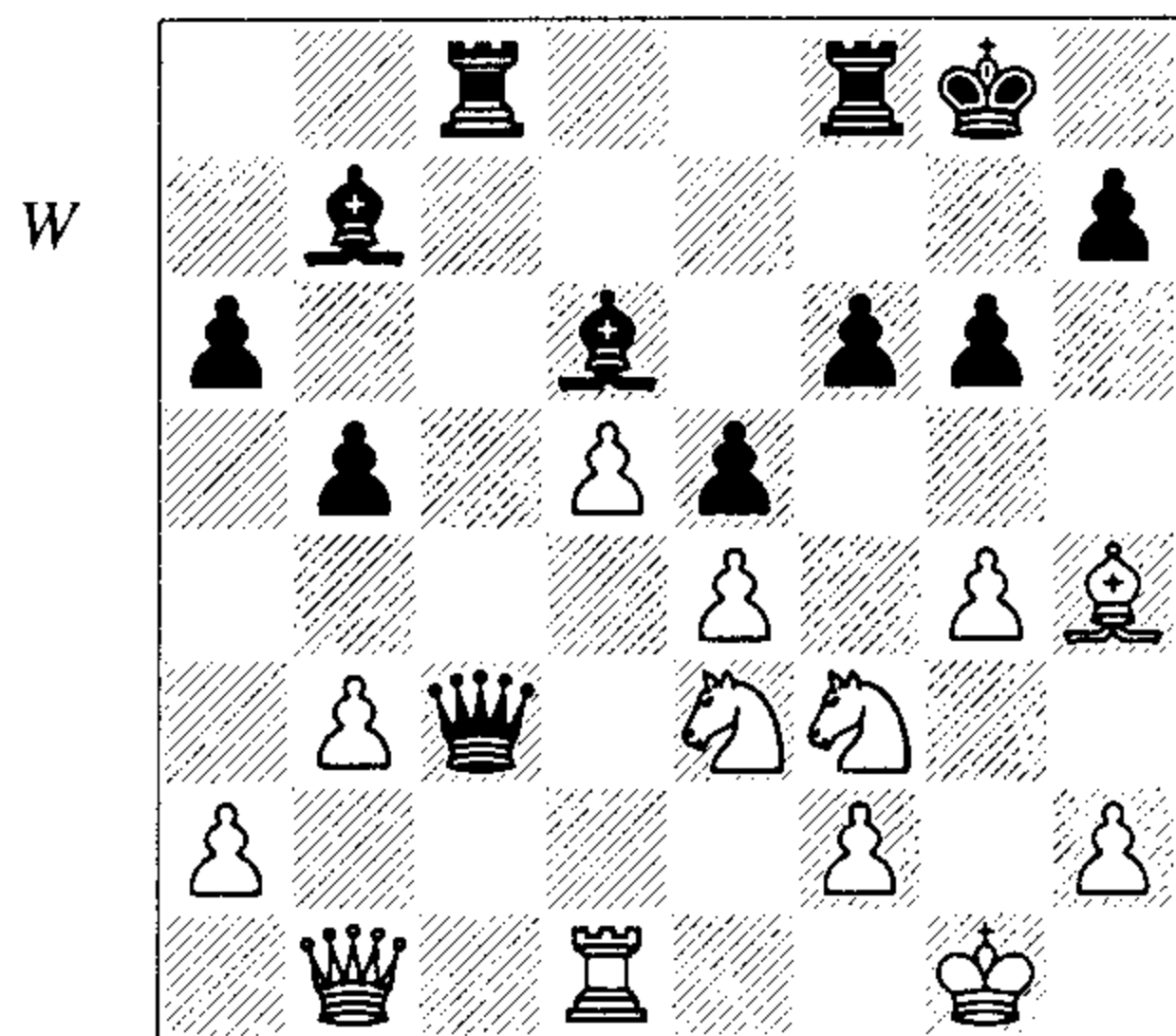
There is a big fork on c3 if the black knight can ever get there.

25...c2 26 Bxc2 Nc3

There it goes!

27 ♖xc3 ♜xc3 (D)

With control of the c-file, an extra exchange, not to mention White's weak king, there will only be one winner here.



28 ♗g3 a5 29 g5

White did not want to sit and wait, so he decided to open things up but the result will always be favourable for Black.

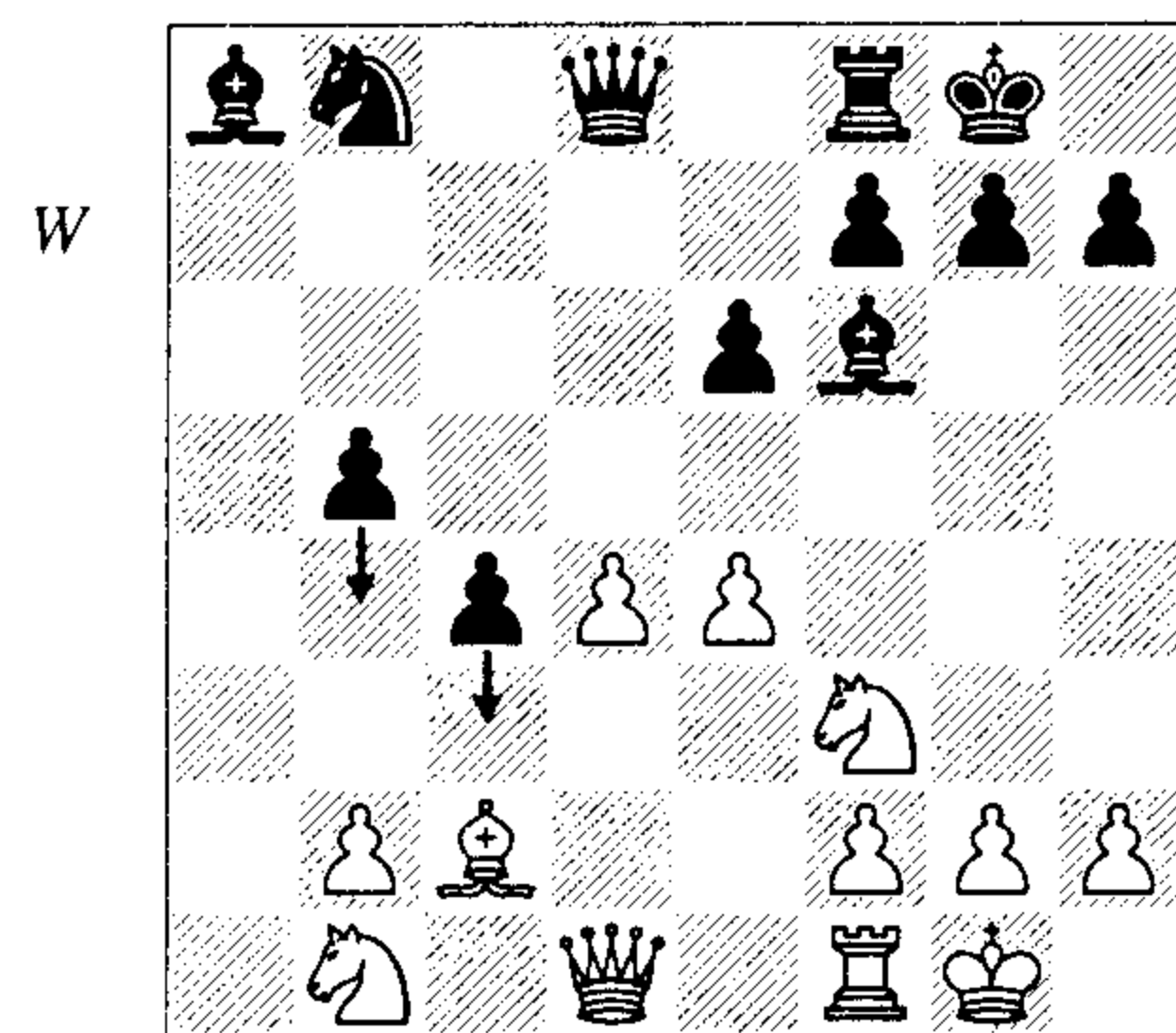
29...f5 30 exf5 gxf5 31 ♖xf5 ♜xf3 32 ♖xd6 ♗xd5

The bishop enters the game and its presence is immediately felt. Black went on to win with a mating attack (see Chapter 4, Line D for the opening moves).

Flexible Centre

In the following example, White's central pawns are not blocked. Once again, Black has advanced his queenside pawns to b5 and c4 and has the potential for creating an outside passed pawn. He has not claimed White's

light-squared bishop for the knight as in the previous example, but still has the advantage of the bishop-pair. White is not threatening to launch an attack with e5 and ♖e4 because the knight is still on b1. Therefore, Black can face the future with confidence. If either the white d- or e-pawn advances, then at least one black bishop promises to have a very good game.



Åkesson – Svensson
Gothenburg 1998

15 ♖c3 b4

The start of a logical plan.

16 ♖e2 ♖c6

Sensibly developing and keeping the pressure on the centre. Unfortunately it blocks the bishop on a8. I prefer 16...♜b6 here.

17 ♜d2 ♜b6

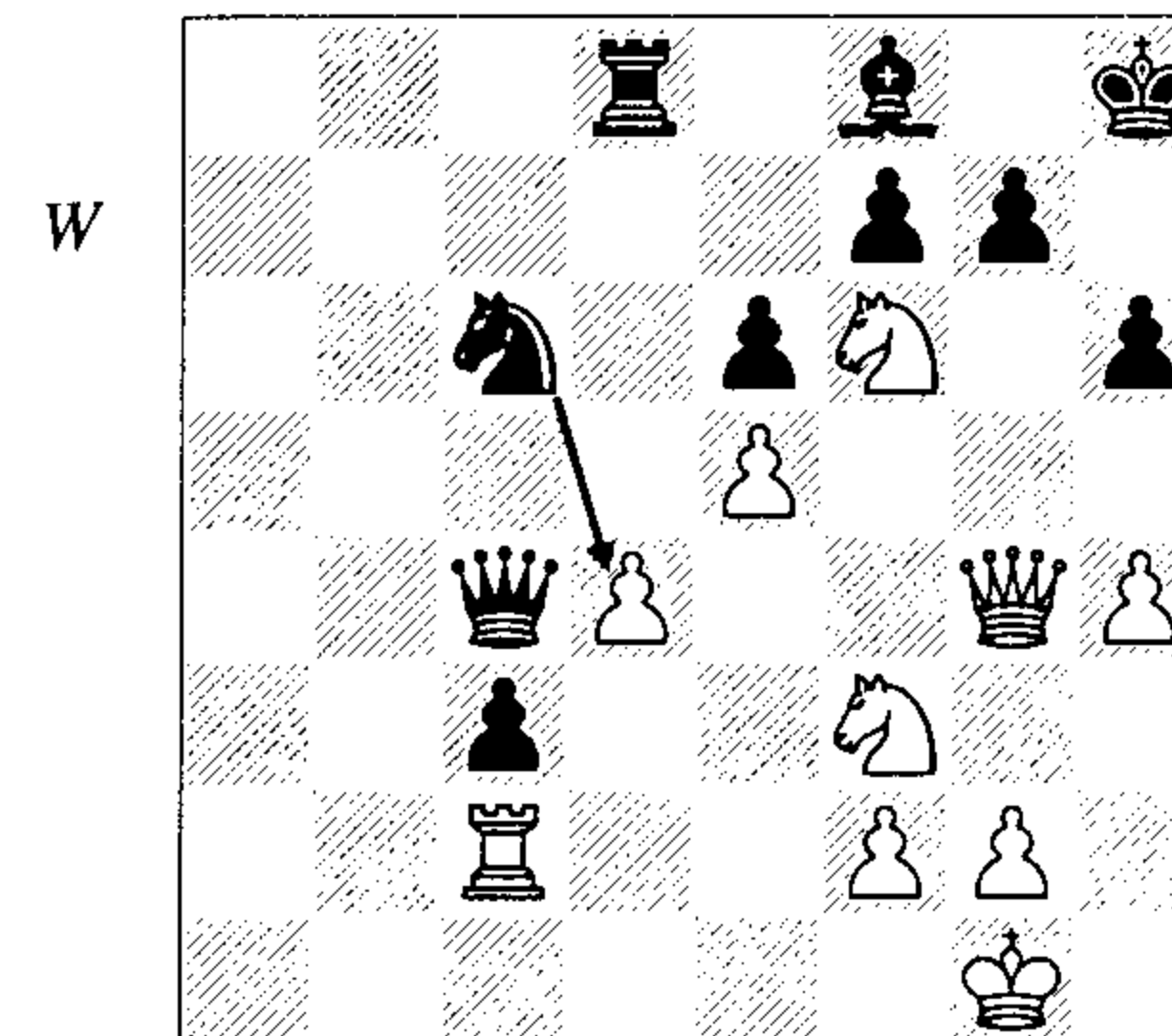
The queen finds a good square while making room for the rook on d8.

18 e5 ♗e7 19 ♗e4

White takes advantage of Black's lapse on move 16.

19...♗a5 20 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 21 ♜c2

White is doing his best. Without light-squared bishops it is tempting to get the queen into the black position via e4 or a4. After many more moves, the players reached the following position.



Black has created his passed pawn and now the d-pawn is weak. Black's king position was too solid and the white attack has failed.

38 ♖e4 ♖xd4 39 ♖xd4 ♖xd4

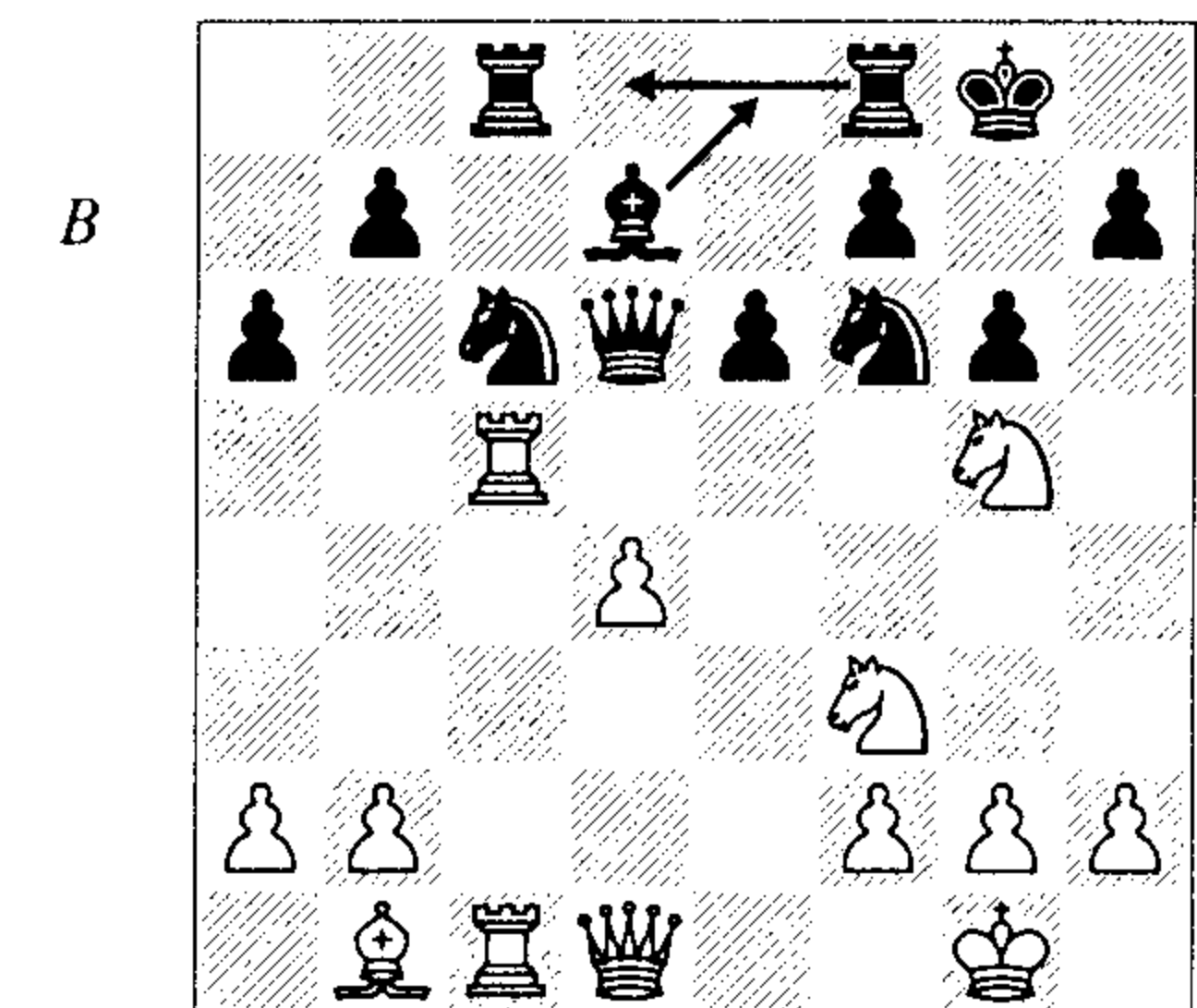
It has been hard work, but Black has finally picked up an extra pawn.

Isolated Queen's Pawn Positions

Positions where White has an Isolated Queen's (d-) Pawn are so common in the QGA that it would seem a good idea to examine these positions in some detail. The section is broken up into three and, along with Chapter 8, gives some indication of which pieces to exchange and what to look out for with such structures.

Exchanges in an IQP position

The following position was reached as a result of opening as in Chapter 8. White has a spatial advantage and is trying for a kingside attack. However, already Black has managed to solidify his king position and exchange one pair of minor pieces. He should now be looking for ways to increase the pressure on the IQP.



Xu Yuanyuan – Zhang Weida
Beijing 1997

18...b6

18...♜fd8 followed by ...♗e8, ...♗g7 and ...h6 is more purposeful. The text-move weakens the queenside pawns a little.

19 ♖5c4 h6 20 ♖e4 ♖xe4 21 ♗xe4 ♖e7

Exchanging pieces is a good idea in itself, as it reduces the danger to the black king. However, there comes a point when a win for Black also starts to look unlikely. 21...♗g7 is more

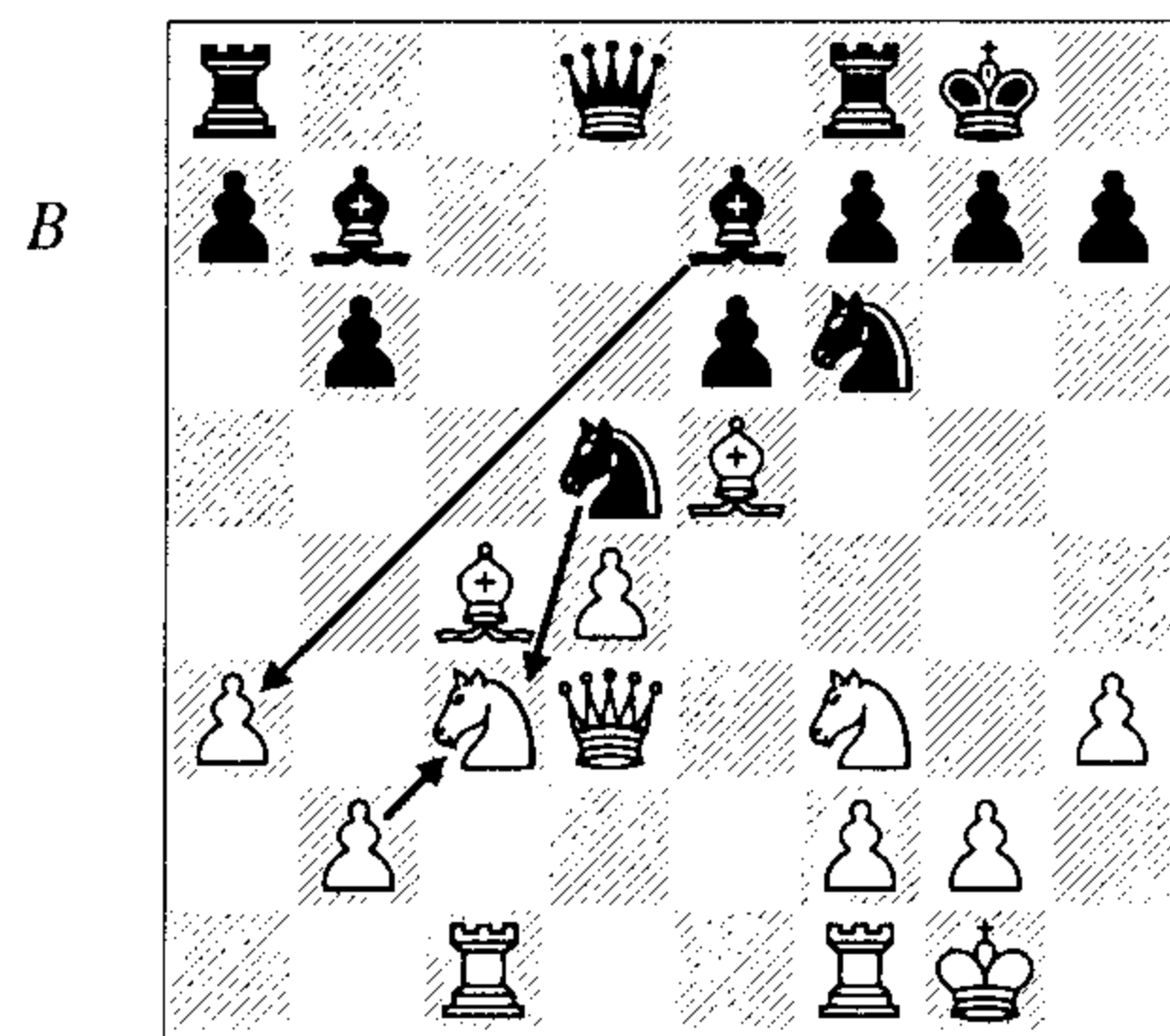
prudent; it is very useful to pre-empt the attack on the h-pawn.

22 ♖e5 ♜xc4 23 ♘xc4 ♚b8 24 ♘e5

Black still needs to prove that the IQP is weak; otherwise the game will end in a draw. The concluding moves are given in Chapter 8.

Black's Queen's Bishop

In this example we focus on the role of Black's queen's bishop. In the previous example, White was able to exchange his e5-knight for Black's light-squared bishop. Indeed, often this exchange will suit Black in an IQP position. In this example, however, the white knight cannot take up its most threatening position on e5 as he has played his bishop to that square. We start with both players already fully developed.



Mizsei – Voloshin
Prague 1996

14...♞c8

Black has blocked White's isolated queen's pawn (see Chapter 8) and is well set for the remainder of the game.

15 ♘g5 g6 16 ♞c2 ♘xc3

An exchange of knights reduces White's fire-power.

17 ♞xc3

White is already regretting a2-a3. This move is most useful if it prevents the ...♘c6-b4-d5 manoeuvre, but in the game it only serves to weaken the a-pawn. White rejects 17 bxc3 because of it.

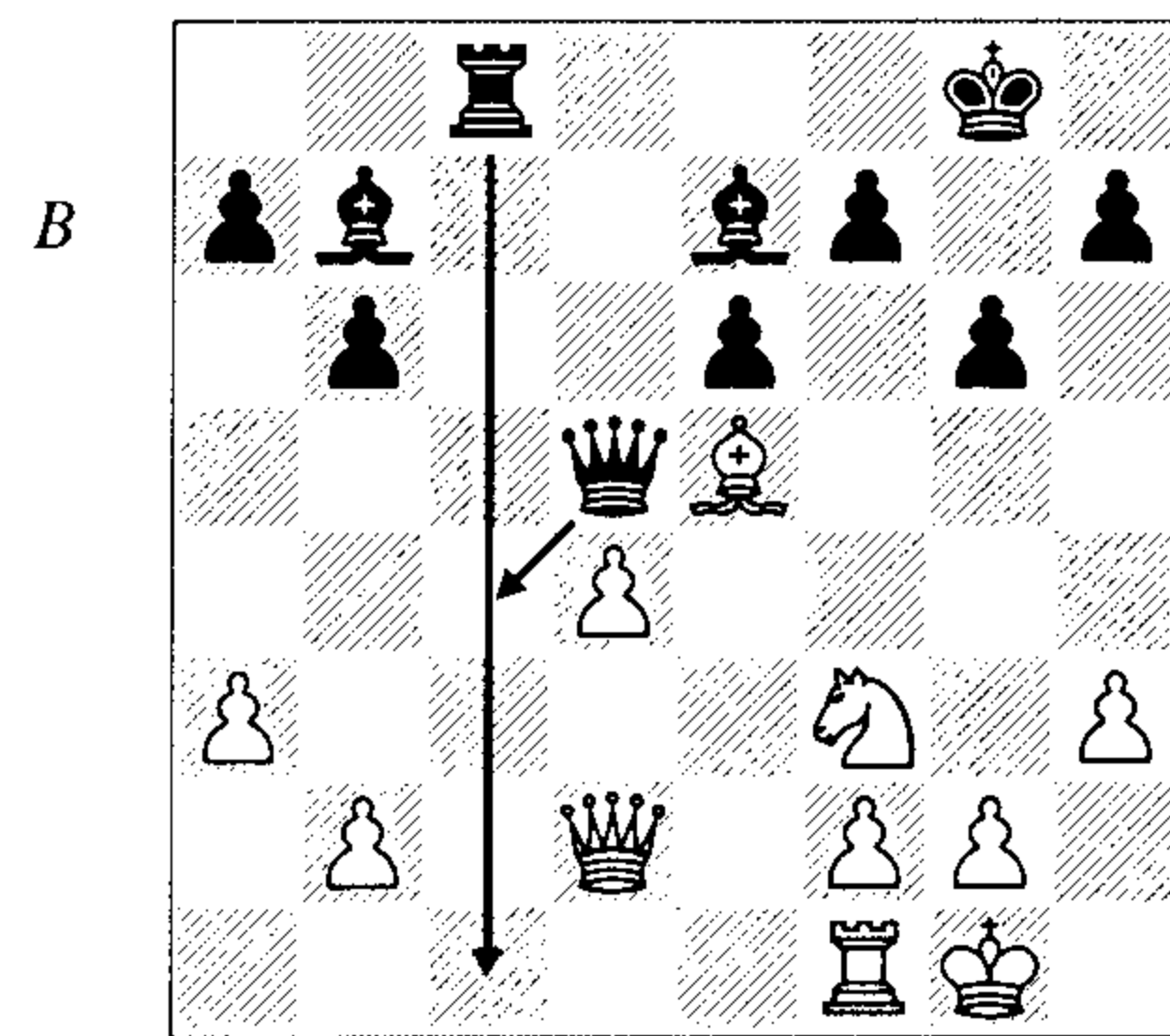
17...♘d5

Forcing more exchanges and therefore ruling out the possibility of sacrifices by White on e6 or f7. Black now forces an exchange which results in him having an unchallenged light-squared bishop.

18 ♙xd5

The attack on c3 forces White to exchange on d5.

18...♚xd5 19 ♘f3 ♞xc3 20 ♚xc3 ♞c8 21 ♚d2 (D)



21...f6

Black has to avoid 21...♞c4 on account of 22 ♚h6 f6 23 ♘g5 winning.

22 ♙f4 ♚c4

Black has complete control.

23 ♚e3 ♙d5 24 ♘e1 ♚b3

The bishops dominate, so there is no need to worry about exchanging queens.

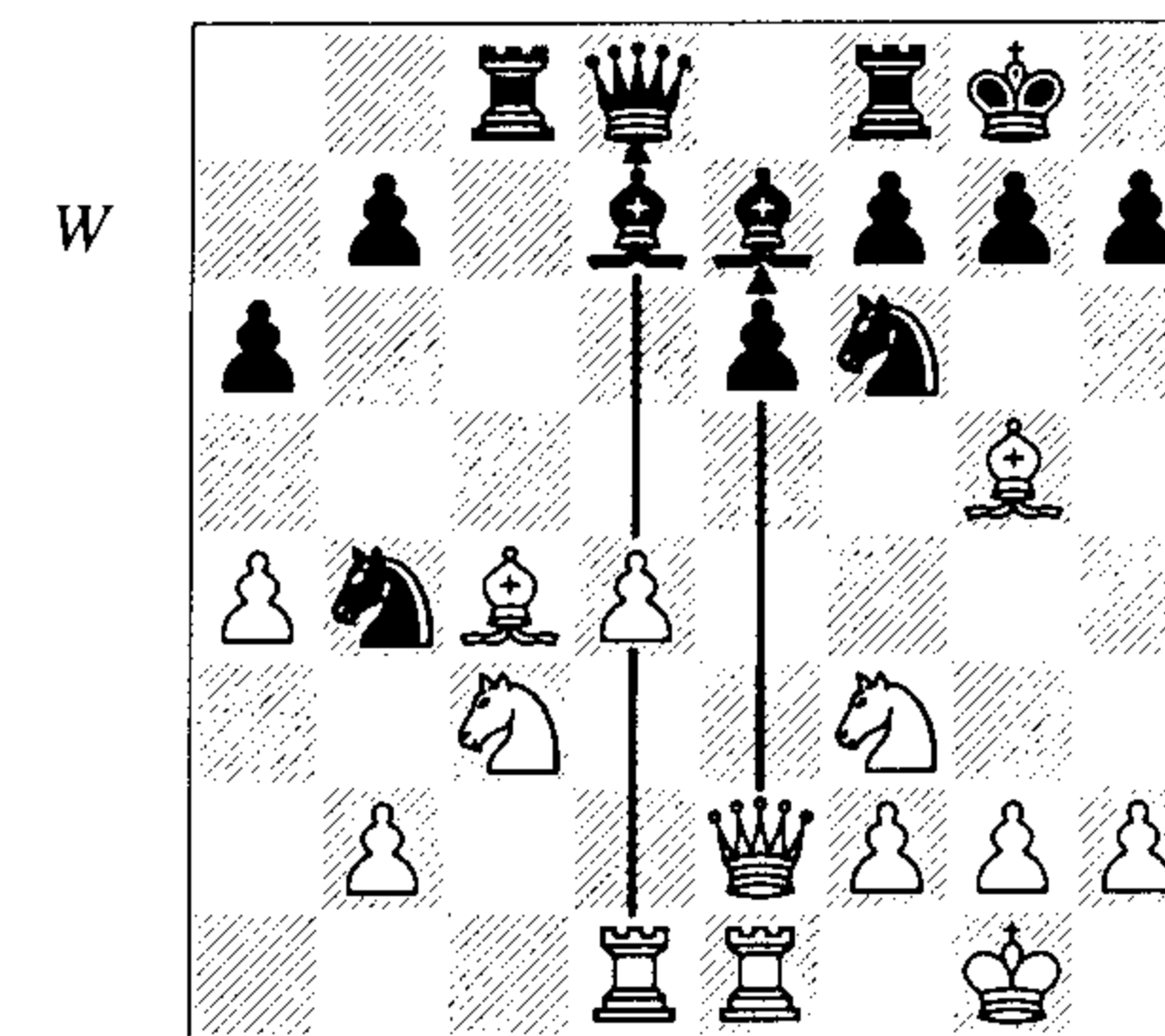
25 ♚xb3 ♙xb3 26 f3 ♚f7

Sensibly improving his position. There is no need to rush.

27 ♙d2 ♙d6 28 ♚f2 ♞c4 29 ♙c3 ♙xa3

Black has won a pawn and the result of the game was never in doubt from here on in.

Typical pawn breaks



Vaïsser – Marciano
French Ch (Narbonne) 1997

Here, White has an isolated queen's pawn. Black is ready to play ...♙c6 and then possibly exchange on f3 before White plays ♘e5. White's response is typical.

15 d5

Just in time! Now, after suitable exchanges, White will be able to attack Black's queen and bishops via the open central files. This could be annoying for Black. It is also worth noting that no pieces have been exchanged yet; this factor also operates in White's favour.

15...exd5

15...♘fxd5 loses a piece to 16 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 17 ♞xd5.

16 ♚xe7 ♞xc4 17 ♙xf6 gxf6

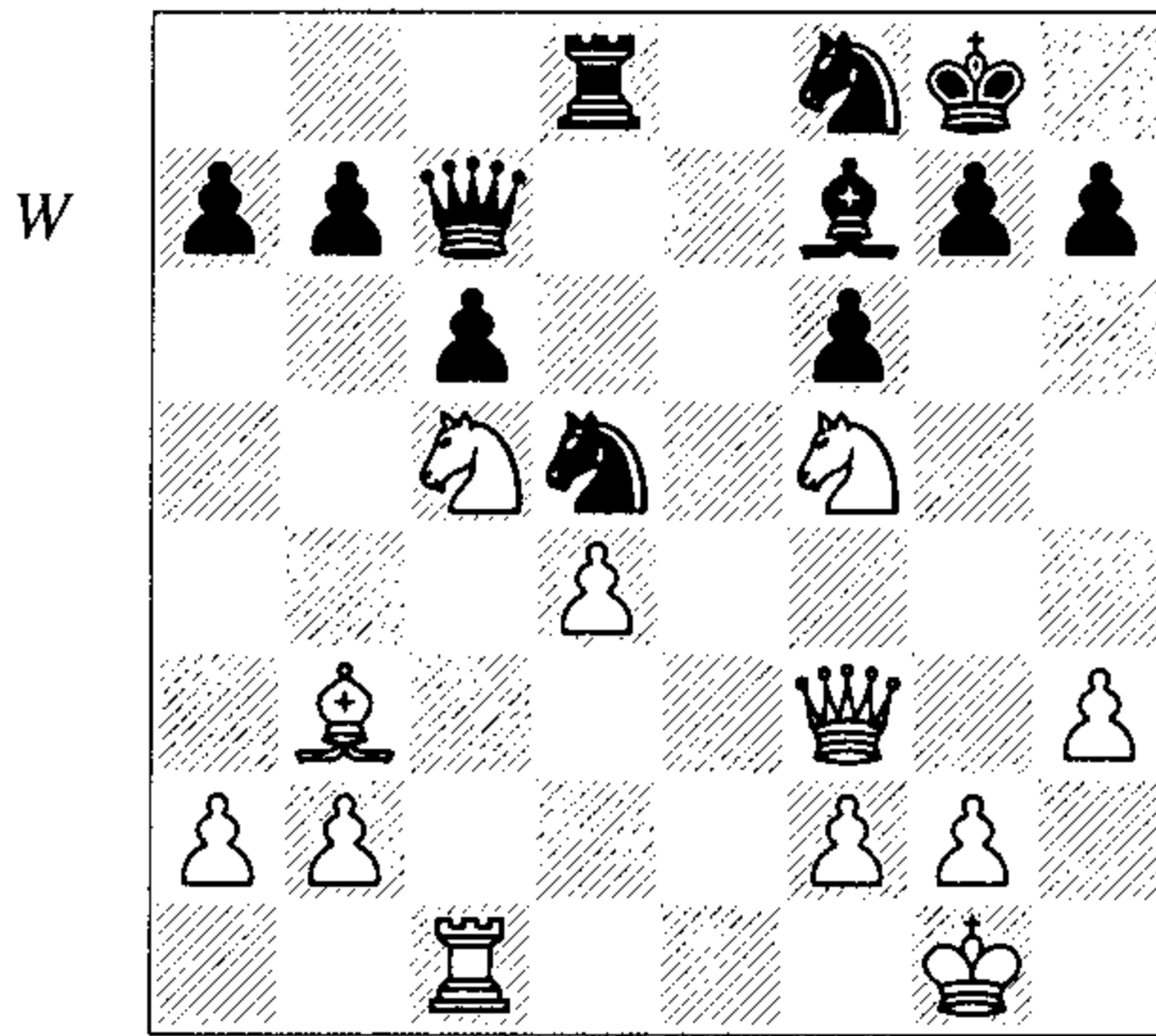
Black has accepted the doubled f-pawns but White cannot exploit them with queens on because there is no time to retreat the queen, so we are in for some more exchanges.

18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♚xd8 ♞xd8 20 ♞xd5 ♚f8 21 h3

White has emerged with an end-game advantage.

Pressure on the c-file

It is not unusual in the QGA for White to have some pressure down the c-file. The reason for this is simple. Black captures on c4 on the second move, and after White has recaptured on c4 – something which almost always happens – then White will be able to place a rook on the semi-open c-file. The following position, which arose from the 3 e3 e5 line (see Chapter 9) is typical in this respect. Black has defended the c-pawn for now, and initially, it looks as though there is no immediate harm that can come to it.



I. Sokolov – Hübner
Wijk aan Zee 1996

23 ♔g3

In addition to the c-file pressure, White has also posted a knight on c5. This knight attacks the b7-pawn which in turn defends the vulnerable c6-pawn. Nevertheless, it is a surprise that White offers to exchange queens. The main point is that the black queen defends b7 and therefore Black's position is already starting to creak.

23...♚xg3

There is no choice since mate was threatened on g7.

24 fxg3

White retains the knight on f5 where it is looking to use the d6-square if given the opportunity.

24...b6

24...♖b8 25 ♘d6 b6 26 ♘a6 wins the c6-pawn.

25 ♘b7

Alarm bells ought to be sounding here. The knight only has one way out, d6, and so there is a risk of it being

trapped. I prefer 25 ♘e4 ♙e8 26 ♘e7+.

25...♗d7 26 ♘fd6 ♙e6

26...♗c7 again loses the pawn to 27 ♘d8.

27 ♗xc6

The white knights are a bit tied up, but White has won the important c6-pawn.

27...♘e7 28 ♗c3 h5

Terrible, particularly as 28...♙xb3 29 ♗xb3 ♘e6 30 ♗d3 ♘d5 31 a3 ♙f8 (rather than 31...♘d8 32 ♘xd8 ♗xd6 33 ♘b7 ♗d7 34 ♘c5, when White survives) highlights the problem with White's 25th move and is very reasonable indeed for Black!

29 ♙a4 1-0

White's e5-Pawn

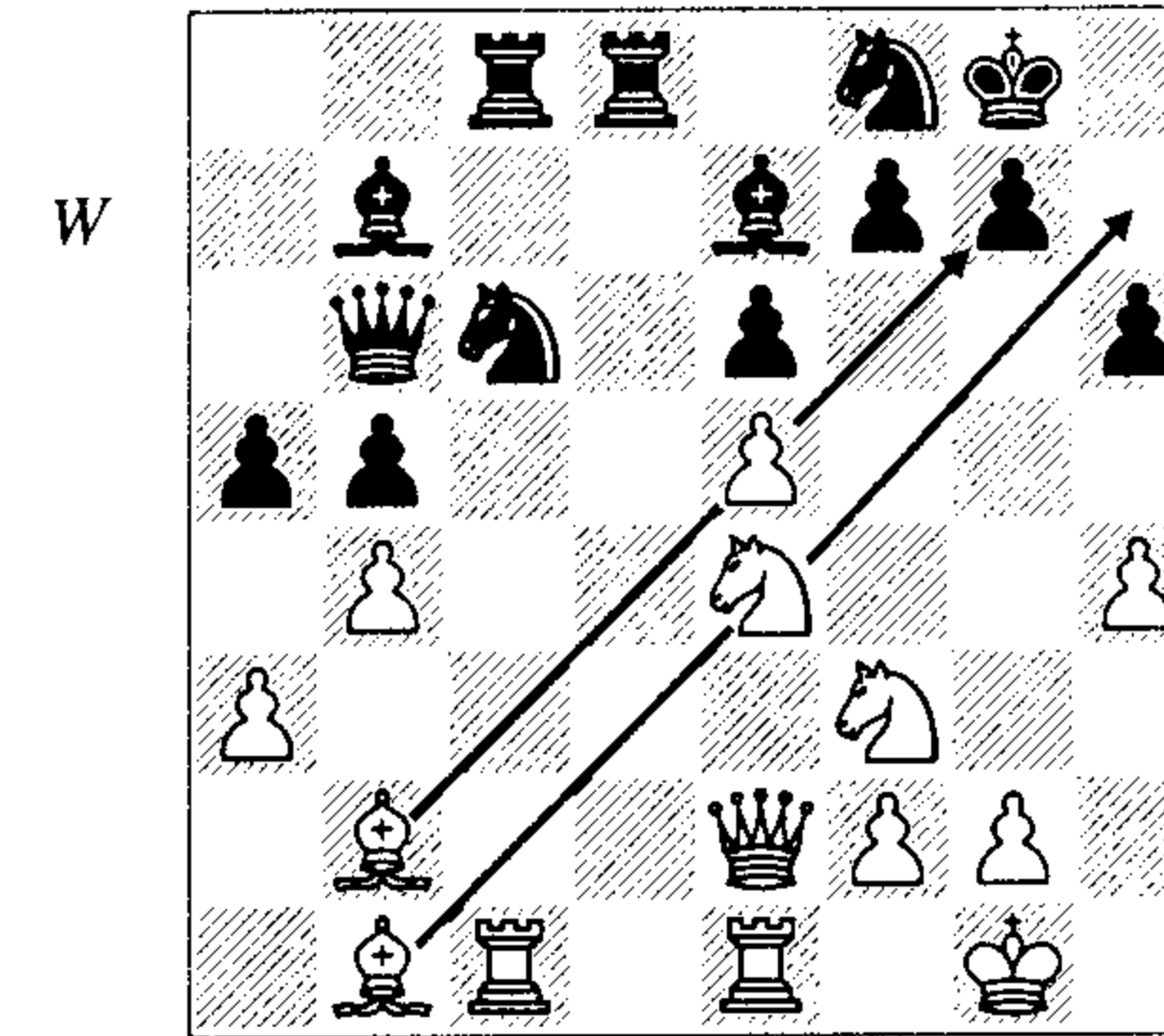
A common idea for White is, in particular, to advance his e-pawn to e5 and thus create some space when there is a strong possibility of building up for a kingside attack. We examine some possible situations.

Immediate Kingside Attack

The following example began with the apparently quiet 7 ♙d3 system used in Chapter 5. Perhaps this is a misleading description as White was now able to finish with a flourish.

22 ♘f6+!

White has the typical ingredients for this kind of sacrifice. No pieces have been exchanged. Both bishops



Ashley – Skripchenko
Cannes 1998

are pointing directly at Black's king, White has also securely defended his e5-pawn and reinforced the attack with the knight on e4.

22...♙xf6

Accepting the piece sacrifice by 22...gxf6 23 exf6 ♙d6 is also hopeless. It is just a matter of time before the white queen will help to deliver checkmate. The f8-knight can only postpone the inevitable after ♘f3-d2 and ♔g4 or ♔h5.

23 exf6 g6

Blocking the kingside as best she could.

24 ♗c5

To avoid the exchange of queens following White's next move.

24...axb4 25 ♔e3 e5

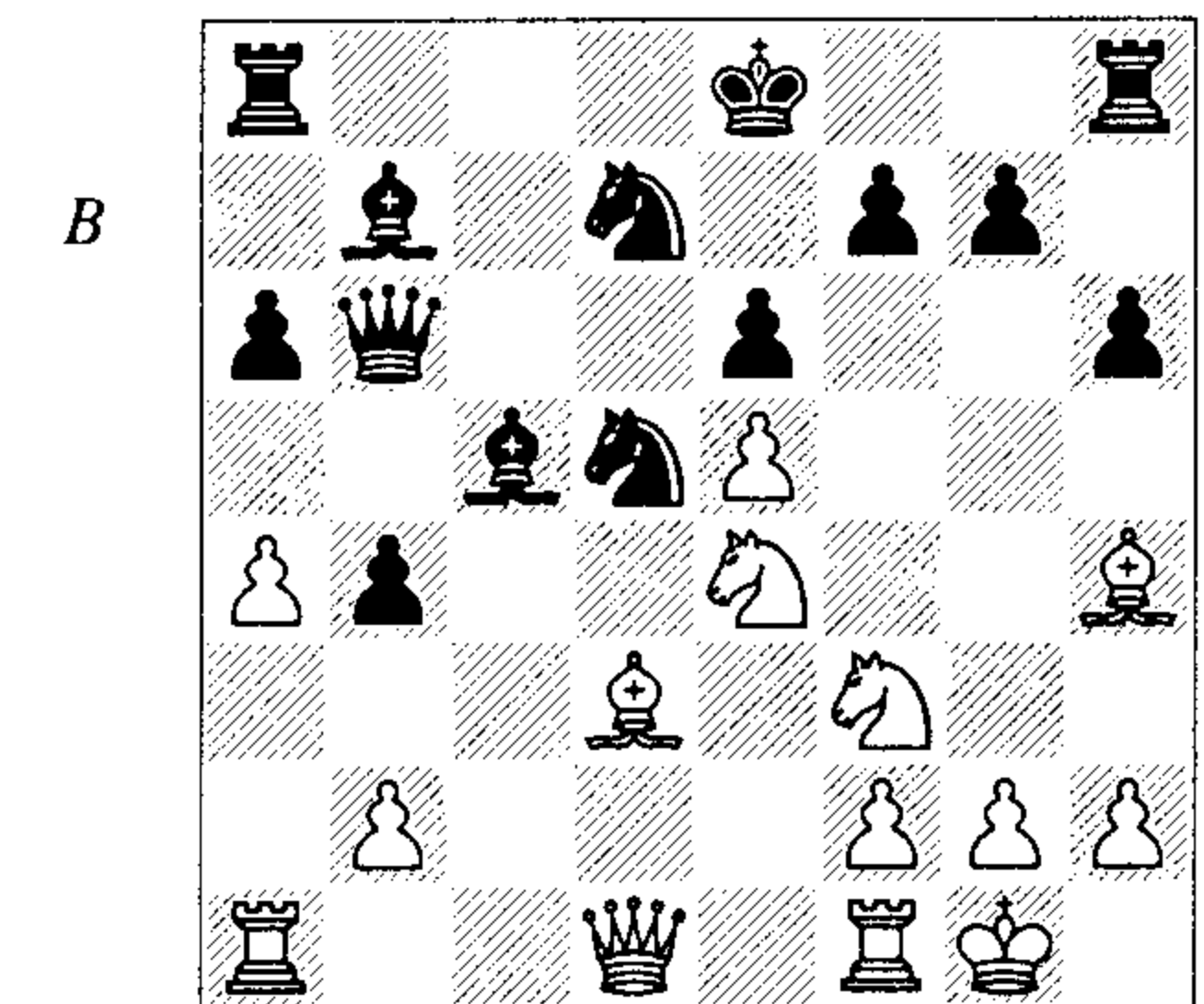
White also wins after 25...♙h7 26 ♙c1.

26 ♔xh6 ♘e6 27 ♘g5 1-0

Mate on h7 or g7 follows. That is about as decisive as they come.

Active Piece Play

The following position was reached from the 7 e4 line of the Classical Variation (see Chapter 4, Line B). An interesting struggle is developing. White has achieved e4-e5 and hopes to be able use the d6 outpost successfully. He has not had to sacrifice a pawn as is sometimes the case. On the other hand, Black has been able to place his minor pieces on positive-looking squares. Most notably the bishop on b7 cuts right through the board and the knight on d5 is better placed here than on f8 where it was in the previous example.



Avrukh – Baburin
Groningen 1995

15...♗c8

The rook need not go to c8. Better is 15...0-0 although even then White has the better of it after 16 a5. Black has to watch his a6-pawn in such a situation and cannot move both queen and rook

from its defence because he can expect White to play ♖e2.

16 ♔g3 0-0 17 ♘fd2

This starts a logical manoeuvre but 17 ♖e2 first is better.

17...♗d4!

Black has something planned against White's next move.

18 ♘d6 ♘xe5 19 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♘2c4

The main idea is revealed in the variation 20 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 21 ♘c4 ♖xc4 22 ♗xc4 ♘f4, when Black's minor pieces offer enormous compensation for the sacrificed exchanges.

20...♖c7 21 ♘xc8 ♗xh2+ 22 ♖h1 ♖xc8

The minor pieces still have great potential.

23 ♖h5 ♘f4

Not the best. 23...♗f4 followed by ...♗g5 would have threatened ...♘f4 winning material.

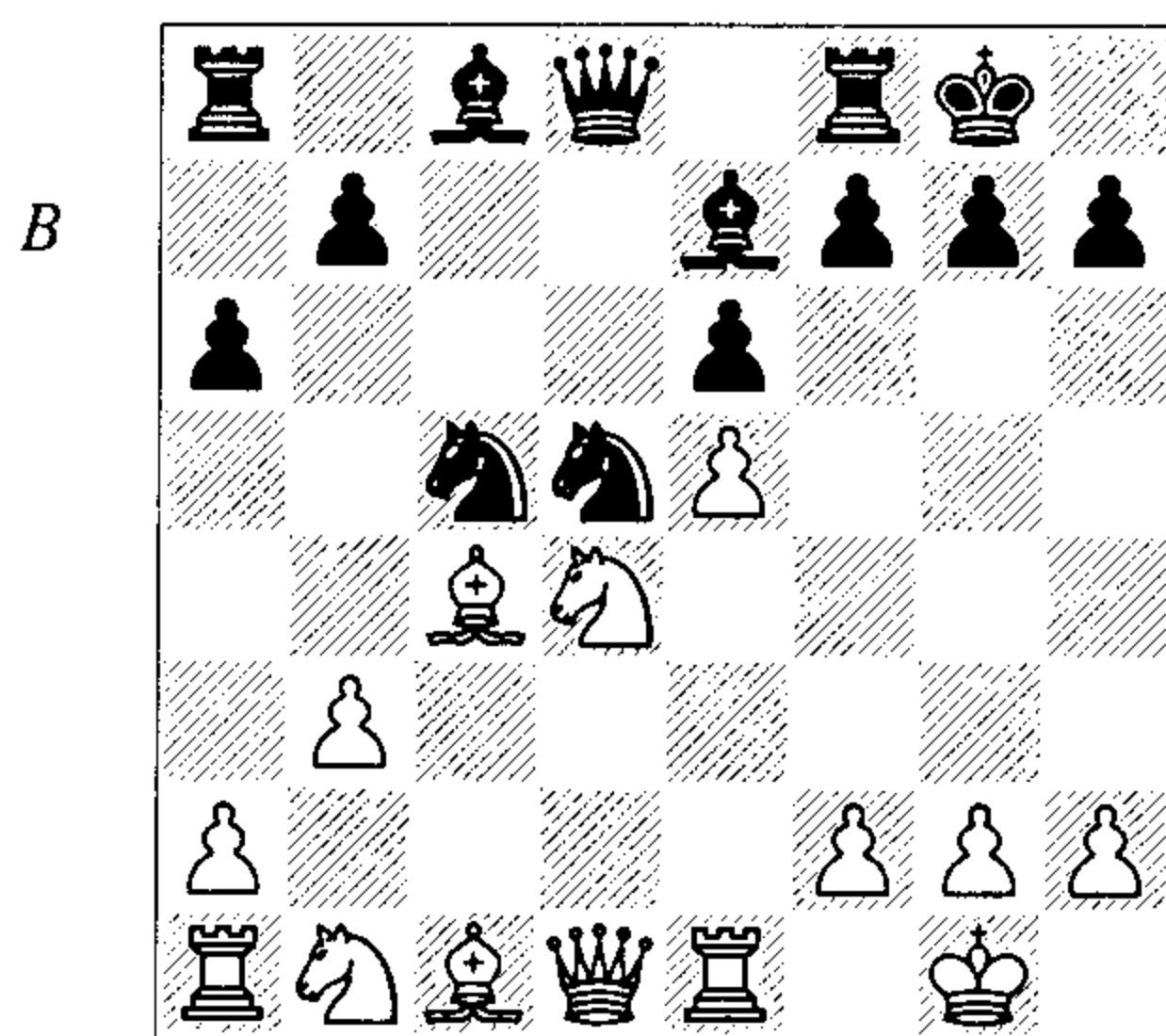
24 ♖xh2 ♗xg2+ 25 ♖g1 ♗d5 26 ♘b6

Black's bishop has already made its presence felt – its white counterpart cannot block or challenge the diagonal. In the game Black went astray with 26...♖d8. Instead, he could have kept his advantage with 26...♘d3 27 ♖xc7 (27 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 is much better for Black) 27...♖xc7 28 ♘d5 exd5 and in the ending Black stands much better, with too many extra kingside pawns for White to cope with.

Despite its flaws, this is a good example, showing the typical complexities of a QGA struggle.

Spatial Advantage Versus Queenside Counterplay

The following again comes from 7 ♗d3 in the Classical Variation. This time, Black has delayed ...b5.



Piket – Svidler
Tilburg 1997

13...♘b6

Played in order to prevent an untimely ♘f5, but 13...♖d7, as seen before, looks better to me.

14 ♗f1 ♖d7

Black intends ...b5 one day and for this, protection of b5 will not do any harm. Also ...♖fd8 could put some awkward pressure on the d4-knight.

15 ♗b2 ♘d5 16 ♘d2 b5

That was all part of the plan. The queen also covers c6.

17 ♖c1 ♗b7 18 ♖g4 ♖ac8

Both players are ready for the battle that lies ahead. Note that White cannot use the e5-pawn just yet by playing ♘e4.

19 ♘2f3 ♖d8

Nicely in time to stop ♘g5 but my general feeling is that the white pieces are heading in the right direction and that they will be quicker in creating threats than Black's in creating queenside counterplay.

20 h4 ♖b6

The queen settles on a sensible square and now Black can look to play ...♘b4.

21 a3

White needs to transfer more pieces over to the kingside. I suggest 21 ♖ed1 and then ♘e2-g3. Admittedly, this is time-consuming, but I do not see anything immediate for Black.

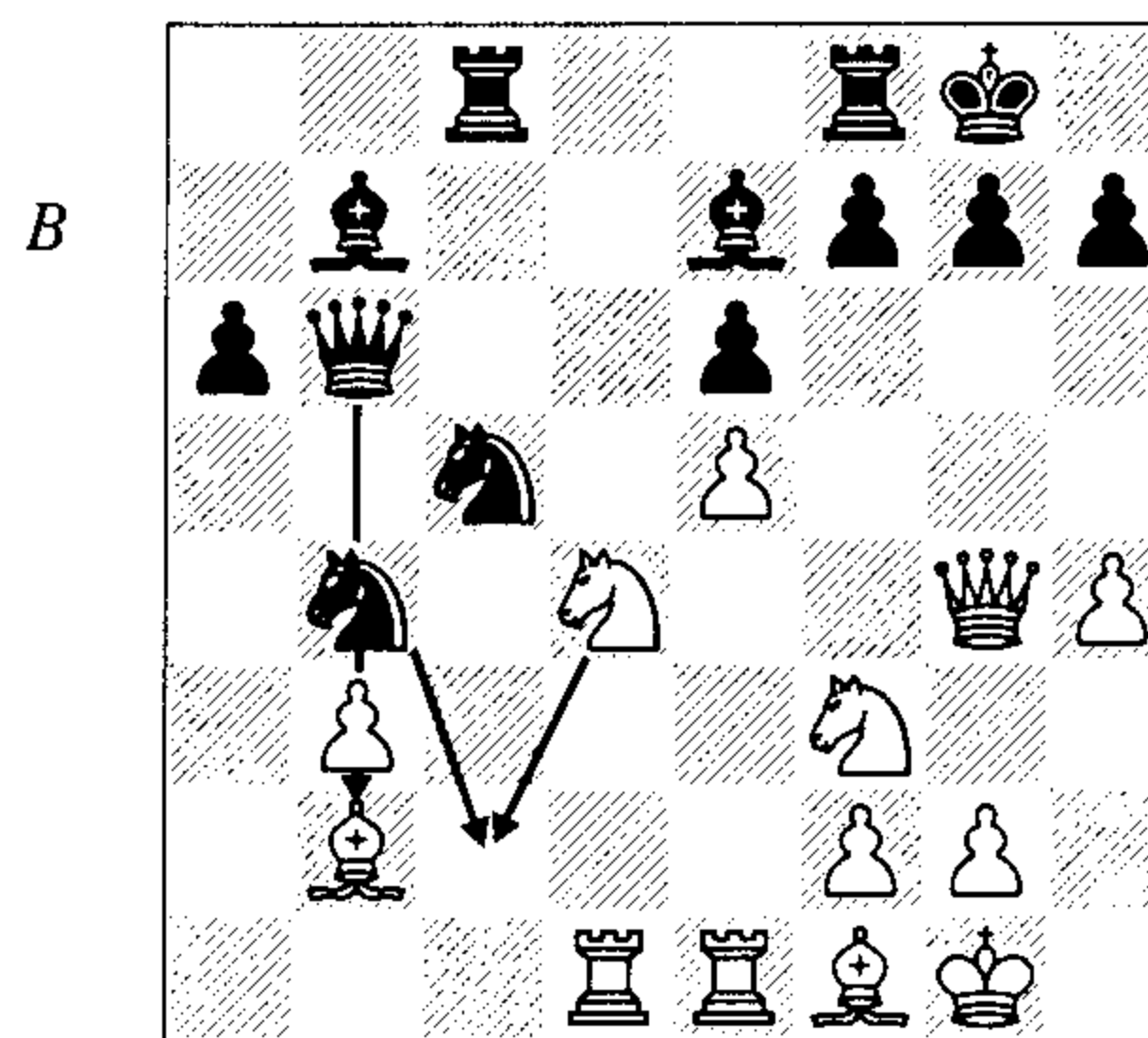
21...b4 22 axb4

Or 22 a4 ♘c3 23 ♗xc3 bxc3 and the a4- and b3-pawns afford ample opportunities for Black on the queenside.

22...♘xb4

The last couple of moves have seen a change in fortunes. Black is beginning to swarm over the queenside.

23 ♖cd1 (D)



23...♘c2!

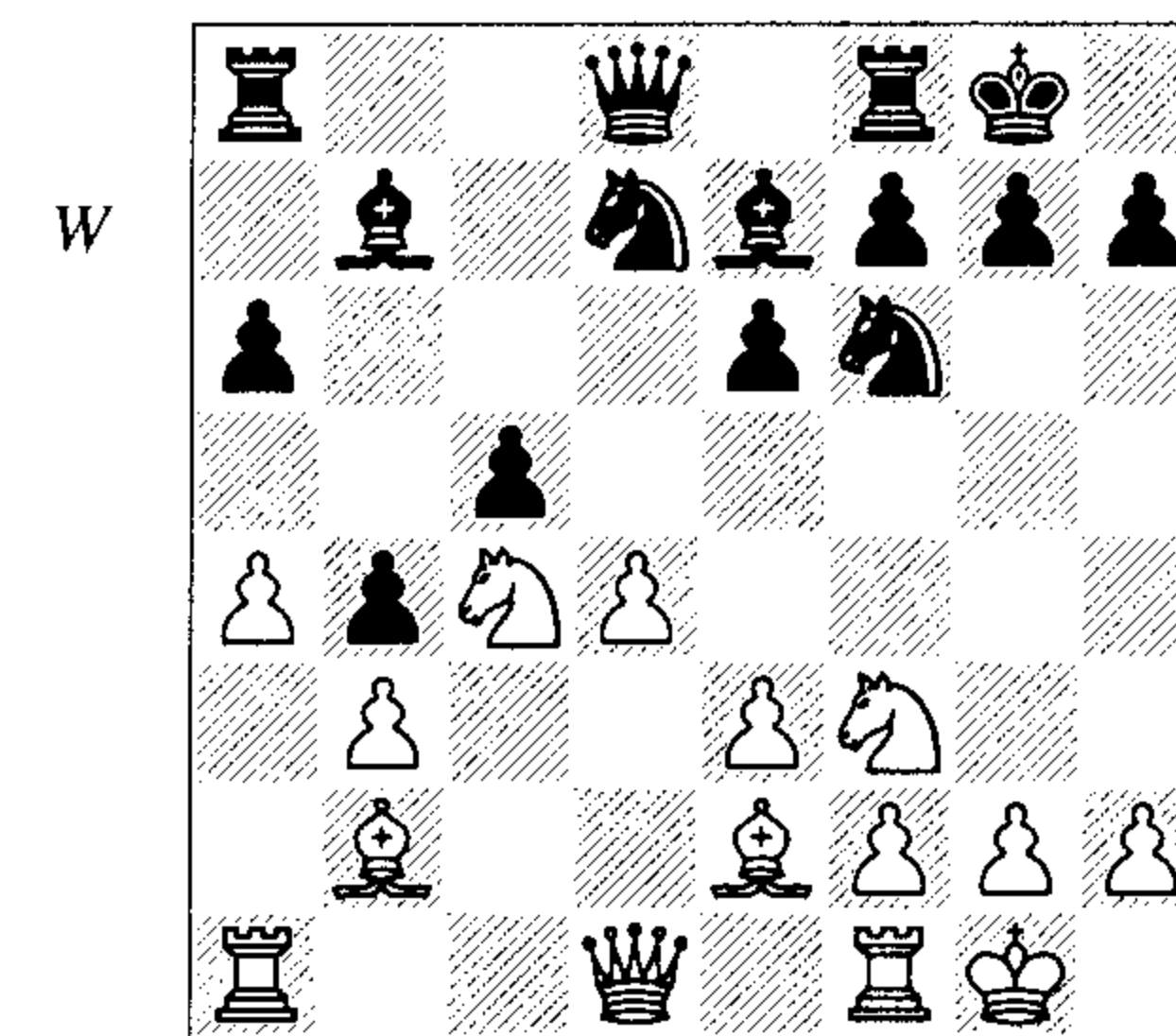
The position was rich with counterplay on this wing but initially, that came as a real shock to your author.

24 ♘xc2 ♖xb3 25 ♘fd4 ♖xb2

Regaining the piece. Black is now a pawn up with a winning position.

Central Tension and Active Piece Play

The opening moves in the following game were made in a pretty random order but we have ended up with something looking very much like a QGA (see Chapter 5).



Taimanov – Hjartarson
Stockholm Rilton Cup 1996/7

13 ♖c1 ♖b8

Planning to answer 14 ♘a5 with 14...♗d5 followed by ...♖b6. However, this is the start of a faulty plan which leaves the kingside denuded of pieces. 13...♘d5 followed by ...♗f6 is a sensible alternative. At some point

the tension on d4 and c5 will be released and if things go well for Black he will be able to plant a knight on c3.

14 ♖fe5 ♜d8 15 ♗h5

Trying to weaken the black king-side.

15...♗xe5 16 ♗xe5

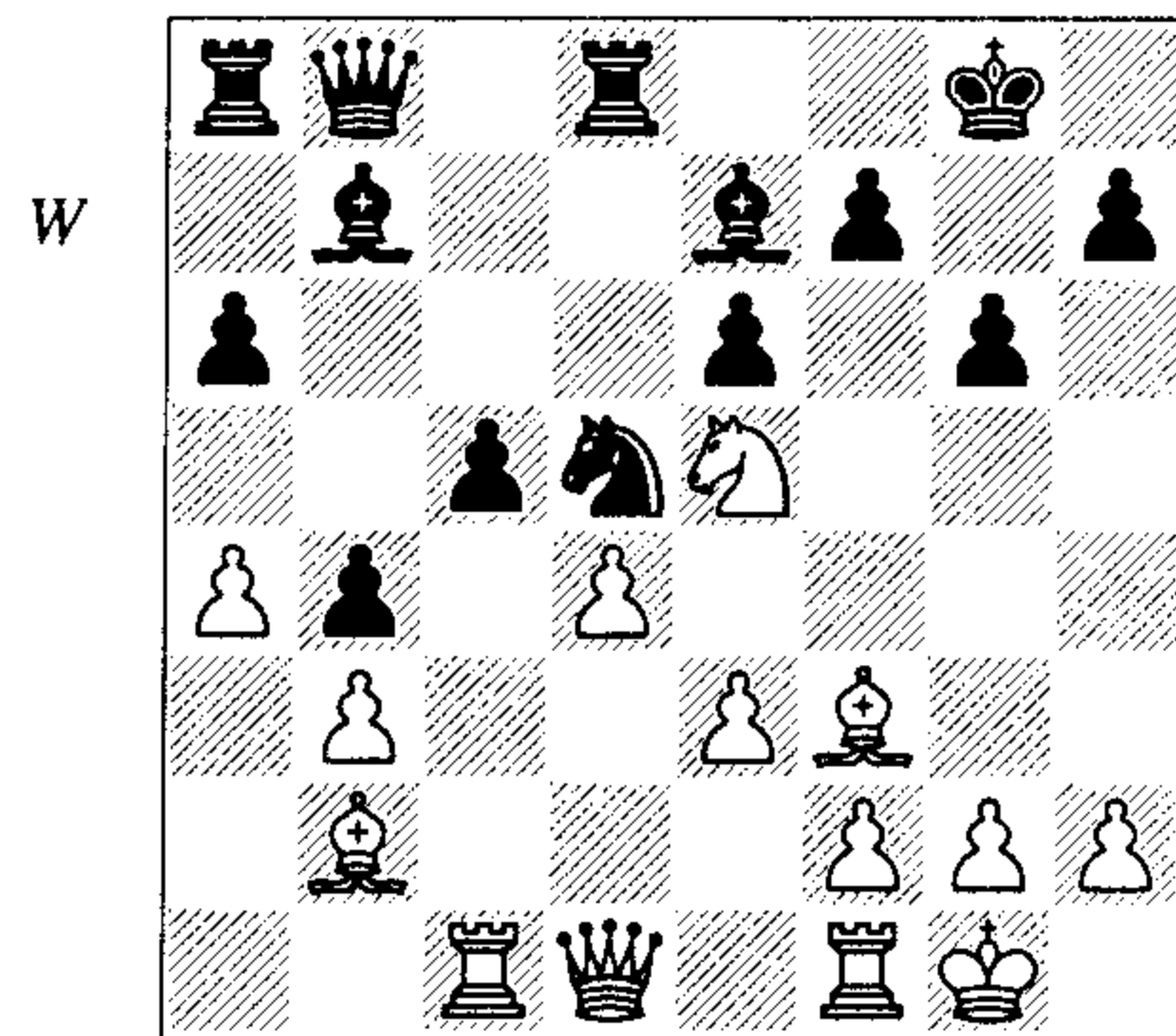
This knight has manoeuvred b1-d2-c4-e5 and can hope to invade on c6.

16...g6 17 ♗f3

White is still eyeing up the c6-square having first weakened the a1-h8 diagonal.

17...♗d5 (D)

This move is overdue.



18 ♗xd5

It is not clear what Black had planned against 18 dxc5, as after 18...♗xe3 19 ♗e2 ♗xf1, the intermezzo 20 c6 keeps the game very much in White's favour.

18...♗xd5 19 e4 ♜d8 20 ♗f3

With a weakened king position and no pieces with which to defend it, Black is still very much in trouble.

20...f6 21 ♗g4

21 dxc5 fxe5 22 c6 again comes into the reckoning.

21...f5 22 ♗h6+ ♖f8

Almost unbelievably Black is still alive. The pin on the e4-pawn, the threat of ...♗g5 and the queen on b8 ready to interfere on e5 or f4 given half a chance really muddied the water.

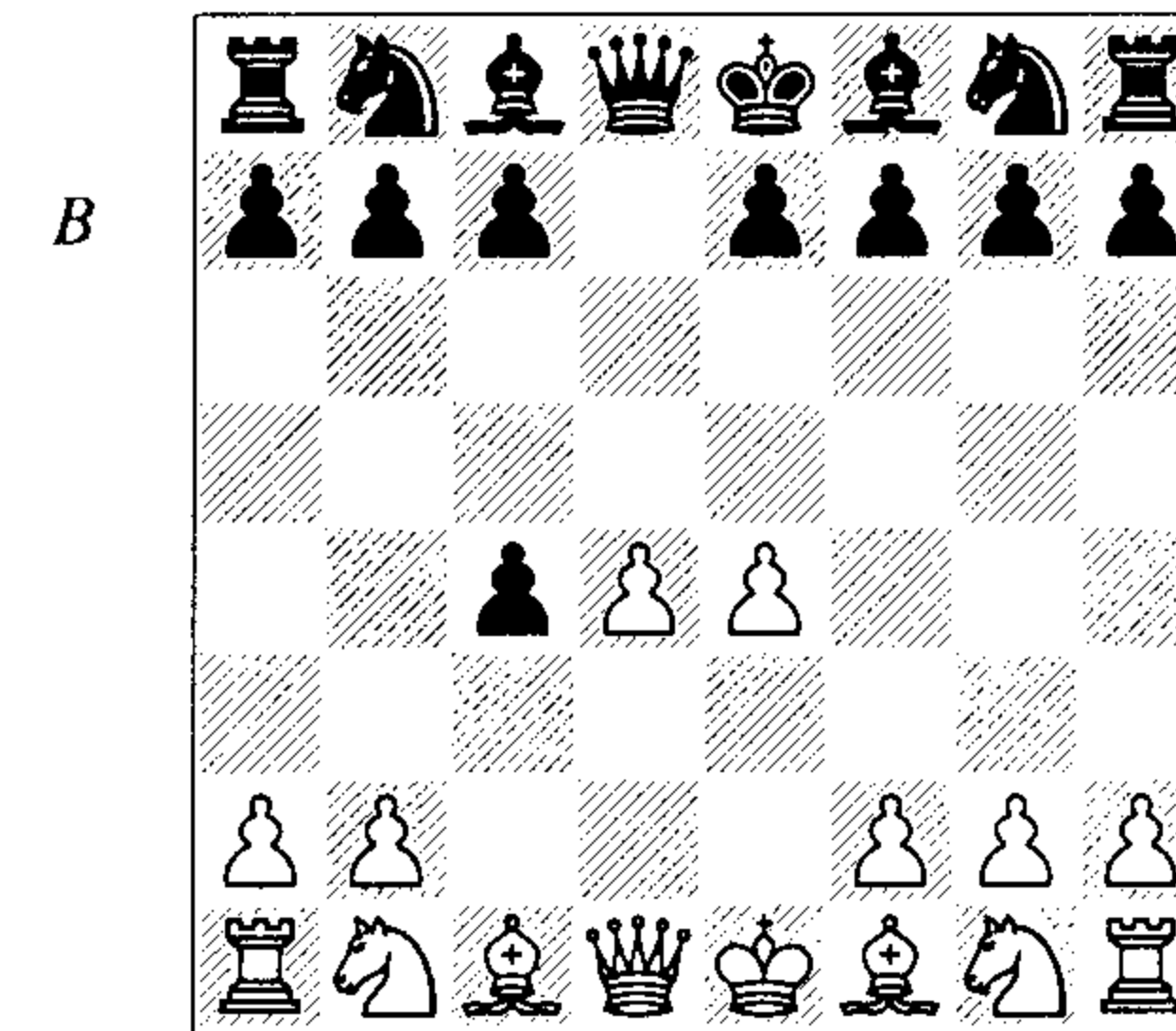
23 dxc5 ♗xe4 24 ♗h3 ♜d3 25 g3 ♗f4

After this move Black is winning! The example also shows the power of Black's queen's bishop if things work out well for it.

That is the end of this first chapter. In it, we have looked at some common ideas and themes arising in the middlegame of the QGA. We have looked at the roles that the pieces play in various pawn formations. We shall now concentrate on opening theory in the rest of this book. Naturally, we shall never lose sight of the fact that however well the opening phase of the game is played, there is still a lot to be gained by playing well in the rest of the game. Therefore, it is well worth being able to understand the middlegame and endgame positions that arise from the opening phase of the QGA.

2 Central Variation: 3 e4

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 (D)



The central variation is an attempt by White to question the viability of Black's whole opening strategy. Can Black really afford to give up the fight for control of central squares so readily? Rather than waiting for developments, the immediate e2-e4 by White stakes a more major claim in the centre than in other variations where White only plays e2-e3 (see the other chapters of this book). The result of this advance is that White generally occupies more space in the centre which can influence the whole game. Indeed, it is not uncommon to advance with either e4-e5 or d4-d5, when the desired safe placement by Black of a knight on either f6 or c6 is impossible. An attack on Black's king by White is

thus possible in these situations. Irrespective of that, if Black does not counter quickly with ...c5, or do something with the c-pawn, then, after capturing on c4, White can hope for some pressure down the semi-open c-file. On occasions, this can lead to an enduring advantage for White late into an endgame.

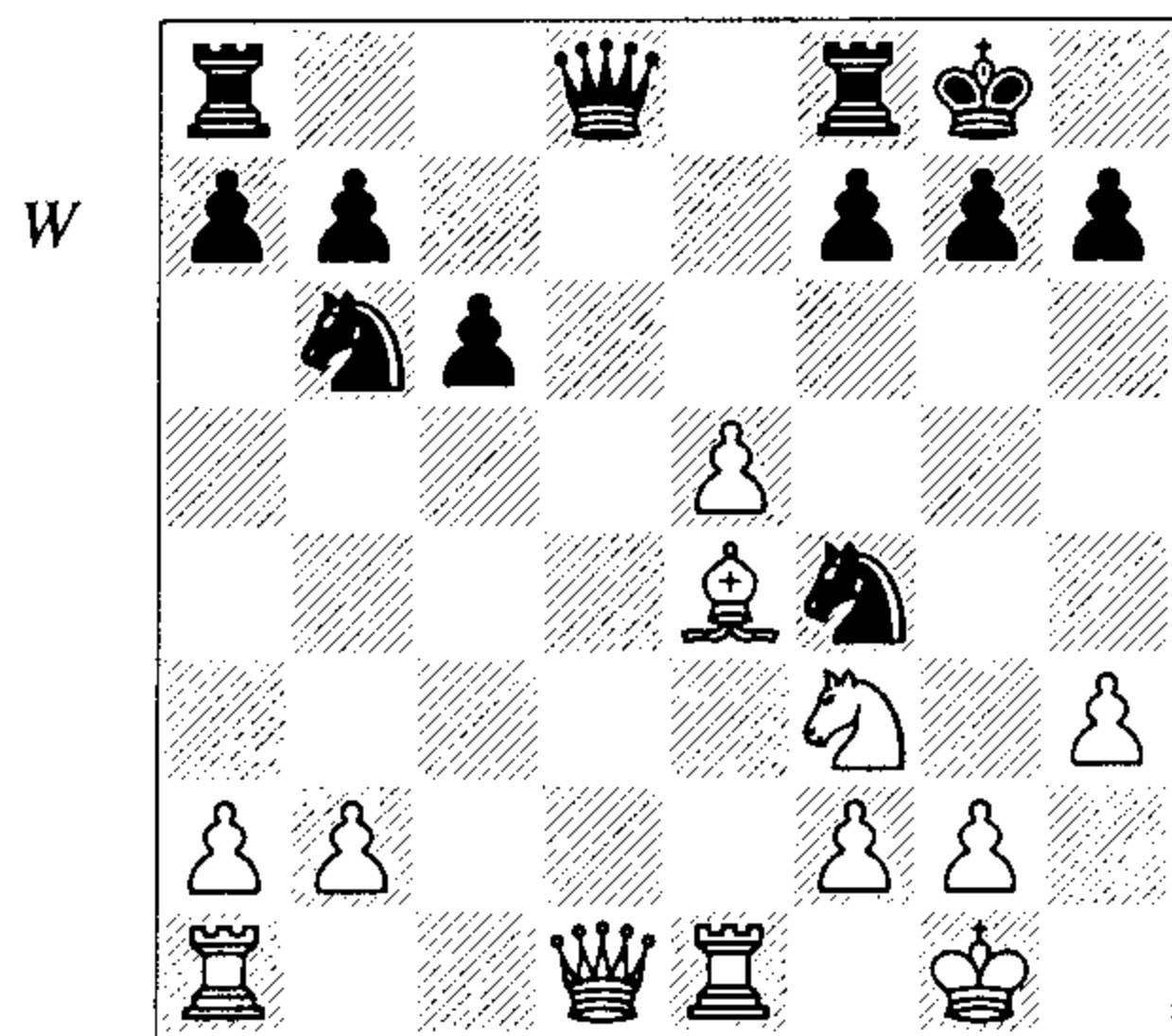
The other side of the coin is that after 3 e4, Black is a pawn up! With Black to move an attack on either of White's central pawns requires some sort of action by White. White can choose to defend the required pawn but often a further attack either directly or indirectly is possible by Black. Another possibility for White is to advance the central pawn so that it is no longer *en prise*. Whilst this gains space for White, as mentioned above, it also determines White's strategy early in the game. Black can then often arrange to plant a minor piece in the middle of the board.

The final possibility is for White to play in gambit mode. There are a wide range of 'home-grown' gambits – technically these are not that sound but in practice they make their mark by scoring points – and ones that are at the leading edge of opening theory. Watch out for all of these!

We shall concentrate on and begin with the most popular of Black's third moves, 3...e5. There are, of course, other ways to attack White's centre. We shall examine the most combative of these alternatives, 3...d6. Other moves, such as 3...d7, 3...c5, and even 3...b5, are possible, but are not discussed here.

Before we move on to the theory, we shall look at two typical kinds of positions which are relevant to Lines A1 and A2 below. In both cases White has the characteristic pawn on e5.

Black exchanges on f3



C.Hansen – Lautier
Groningen 1995

The material is level and there are no weaknesses in either camp. One would not normally expect that the white bishop could triumph over the black knight or that the e5-pawn would be significant.

18 ♖c2

Gaining a tempo by attacking h7. It makes sense to connect the rooks.

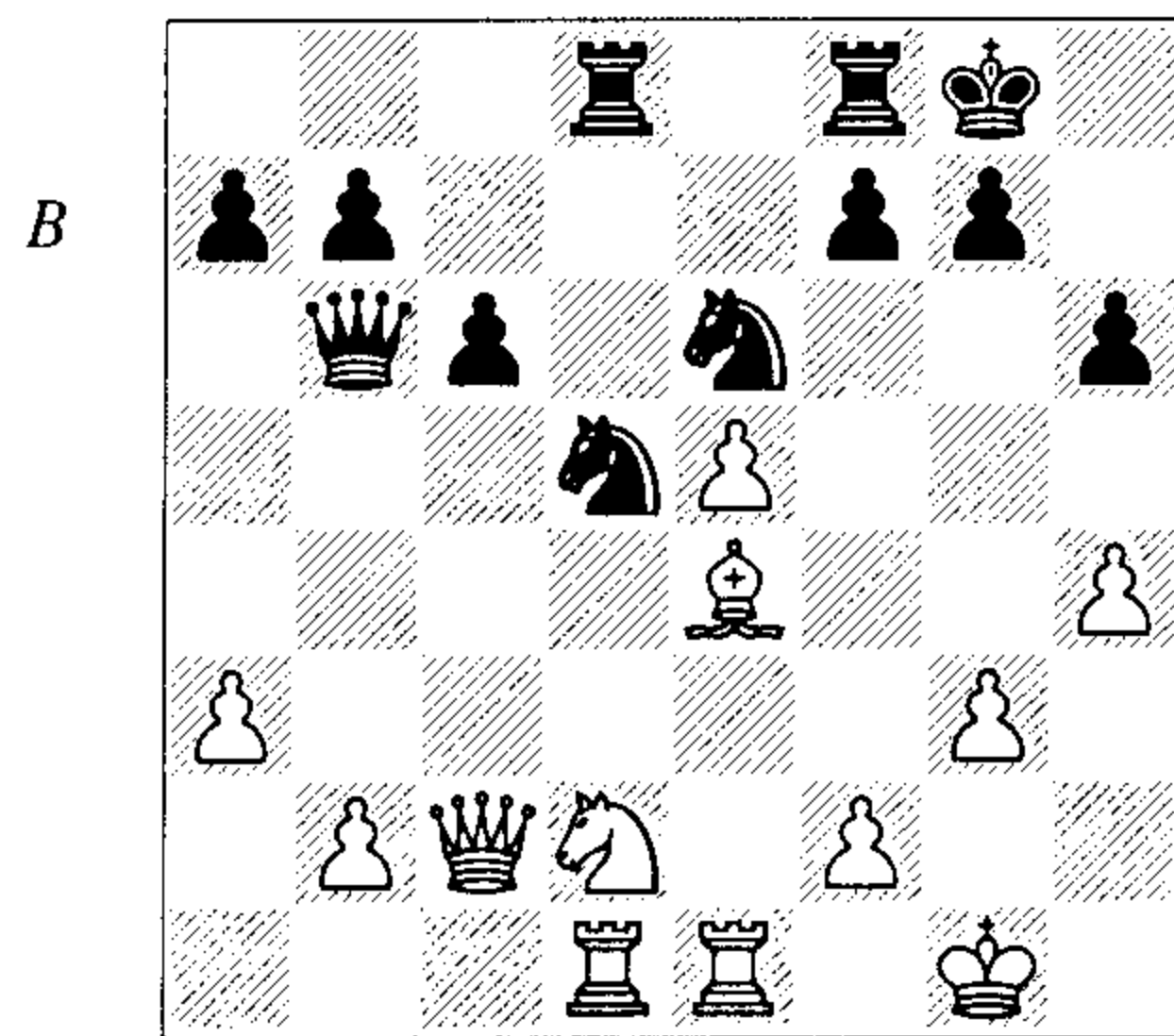
18...h6 19 ♖ad1 ♘bd5

Unnecessarily getting the knights in a tangle. 19...d6, while optically not looking ambitious, is the best way to keep solid and blunt the power of the white bishop.

20 h4

White wants to kick the f4-knight away with g2-g3 but first he must guard against losing the h-pawn.

20...♗b6 21 a3 ♖ad8 22 g3 ♘e6 23 ♘d2 (D)



White begins a regrouping manoeuvre and does not seem concerned about the d4-square. A backward manoeuvre like this is not always a signal that Black is standing fine.

23...d4 24 ♗d3 c5

Defending one knight but weakening the defence of the other.

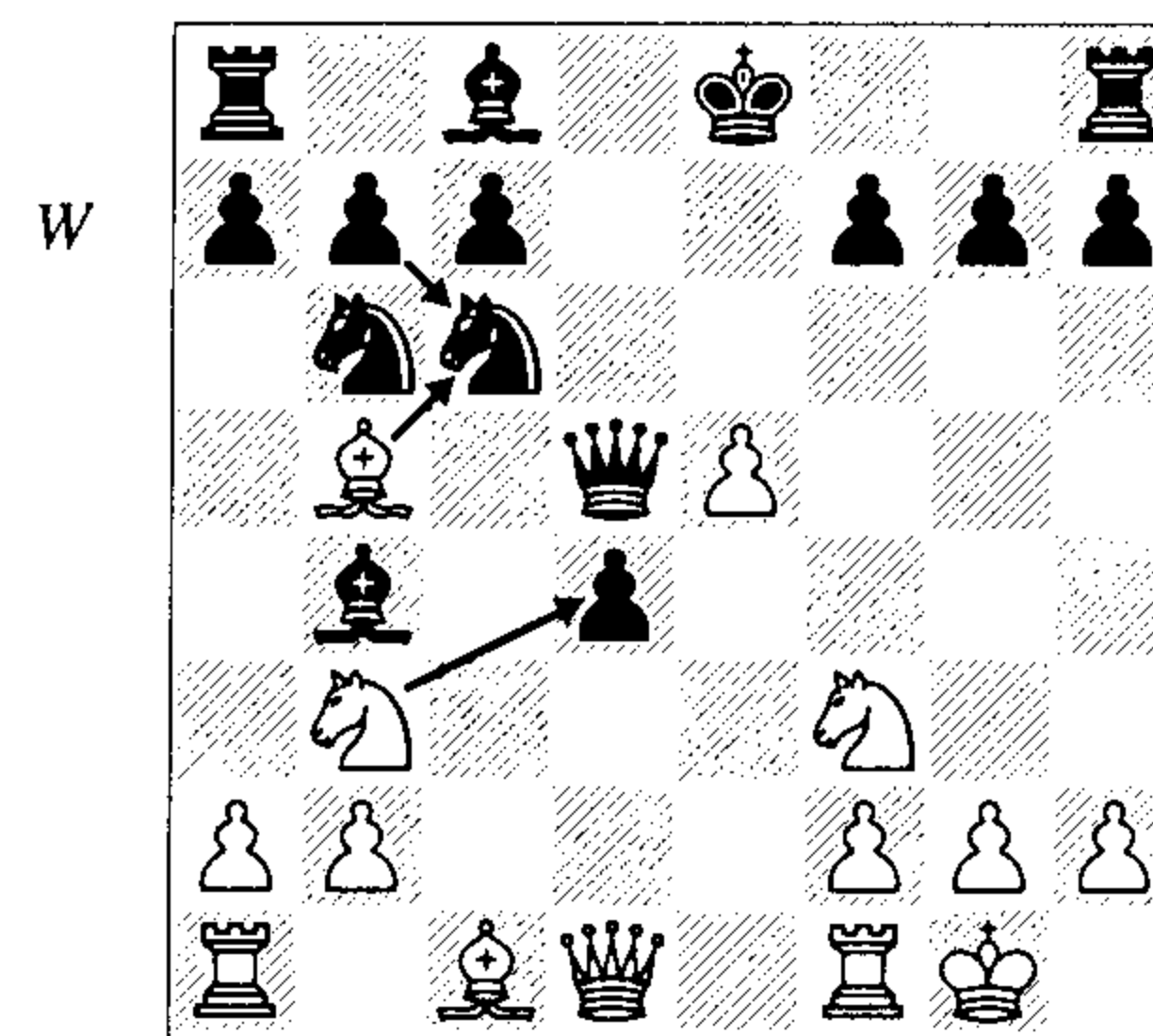
25 d4 ♗e6 26 ♙g2 b6 27 b4

Undermining Black's hold in the centre.

27...d7 28 bxc5 bxc5 29 d6

White has played well. Black now has split pawns, an outpost on d6 for his knight and the light-squared bishop is exerting more pressure along the diagonal than it was at the beginning of this example. White went on to win from here.

White exchanges on c6



Kharlov – Yakovich
Elista 1997

11 d6 0-0

Inviting White to double his c-pawns.

12 ♙xc6

White accepts the invitation.

12...bxc6 13 ♗c2 c5

Black wants to organize his queen and bishop along the long diagonal.

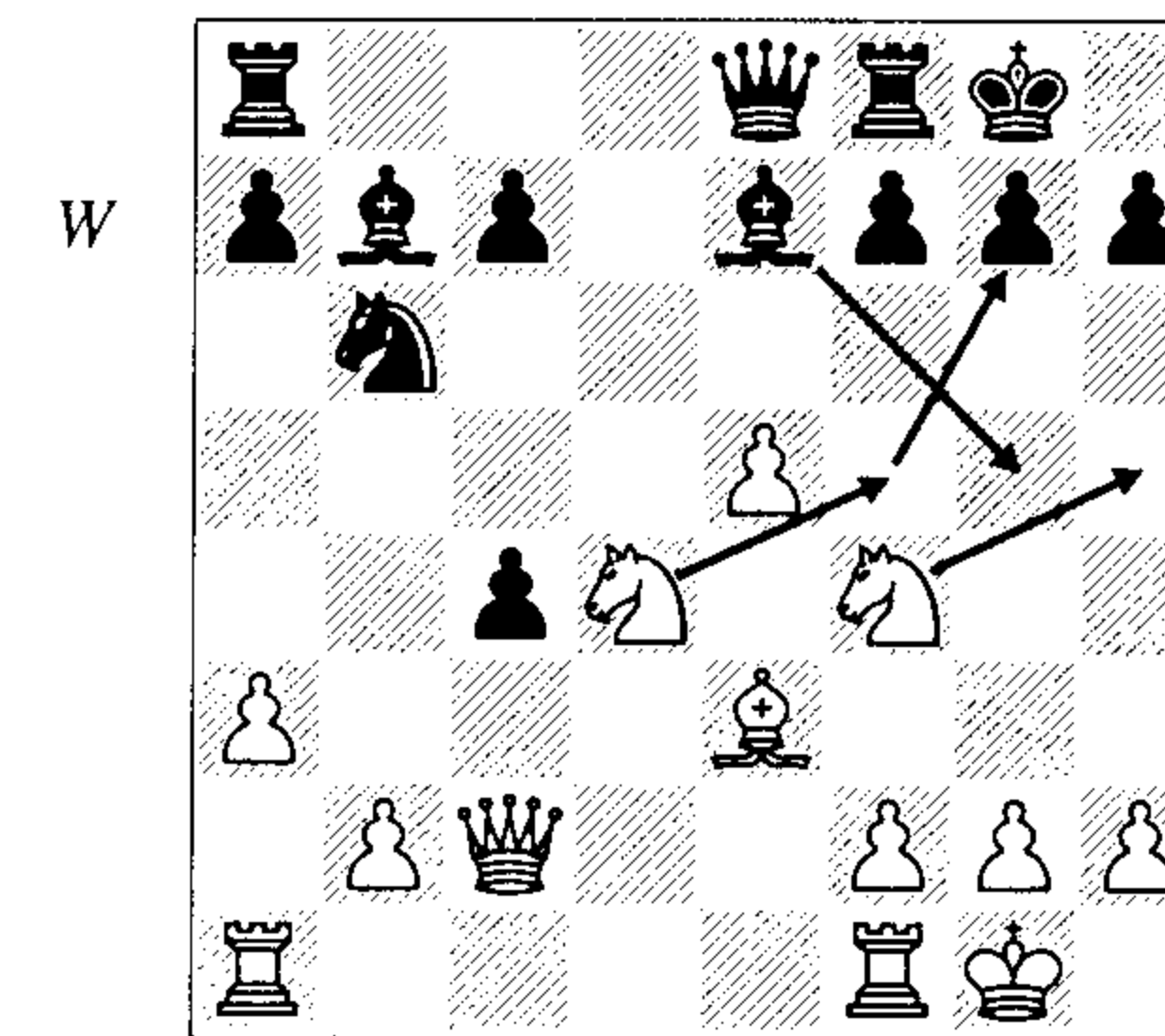
14 d7 c4

It is favourable to be able to retreat the bishop to e7.

15 d7 ♗c6 16 a3 ♙e7 17 ♙e3 ♙b7

Better is 17...g6 keeping the knights out of f5 and h5, which is where they seem to be heading whilst also avoiding the note to White's 19th move below.

18 d4 ♗e8 (D)



White has done well. Black's queen has been forced to the ugly-looking e8-square. Now, can White take advantage of his well-placed knights?

19 ♖fe1

A sensible move. Black defends the e5-pawn in anticipation of it being attacked. However, 19...d7 is interesting. Then 19...g5 20 d7 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 21 d7 ♗h5+ is a dangerous tactical shot, so Black should probably play 19...g6 20 d7 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 21 d7 ♙d4 but that leaves some weak squares around the black king with no bishop with which to cover them.

19...g6 20 ♖ad1

e5-e6 on this occasion and on previous ones was well worth considering as a way to try to get the knights into the black position.

20...c5 21 ♖de2

A welcome sign for Black. He is now able to keep the bishop-pair and the knights have been forced backwards.

21...♚c6

Black's queen returns to its post.

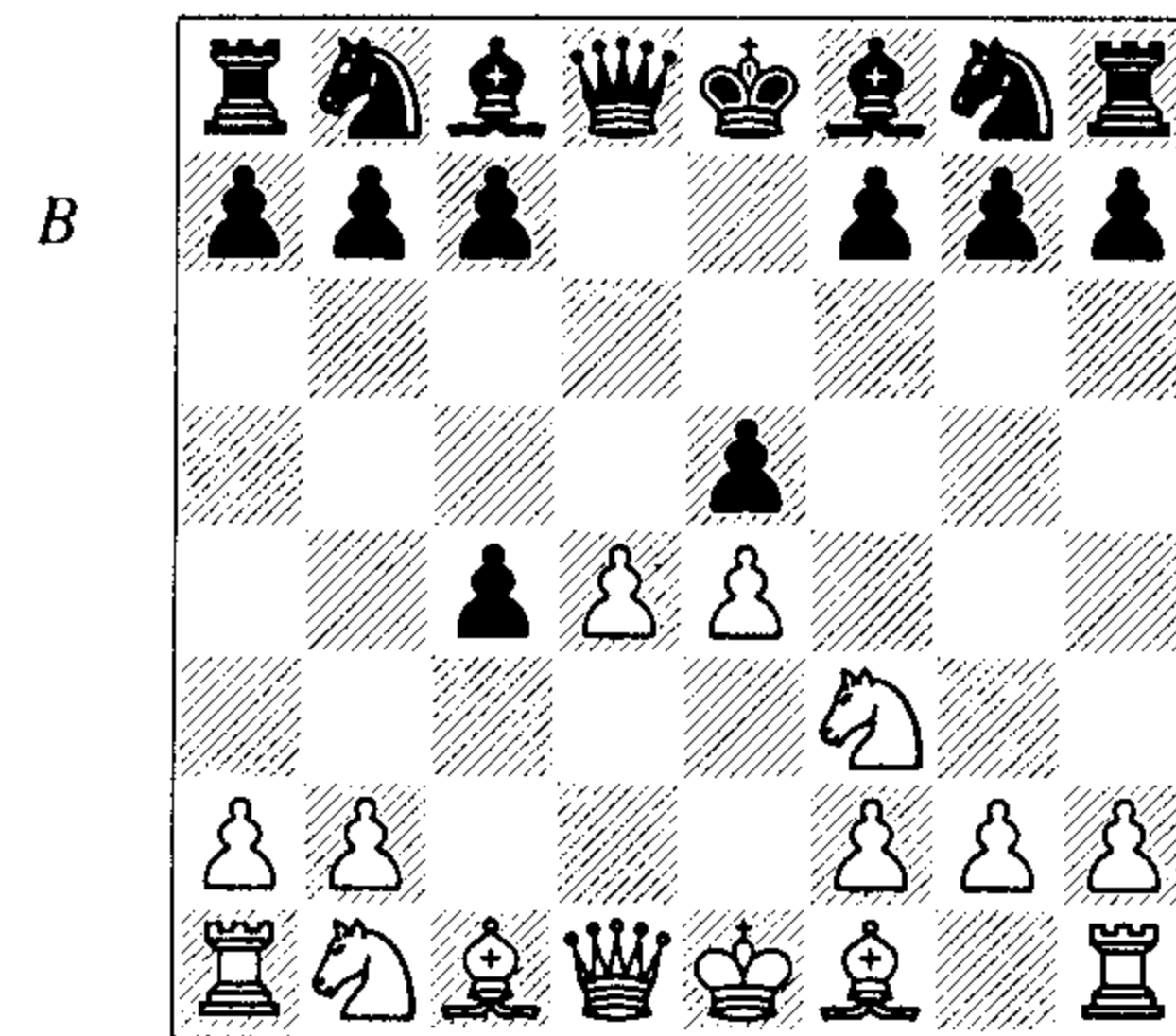
22 ♖c3

Finally and typically, the knight settles immediately in front of the doubled pawns.

22...♜ad8 23 f3 ♜fe8 24 ♖f2 ♜xd1 25 ♚xd1 ♖f8

Black is doing fine. The doubled pawns are well defended and now it is White who must defend his own e5-pawn.

means obligatory but was still advantageous to Black after 5 ♖xc4 ♖f6 6 exf5 ♖xf5 7 ♖c3 ♖d6 8 ♖g5 0-0 9 ♖ge2 ♚e8 10 ♖g3 ♚g6 11 ♚d2 a6 12 ♖xf5 ♚xf5 13 0-0 b5 14 ♖b3 b4 15 ♖e2 ♖e4.



The Theory of 3 e4

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4

Now:

A: 3...e5 22

B: 3...♖c6 33

A)

3...e5

It is very natural to strike out in this way. The two black bishops are now ready to develop. White does not generally find Black's countergambit very tempting since after 4 dxe5 ♚xd1+ 5 ♖xd1, White cannot castle.

4 ♖f3 (D)

4 d5 is not hugely tempting because Black can easily develop with ...♖f6 and ...♖c5. Rylander-Miskulin, Swedish open Ch (Växjö) 1992 had a different flavour with 4...f5 – this is by no

We have now reached a turning point in opening theory. Of the lines upon which we focus, much attention was devoted to the first two, which have many similarities, but there have been several games between top players with the third idea, which has received greater support more recently.

A1: 4...♖b4+ 22

A2: 4...exd4 5 ♖xc4 ♖b4+ 27

A3: 4...exd4 5 ♖xc4

without 5...♖b4 29

A4: 4...exd4 5 ♚xd4 32

In Line A1 Black generally follows up with ...exd4, while in A3, ...♖e6 is the normal follow-up.

A1)

4...♖b4+ 5 ♖c3

5 ♖bd2?! allows 5...c3:

a) After 6 bxc3 ♖xc3 7 ♜b1 ♖e7! 8 ♖c4 0-0 9 0-0, Westerinen-Fahnen-schmidt, Bad Mondorf 1972, a simple count of the number of pieces developed is one way of judging that White does not have enough for a sacrificed pawn. If instead 9 dxe5, then it is not easy to see if White can hold on to the doubled e-pawns.

b) 6 ♚a4+ has proved surprisingly popular. Lautier-Dlugy, Palma de Mallorca 1989 continued 6...♖c6 7 d5 cxd2+ 8 ♖xd2 ♖ge7 9 dxc6 ♖xc6 10 ♖b5 ♖d7 11 ♖xc6 ♖xd2+ 12 ♖xd2 ♖xc6 13 ♚a3 ♖xe4 14 ♜d1 and then 14...♚d3 15 ♖c3 ♚b5 16 f3 ♖d5 17 ♖xe5 ♖xf3? 18 gxf3 f6 (18...♚xe5+ 19 ♖f2 and 20 ♜he1 is terminal) 19 ♖xc7, etc. Following that piece of suicide the game tragically concluded in White's favour. However, Black could have improved in a number of places. 14...♖d3 for example, gives Black an advantageous position – the white king is in more trouble than Black's, not to mention the two-pawn material disparity.

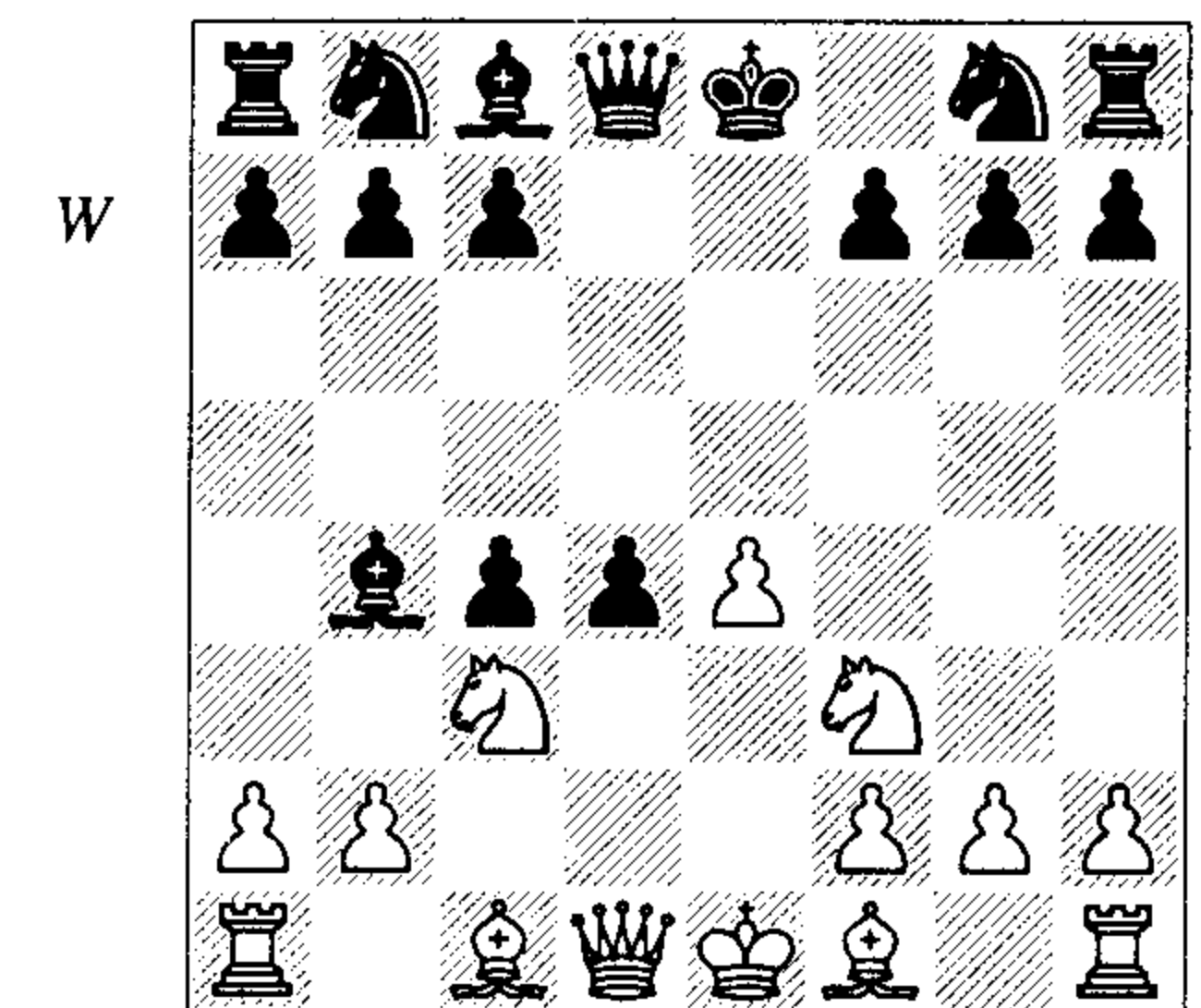
We discuss 5 ♖d2 by transposition in Line A2.

5...exd4 (D)

After 5...♖f6 I am a firm believer in White's pawn sacrifice 6 ♖xe5 b5 7 ♖e2 ♖b7 8 0-0:

a) 8...♖xc3 9 bxc3 ♖xe4 10 ♖f3 0-0 (10...♖xc3? loses to 11 ♚e1) 11 ♚c2 ♖d6 12 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 13 a4 with an advantage for White, due to Black's shattered queenside pawns.

b) 8...c6 9 ♖g5 h6 10 ♖h4 0-0 11 ♖g4 (11 a4 is good – Bareev) 11...♖e7 12 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 13 e5 ♖e7 14 ♖f3 a6 15 a4 ♖d7 16 axb5 axb5 17 ♖xb5 ♚b6 18 ♖c3 ♜ad8 19 ♖a4 ♚b4 20 ♚e1 and Black had the worse of it for some time before securing a draw in the game Bareev-Ivanchuk, Linares 1992.



Now play divides according to whether White wants a quiet or a sharp game:

A11: 6 ♚xd4 23

A12: 6 ♖xd4 24

A11)

6 ♚xd4 ♚xd4

6...♖c6 is unexplored territory, e.g. 7 ♚xg7 ♚f6 8 ♚xf6 ♖xf6.

7 ♖xd4 ♖f6 8 f3 ♖c5

If Black omits ...♖b4+, then the position is also possible without f2-f3.

9 ♖e3 ♖c6 10 ♖c2

White has tried various other moves here, but sometimes they turn out as the same thing.

a) 10 dxc5 dxd4 11 exd4 exd4 12 dxd4 e6 (it is more straightforward to play 12...0-0 13 exc4 d8 , when the position is equal, but the position is far from dead) 13 dxe6 fxe6 14 exc4 e7 (the scene is set; Black has more pawn islands and we have an ending of $2\text{R}+\text{K}$ vs $2\text{R}+\text{K}$) 15 cf2 ad8 16 hd1 g5 17 e3 c5 18 a4 e5 19 xd8 xd8 20 b3 d4 21 g4 (White is threatening h4) 21...h5 22 h4 gxh4 23 g5 (that is a different picture; White has created a passed pawn) 23... e8 24 h1 and the advantage is very much with White, Lobron-Dlugy, New York 1992.

b) 10 0-0-0 e6 (having played f2-f3, White's chances of being able to move the knight from d4 and find an advantage is small; this includes taking the bishop on e6 or taking the knight on c6) 11 f5 (Black was planning queenside castling so the d4-knight must move anyway) 11... xe3 + 12 dxe3 e5 transposes back to the main line.

10... xe3 11 dxe3 e6 12 0-0-0 e5 13 b5

White must regain his sacrificed pawn.

13... c8

A tacit offer of a draw. Instead after 13...0-0 (which I prefer) 14 dxc7 ac8 15 dxe6 fxe6 (Black's development compensates for the potentially weak pawn) 16 c2 fd7 the black pawns and knights have something of a grip, especially down the d-file, Kochetkov-Shevelev, Beersheba 1998.

Instead 13... e7 is not feasible in view of 14 dxc7 and d5+ . There is often a fine line as to where the black king should go.

14 xa7 a8 15 b5 c8 16 a3 e7 17 d4 g5

Black must play here to stop f3-f4. However, conceding the f5-square like this is not a pleasant choice for Black to have to make. With the pawn on c4, which is securely defended, Black's plan to play a knight to d3 remains the same. With his king in the centre there is an accident waiting to happen, Seirawan-Ivanchuk, Roquebrune Amber rpd 1992.

A12)

6 dxd4 e7 (D)

It would be an idea to attack White's centre with ... f6 . First, Black must watch a4+ picking up the bishop.

a) If 6... xc3+ 7 bxc3 f6 , then 8 a3 is extremely awkward for the black king.

b) 6... e7 7 exc4 and then:

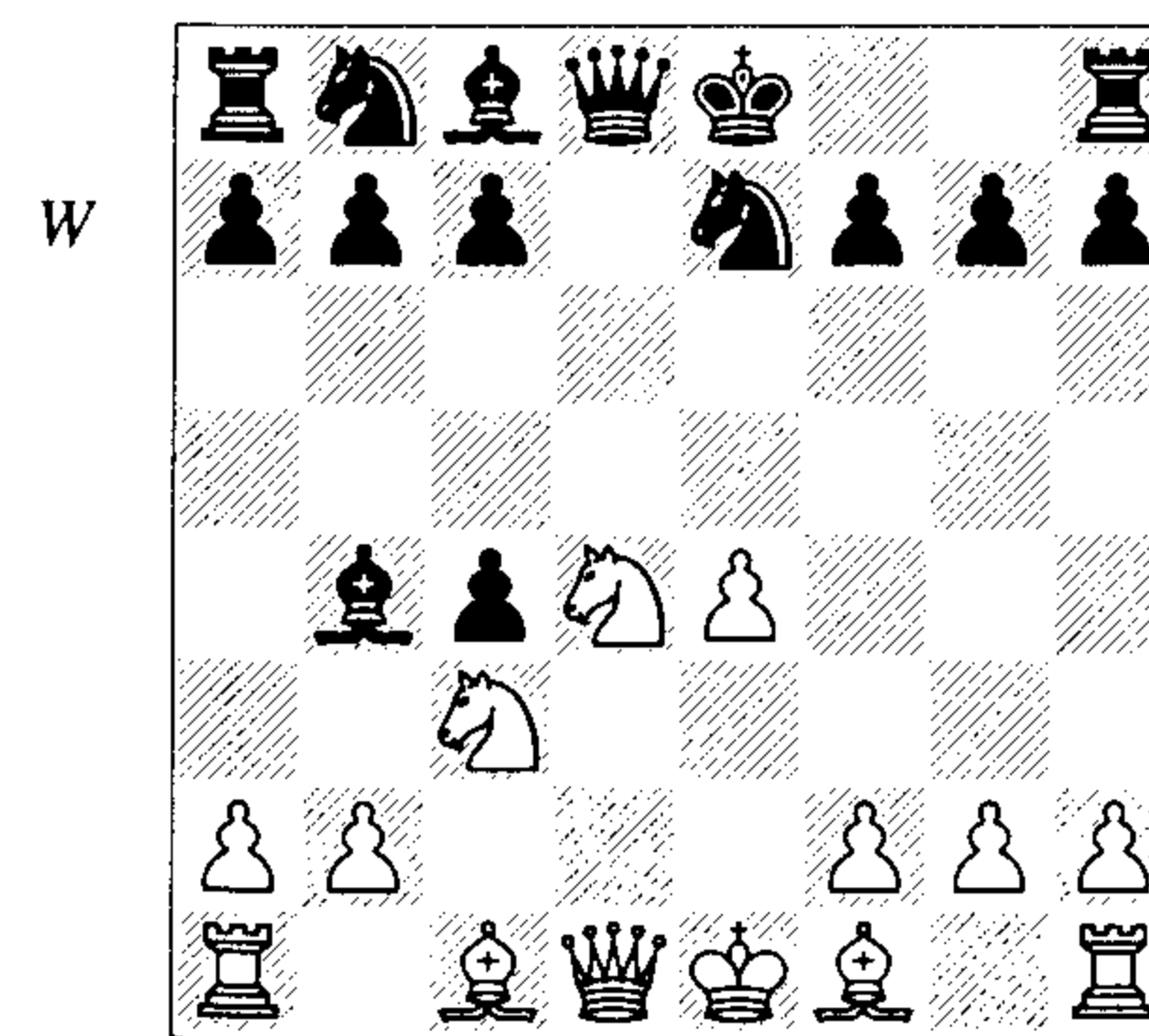
b1) 7... xe4+ (grabbing the e4-pawn is more trouble than it is worth) 8 f1 xc3 9 bxc3 e6 10 a4+ (10 b3 is also good, Albur-Romani-shin, Kiev 1978) 10... c6 11 g5 led to a decisive attack for White in Shirov-Hübner, Dortmund 1992.

b2) 7... f6 8 0-0-0 with a further branch:

b21) 9 g5 (popular but unsuccessful in practice) 9... xc3 10 bxc3 (instead 10 xf6 led to equality in Albur-Zaltsman, New York 1983

after 10... xf6 11 bxc3 c6 12 dxc6 xc6 13 d5 xd5) 10... c5 11 xf6 xc4 12 h5 (an interesting try – it spices up the game but I do not believe the attack is sound) 12... gxf6 13 h6 c6 (instead, 13... a6 with the idea of ...f5 has been suggested as an improvement) 14 ae1 dxd4 15 cxd4 g4 16 e3 fe8 17 h3 ad8 18 hxg4 (suddenly, White gets his piece back) and the game Hertneck-Westerinen, Manila OL 1992, after some more random moves, concluded with all honours even.

b22) I like 9 b3 . Then the shortsighted pawn-grab 9... xc3 10 bxc3 xe4 (or 10... xe4 11 a3 with advantage) loses to 11 e1 . Alternatively, 9... d6 (eyeing up ... xh2+ and ... e5+) 10 db5 is also comfortable. Note that the c1-bishop may yet develop to either f4 or g5.



We look at two moves in this position:

A121: 7 exc4 25

A122: 7 ef4 26

A121)

7 exc4

Recapturing the pawn is most natural.

7...0-0

Or 7... bxc6 8 e3 0-0 and now:

a) 9 a3 has been popular and at quite a high level too. It looks like a waste of time to me, but who am I to argue with Kamsky and co.? Sooner or later the b4-bishop is best off exchanging on c3 whether it is encouraged by a3 or not. The continuation 9... xc3+ 10 bxc3 a5 11 e2 b6 (11... g6 12 0-0 e7 13 c2 e5 was equal in Bareev-Ivanchuk, Dortmund 1992) 12 0-0 b7 13 c2 e8 14 ad1 , Kamsky-Short, Linares 1994, does not give Black equality as he has still not solved the problem of his king's knight and now White is fully developed with a rook on the centre file and the bishop-pair remain as does the all important central pawn.

b) 9 b5 is possible. White hopes to cause much discomfort on c7 but the pre-emptive 9... a5 is a logical and more than satisfactory way to defend. If the bishop stays on b4 it will get chased anyway by White's queenside pawns. I cannot see a way for White to hold on to the pawn. It is worth exploring the untested idea 10 xd8 xd8 11 f4 (consistent with 9 db5) 11... d7 12 d1 a6! ? 13 xd7 axb5 14 xe7 dxe7 15 xb5 e6 – this position is fine for Black and should not convince anyone to copy White's wrongly directed approach.

8 0-0 ♖bc6 9 ♕e3

9 a3 transposes into the previous note.

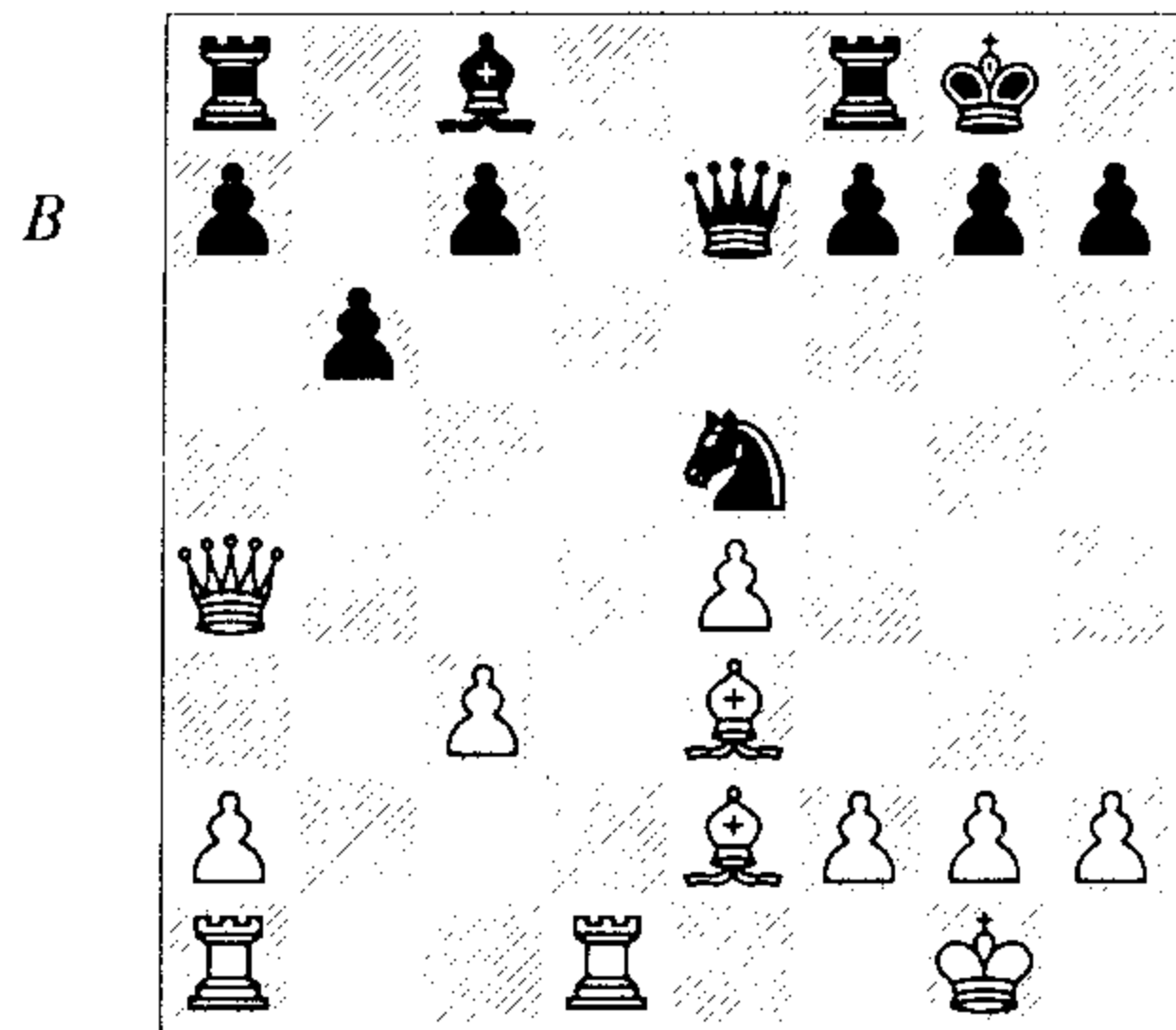
9...♗xd4 10 ♕xd4 ♗c6 11 ♕e3 ♕xc3 12 bxc3 ♖e7

Black has freed the position with the exchanges on the previous moves and can now place the queen on this ideal square.

13 ♖a4 ♗e5

13...♖xe4 14 ♕xf7+ wins the black queen.

14 ♕e2 b6 15 ♖fd1 (D)



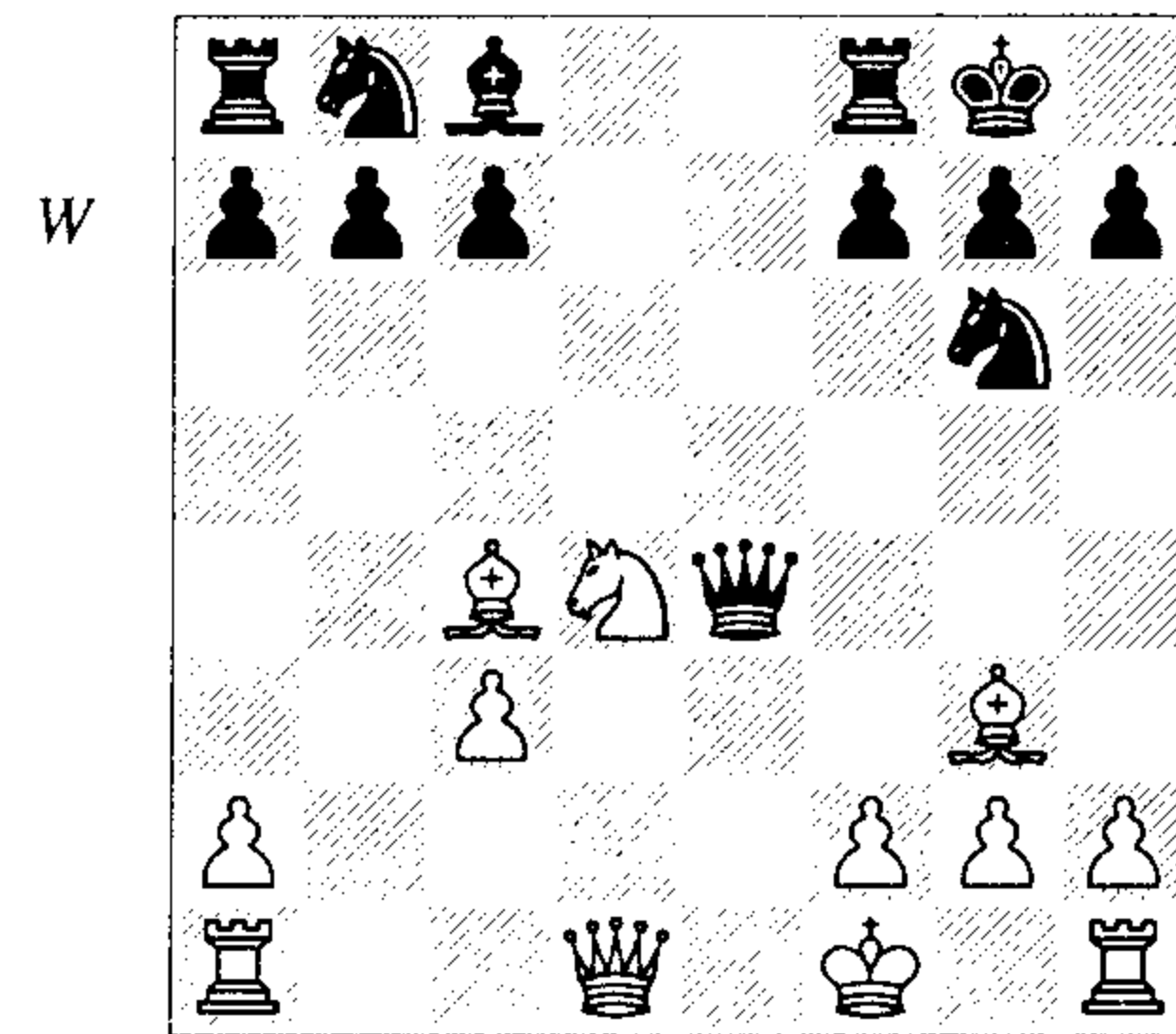
The position is equal, Van Wely-Hübner, Wijk aan Zee 1996. This time Black has exchanged a knight and does not have a cramped position, the rooks are connected along the back rank. Thinking long term, Black may even hope to pressure White's split pawns as well as using the squares in front of them to place pieces. Compare this with Kamsky-Short from above.

A122)

7 ♕f4 ♗g6 8 ♕g3 ♖e7

Black accepts the challenge and goes for the e-pawn.

9 ♕xc4 ♖xe4+ 10 ♖f1 ♕xc3 11 bxc3 0-0 (D)



12 ♖e1 ♖xe1+

In the roughly comparable position discussed earlier (see Shirov-Hübner in the note to Black's 6th move) 9...♖g4 is best instead of 9...♕e6. Here too, the queen should move to g4 with 12...♖g4. In this way, the g6-knight can hope to play an active part in the game.

13 ♖xe1 ♕d7

After 13...c6 14 h4, even without queens, there is still an attack for White.

14 h4 ♗c6

Not best. With 14...♖e8 15 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 16 h5 ♗e7 17 ♕xc7 ♗bc6 18 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 19 ♖h4 ♕d5 Black is going some way to solving the problem of his king's knight.

15 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 16 h5 ♗h8 17 ♖h4

White has an advantage.

17...♖fe8 18 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8

18...♖xe8 loses to 19 ♕xc7.

19 ♖e4 ♖c8 20 ♕d5 ♕b5+

20...♕c6 (or 20...c6 21 ♕b3) 21 ♕xc6 bxc6 22 ♖a4 is good for White.

21 c4 ♕a6

21...♕c6 22 ♕xc6 bxc6 23 ♕xc7 f6 24 ♖e7 ♗f7 25 ♕f4 is winning for White.

22 ♕xc7

White went on to win from here in the game Epishin-Godena, Reggio Emilia 1995/6. White's two bishops have had a presence throughout. The knight that started on g8 only made progress as far as h8. This is really a problem piece. The white pawn on e4 prevented the knight from finding squares easily. The split pawns on the a- and c-files did not matter much. These pawn weaknesses will only make a difference long term, after Black first solves his opening problems and neutralizes the initiative.

A2)

4...exd4 5 ♕xc4 ♕b4+

There are two possibilities:

A21: 6 ♕d2 27

A22: 6 ♗bd2 28

A21)

6 ♕d2

The difference with Black's move-order is that the knight can now intercept on d2 (we shall return to this; see Line A22 below) but not on c3 (compare with Line A1).

6...♕xd2+ 7 ♗bxd2

Here we see another difference from Line A1. It is now impossible to

transpose into Groszpeter-Zsu.Polgar, Hungarian Ch 1991, which continued 4...♕b4+ 5 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 6 ♖xd2 exd4 7 ♗xd4, since in the current position 7 ♖xd2 would be a mistake because 7...c5 is possible.

7...♗c6

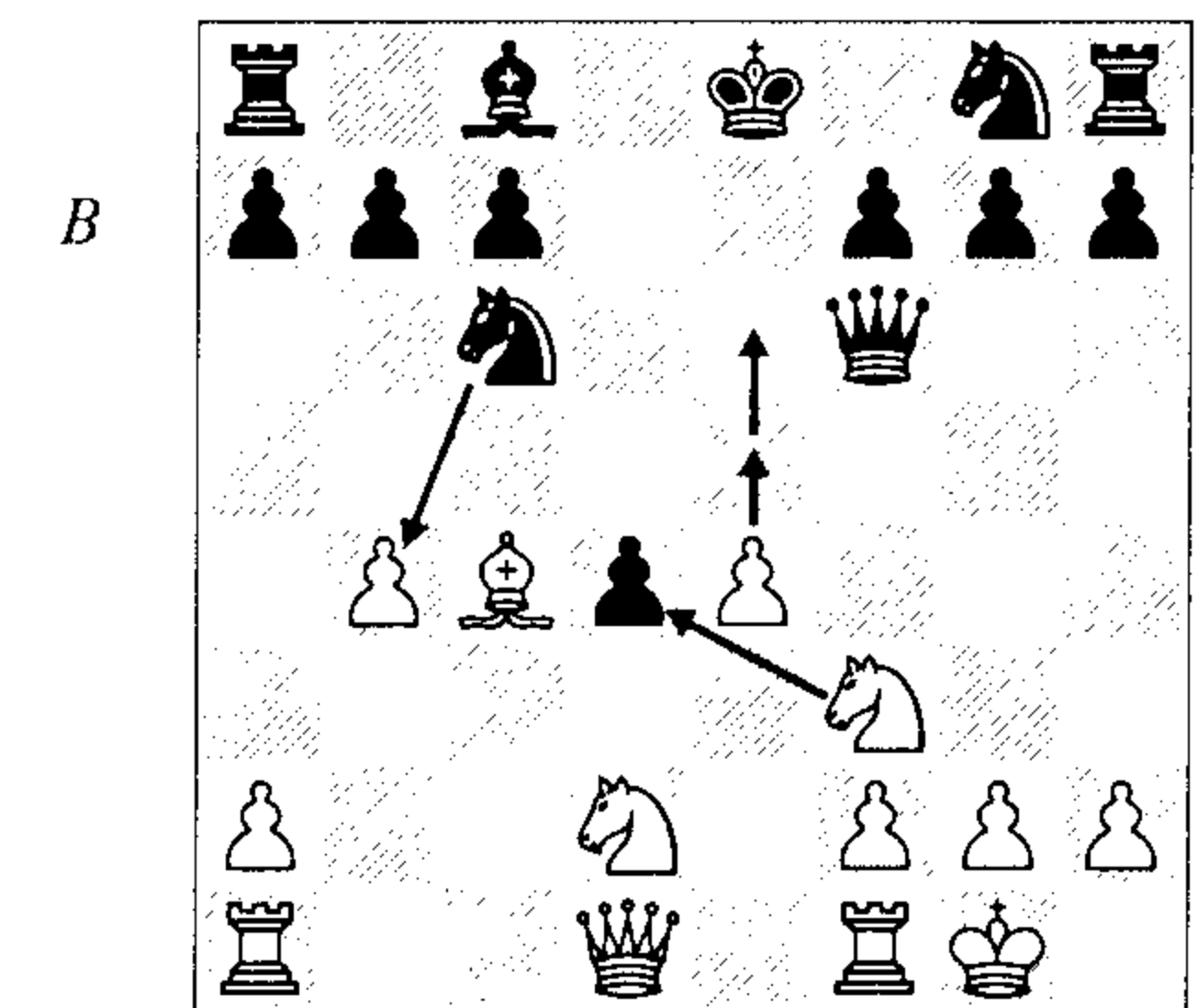
7...c5 allows White a wealth of possibilities like 8 ♖c1 ♖e7 9 b4 cxb4 10 ♕xf7+.

8 0-0

White attempted but failed in Kniest-Golubović, Bled 1998 to exchange everything off on d4 and reach a position without queens: 8 ♗b3 ♗f6 9 0-0 0-0 10 e5 ♗g4 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 ♗bxd4 ♗cxe5 13 ♗b5 ♕d7, resulting in a pawn advantage for Black with which he was able to win the game.

8...♗f6

8...♖f6 is also possible. However, an immediate queenside advance causes Black difficulties, viz. 9 b4 (D), a move invented by Shirov – he certainly likes to advance his knight's pawn two squares!



9...a6 (9...dxb4 10 e5 Wg6 11 Wa4+ dxc6 12 dxd4 d7 13 e6 fxe6 14 dxe6 with a substantial advantage) 10 a4 dxb4 11 e5 Wg6 12 dxd4 de7 13 Ba3 was the beginning of a strong attack in M.Gurevich-Meins, Groningen 1997.

9 e5

Not so effective now is 9 b4 0-0 10 b5 da5 11 d3 c5 12 Wc2, although White still won in Notkin-Rõtšagov, Moscow 1996.

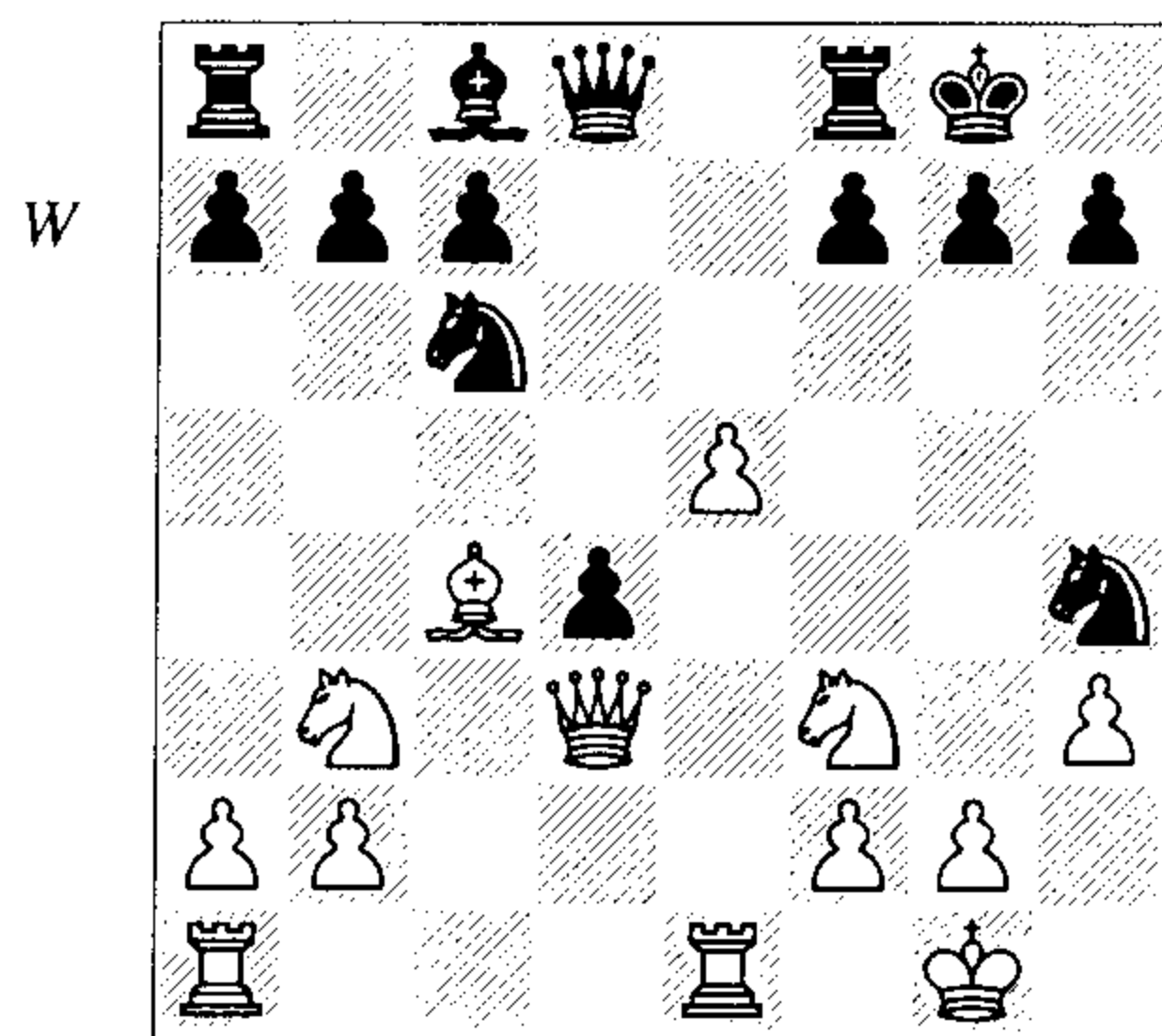
9...dg4

9...d5 is also playable.

10 h3 dh6 11 db3 df5 12 Wd3

Or 12 db5 Wd5 13 d bxd4 (13 dxc6+ Wxc6 14 c1 Wb6 15 d bxd4 0-0 16 dxf5 dxf5 17 Wd4 and there is no cause for concern for Black, C.Flear-S.Slipak, Palma de Mallorca 1991) 13...dxd4 14 dxd4 d7 15 dxc6 dxc6 16 dxc6 again with equality, Amura-S.Slipak, La Plata 1991.

12...0-0 13 ffe1 dh4 (D)



Black has reached a comfortable position, G.Flear-S.Slipak, Palma de

Mallorca 1991. He is still a pawn up and the bishop threatens to develop to f5 with tempo, and if White is careless, ...Wg5 may begin an attack.

A22)

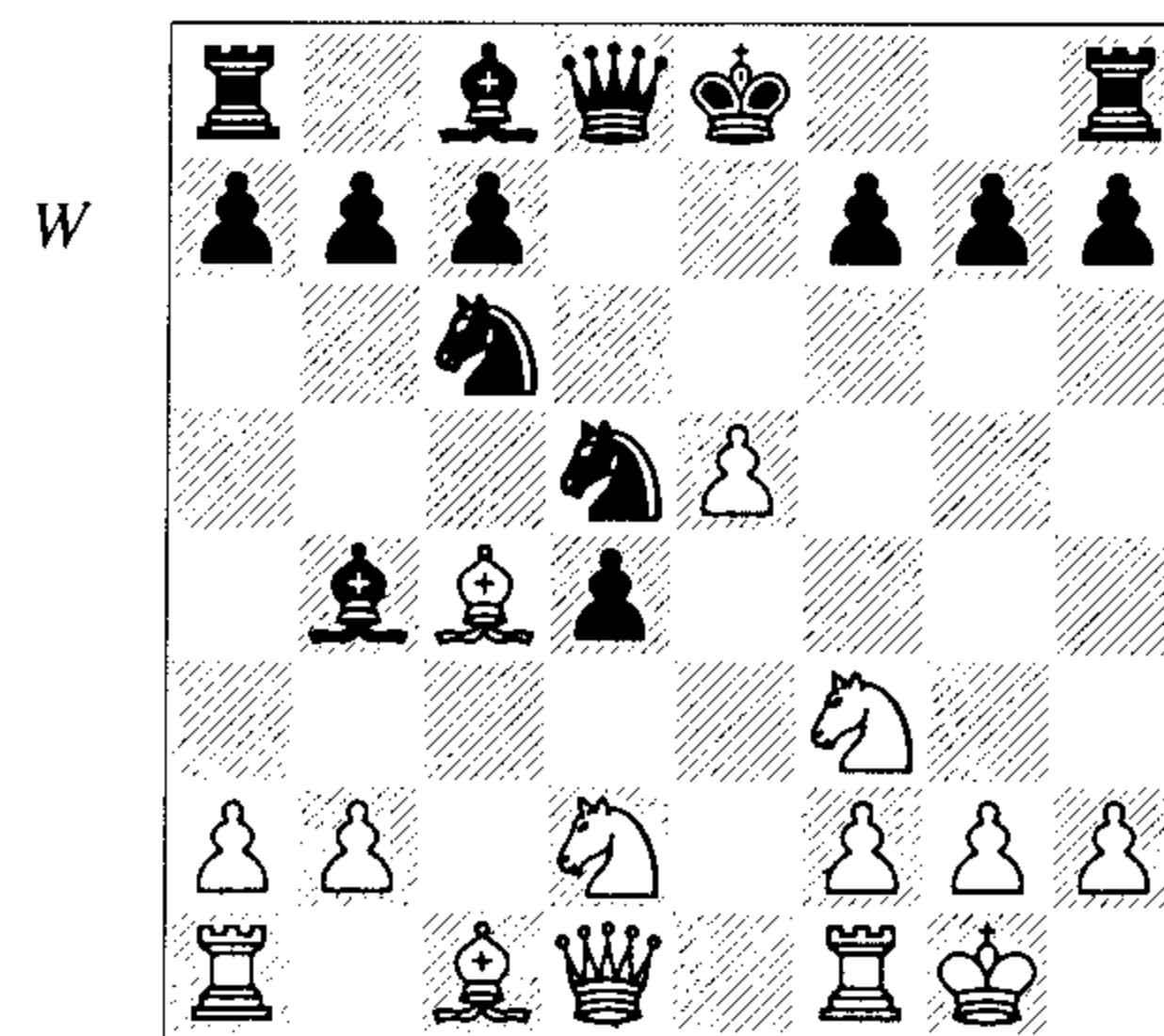
6 dbd2

There is not a great deal to choose between the two possibilities but I prefer the move-order in A1 for Black so as to avoid this possibility. In this line, I feel that the b4-bishop can be left out on a limb and in some lines a timely Wg4 by White may prove embarrassing with the double attack on b4 and g7.

6...dc6 7 0-0 df6

Black went horribly wrong in Touzane-Pinkus, Geneva 1996 with 7...de6 8 dxe6 fxe6 9 Wb3 dxd2 10 dxd2 e5? (Black must hang on to the extra pawn with 10...Wd7) 11 Rac1 Bb8 12 dg5 Wd7? 13 Bxc6! Wxc6 14 Wf7+ d8 15 de6+ dc8 16 c1 1-0.

8 e5 dd5 (D)



9 a3

9 db3 has also proved popular. For example, 9...db6 10 dg5 (or 10 db5 Wd5) 10...de7 11 dxe7 Wxe7 12 db5 d7 13 dxc6 dxc6 14 d fxd4 d5 15 Wg4 g6 16 ffe1 0-0 Petursson-Spangenberg, Linares open 1995. The chances are roughly even though the black king is a bit fragile for a few moves as White's queen and knight are rather close to it. Black should not hesitate to double the white b-pawns if it is possible and that may prove advantageous in the long term.

9...de7 10 Wb3 da5 11 Wa4+ dc6 12 dxd4

A repetition is possible here, if White chooses, with 12 Wb3 da5.

12...db6 13 dxc6 dxa4 14 dxd8 dxd8 15 f4

White has found a fairly unusual way of exchanging queens, Milov-Howell, Isle of Man 1994. The result is a slightly advantageous position for White which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

A3)

4...exd4 5 dxc4 dc6 6 0-0 de6 (D)

There are two possibilities in this position:

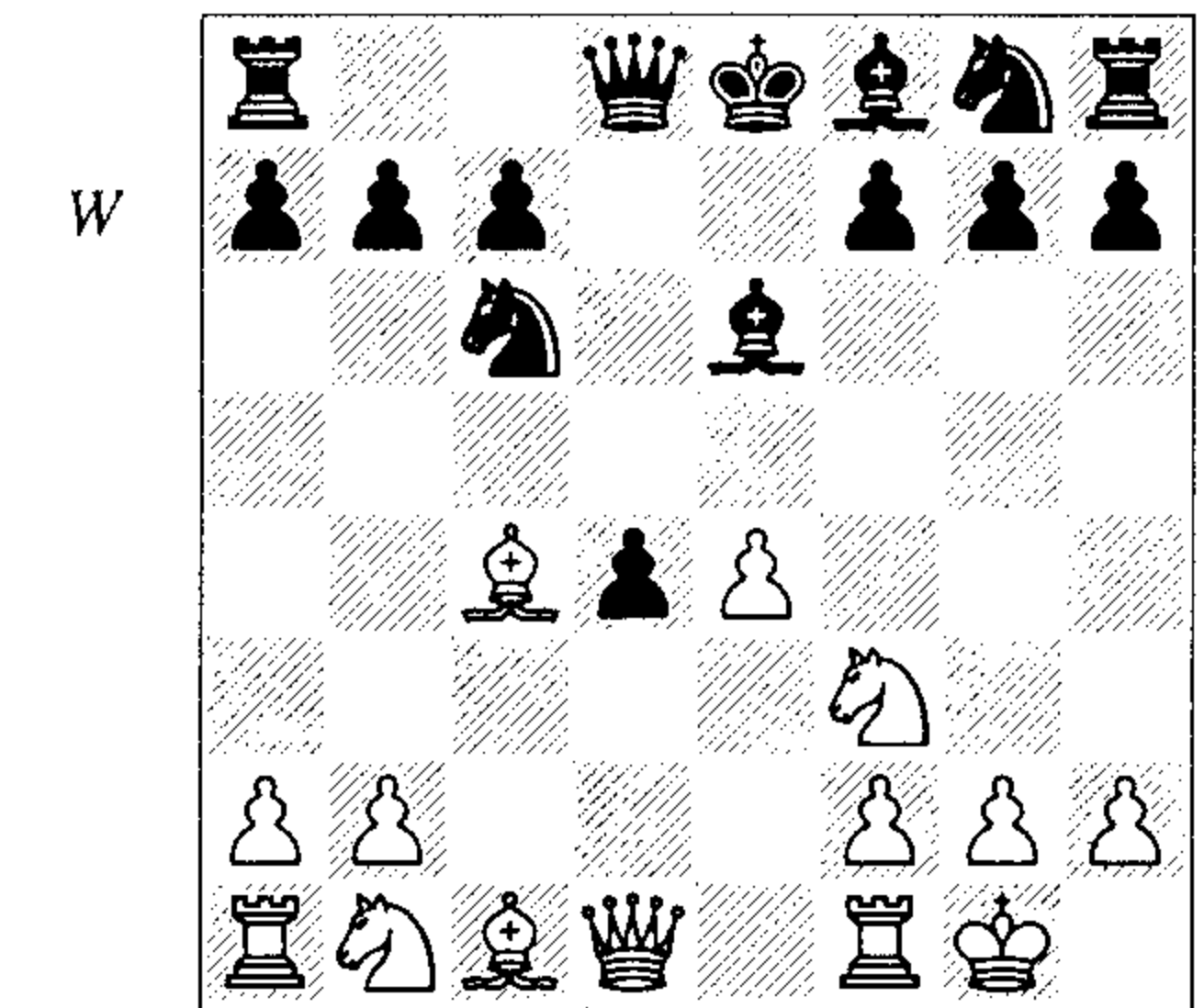
- A31: 7 db5 29
- A32: 7 dxe6 30

A31)

7 db5 dc5 8 Wc2

Again, we are at a cross-roads and the theory is still developing. Instead:

a) 8 dbd2 dge7 9 dg5 (White is playing a real pawn sacrifice) 9...Wd6 10 dxe6 Wxe6 11 db3 Wd6 (Black



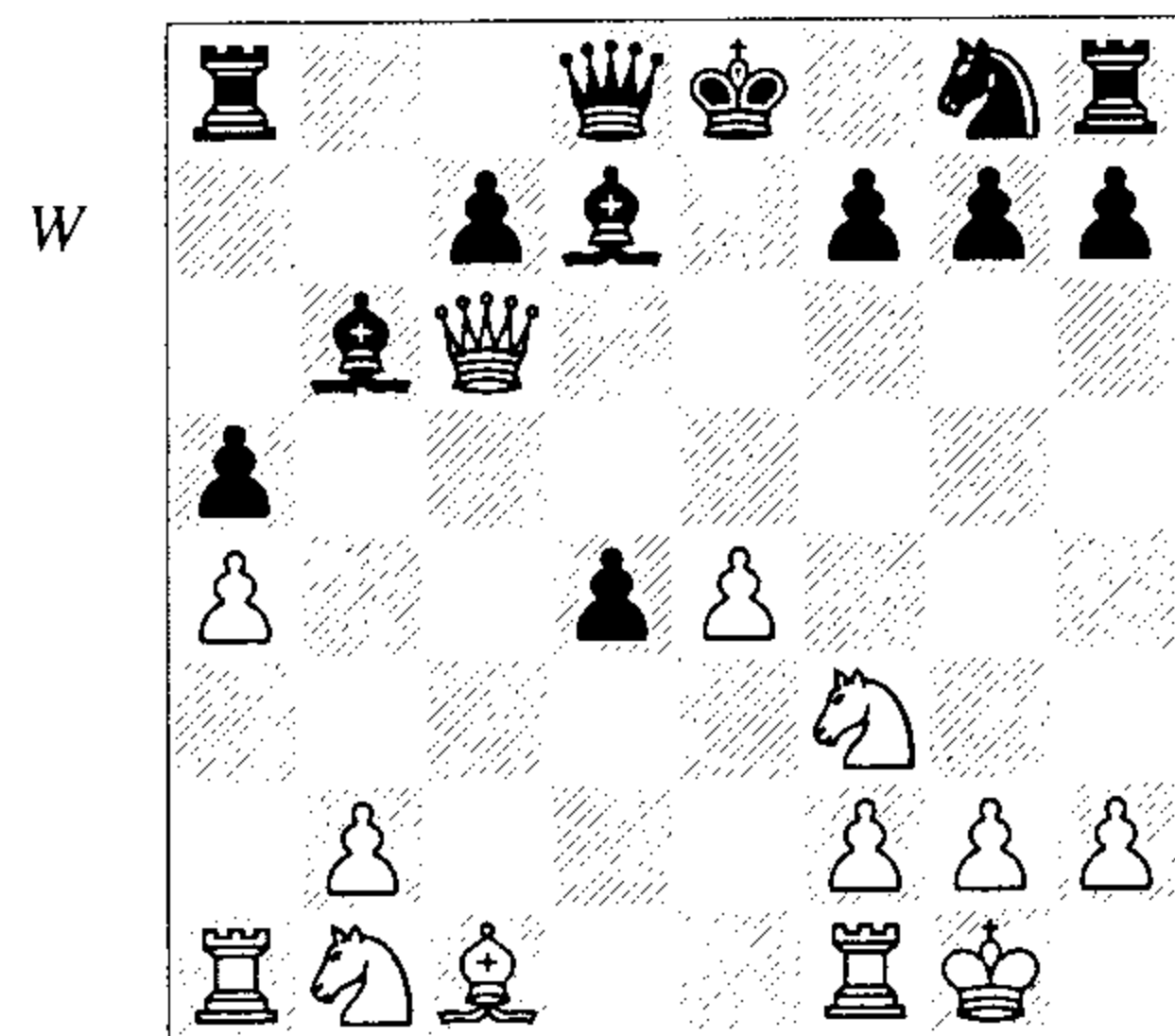
hangs on to his extra pawn) 12 d f4 Wxf4 13 dxc5 0-0 14 g3 (Black can take on e4 and attack down the b-file if White takes on b7, so first the queen is attacked) 14...Wh6 15 c1 (White increases queenside pressure) 15...Bfd8 (less successful are 15...de5, Grand-Ibragimov, New York 1997, and 15...Bfb8, Stoczek-Ashley, Budapest 1997) 16 dxb7 (it was the last chance to regain the pawn; otherwise Black could have played ...Bab8 on the next move to defend b7) 16...Bdb8 17 Wa4 de5 18 Bxc7 d7g6 (the queen and knights are heading in the general direction of White's king, but as yet an opening is not easy to find) 19 Wb3 (White is in a number of pins – the last move walks into another one but if instead 19 de2 then White must still find an answer to 19...df8) 19...df8 20 Wd5 df3+ 21 dg2 de6 22 Bd7 dh4+ 23 dh1 (23 dh3 dg5+ 24 dg4 dhf3 wins) 23...df3 24 h4 (24 dg2 dh4+ 25 dh1 only offers repetition) 24...dxb4 25 de2 (White now loses the queen by force but White was lost

anyway, e.g. 25 ♖g1 ♕f3+ 26 ♖g2 ♕eg5 27 ♜h1 ♕e1+ 28 ♜xe1 ♜h3+ 29 ♖g1 ♕f3#) 25...♕f3+ 26 ♖g2 ♕f4+ 27 ♖xf3 ♕xd5 28 exd5 ♜xb7 29 ♜xb7 ♜h5+ 0-1, Dreev-Svidler, Russian Ch (Elista) 1997.

b) 8 ♕g5 ♜e7 9 ♖xc6+ bxc6 10 ♕xe6 ♜xe6 11 ♕d2 ♜d8 12 ♜c2 ♖b6 13 ♜d3 ♕f6 14 ♕c4 ♕d7 15 b4 c5 16 b5 c6 17 bxc6 ♜xc6 18 ♖g5 f6 19 ♖h4 ♖c7 20 f4 0-0 gives White some pressure for some time, but in Vyzhmanavin-Rublevsky, Novosibirsk 1995 he never got the pawn back and eventually the blockade was removed from the squares d3 and c4.

c) 8 b4 ♖b6 9 ♖b2 ♕ge7 10 ♖xd4 0-0 11 ♖c5 ♖xc5 12 bxc5 a6 13 ♖xc6 ♕xc6 14 ♕c3 and Black was not worse in the game Beliavsky-Scherbakov, Nikšić 1996.

8...♖b6 9 a4 a5 10 ♖xc6+ bxc6 11 ♜xc6+ ♖d7 (D)



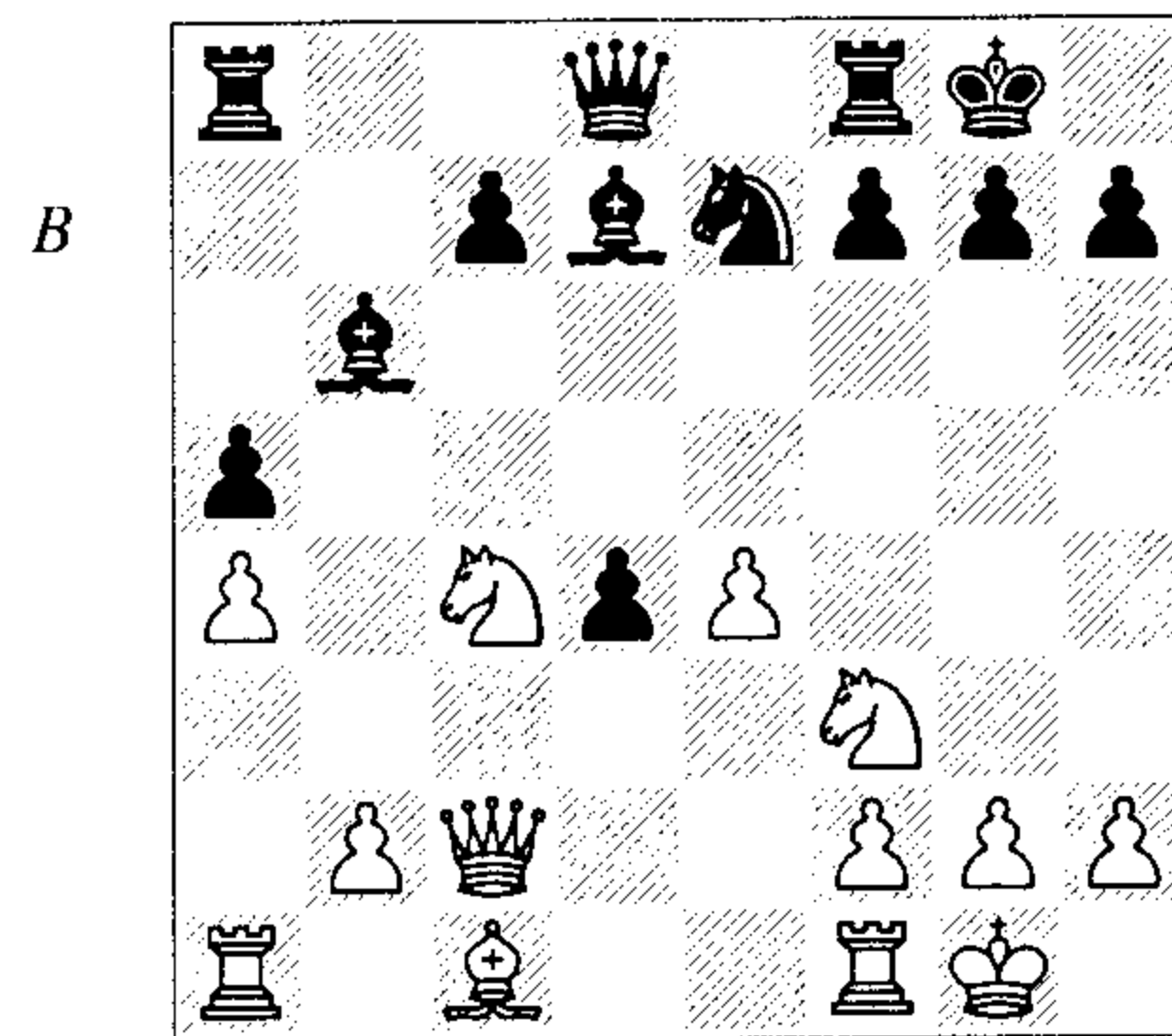
12 ♜c2

12 ♜c4 ♖e6 13 ♜c6+ ♖d7 14 ♜c4 ♖e6 15 ♜c6+ ♖d7 with an immediate

draw, Ward-Rublevsky, Thessaloniki ECC 1996.

12...♕e7 13 ♕a3 0-0 14 ♕c4 (D)

14 ♕e5 ♕g6 15 ♕ac4 ♕xe5 16 ♕xe5 ♜e8 17 ♖f4 ♜f6 18 ♕xd7 ♜xf4 19 ♕xb6 cxb6 20 ♜fe1 ♜ac8 21 ♜d3 ♜d6 22 ♜ad1 is pretty even, Sorin-Sorokin, Salta 1995.



14...♕c6 15 ♜d1 ♕b4 16 ♜b3 c5 17 ♖d2 ♖c7 18 ♖xb4 ♜b8

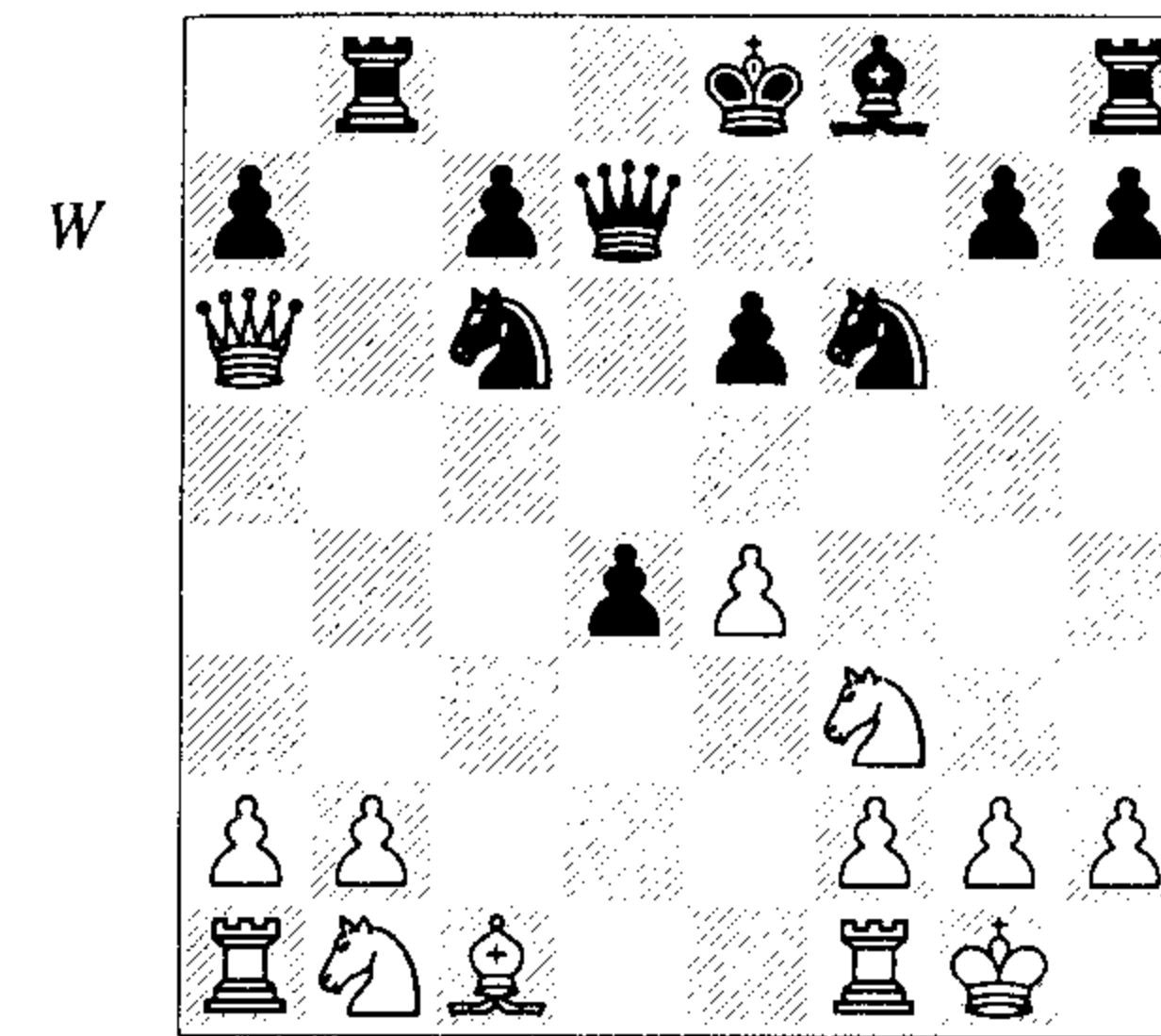
Black's well-timed last move keeps the pressure on the b-file. The advantage is with Black, although if the game had not been played blindfold, then the likely result would have been a draw, Van Wely-Anand, Monaco blindfold 1997.

A32)

7 ♖xe6

The most natural. White does not want to lose a tempo by moving the bishop for a second time. The vastly different pawn structure ensures a much different game to others discussed in Line A.

7...fxe6 8 ♜b3 ♜d7 9 ♜xb7 ♜b8 10 ♜a6 ♕f6 (D)



11 ♕bd2

Taking stock of the situation, Black has compromised his pawn structure and now has three islands. In return he can hope for an attack down the f-file. Also, the white knight on d2 is holding Black's pawn front up nicely but it does confine the bishop to its home for the time being.

11...♖b4

It makes sense to threaten the knight. There are some lesser choices:

a) 11...♖d6 12 ♜e1 (12 ♜d3 and ♕c4 is also possible) 12...♕g4 13 h3 ♕ge5 14 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 15 a3 0-0 16 ♜d3 a5 17 b3 ♖f4 18 ♕c4 ♕e5 19 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 20 a4 with approximate equality, Razuvaev-Ibragimov, Biel 1995.

b) 11...♖e7 12 ♜d3 (White also has the natural plan of playing a3, b4, ♖b2 and ♜ac1) 12...0-0 13 ♕c4 ♖c5 14 ♖d2 is a set-up that favours White, Dashchian-Anisheva, Moscow 1998.

12 ♕c4

Alternatives:

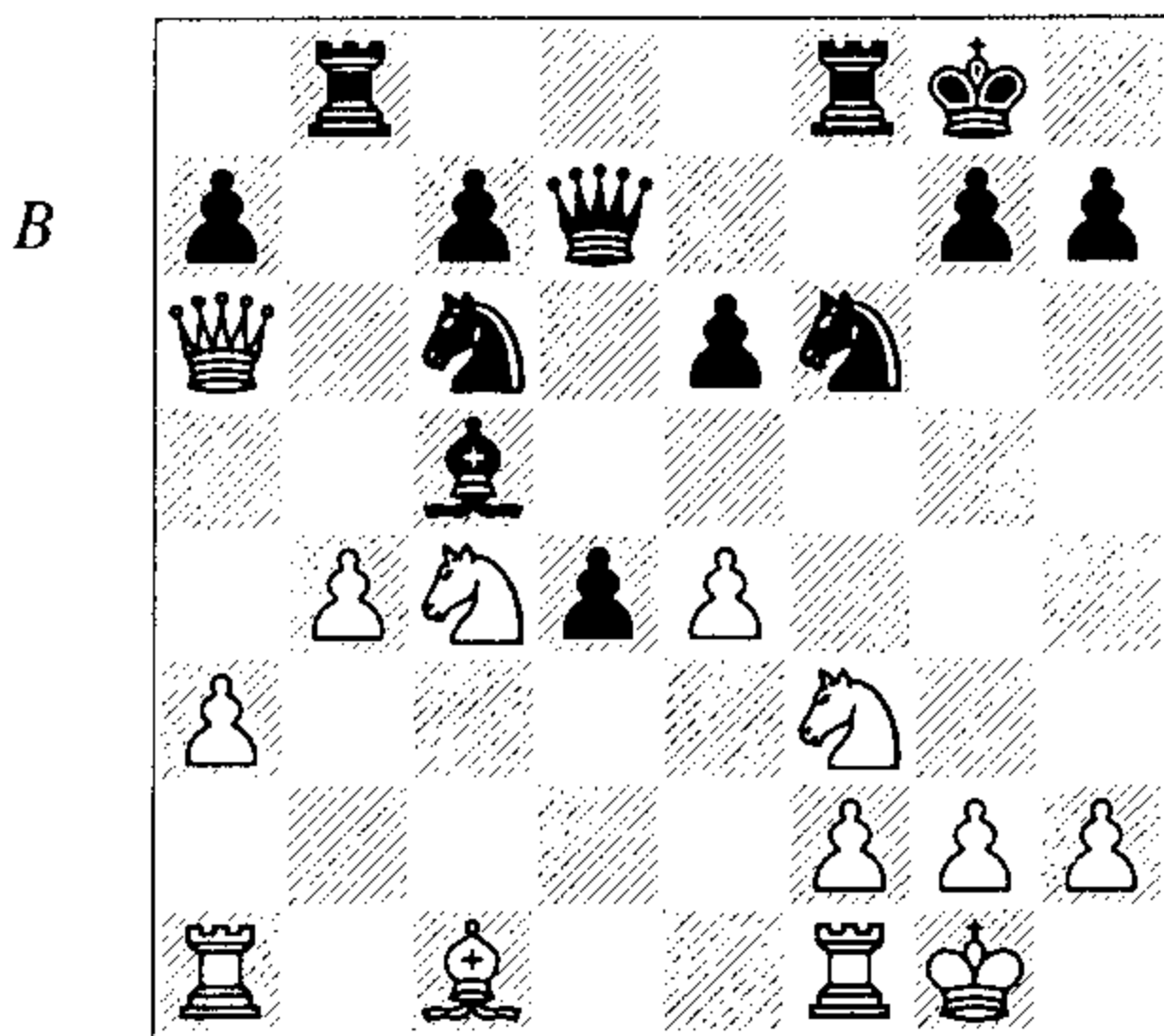
a) 12 e5 ♕g4 13 ♜e2 ♜d5 was agreed drawn here in Scherbakov-Bronstein, Hastings 1993/4.

b) 12 a3 ♖xd2 (knights seem to be better pieces than bishops in positions like this; the knights are better at blockading dangerous pawns and can hop into some awkward squares) 13 ♕xd2 0-0 14 b4 ♜b6 15 ♜d3 ♕e5 16 ♜b3 and after 16...a5, Izoria-Tenikashvili, Moscow 1998, or 16...c5, Black is better, with a lead in development.

c) 12 ♜d3 (an interesting test: can Black give up his bishop for knight even here? and can White steal a march on line 'b'?) 12...♖xd2 13 ♖xd2 ♜xb2 14 ♜ac1 0-0 15 ♜c5 (piling down the c-file) 15...♕g4 (the main theme of this variation: Black hopes for an attack on White's king) 16 ♖c1 ♕b4 17 ♜c4?! (17 ♜b5 is better) 17...♜c2 (tactics galore!) 18 ♜xb4 ♜d6 19 ♜b5 c5 20 e5 ♕xe5 21 ♜a4 ♜c4 22 ♜xa7 (22 ♜d1 is possible) 22...♜xf3! 23 ♜b6? (White is not lost here; after 23 gxf3 ♕xf3+ 24 ♖g2 ♜xh2+ 25 ♖xf3 ♜h3+ 26 ♖f4 the spectacular variation 26...d3+ 27 ♖e5 ♜f5+ 28 ♖d6 ♜d4+ 29 ♖c6 ♜d5+ 30 ♖b6 ♜d8+ 31 ♜c7 ♜d6+ 32 ♖b7 ♜d7 33 ♖f4 is not totally conclusive but nevertheless slightly favours White, so Black should take the perpetual with 26...♜f5+) 23...♜d5 24 gxf3 ♕xf3+ 25 ♖h1 ♕h4+ 26 f3 ♜xf3+ and mate, Beliavsky-Scherbakov, Nikšić 1996.

12...0-0 13 a3 ♖c5 14 b4 (D)

14...♕xe4!



A stunning novelty. Previously, 14...♙b6 had been played with complications of its own: For example, 15 b5 ♘e7 16 ♗fe5 ♜e8:

a) 17 ♜e1 ♘g6 18 ♘d3 (a novelty at the time) 18...♗h4 19 ♙f4! ♗xe4 20 ♙g3 (20 ♜xe4 ♜g6) 20...♗xg3 21 hxg3 ♗f5 22 a4 and now with 22...♗e3 Black throws a piece into the bargain in order to get at the white king before the white queen returns and aids the defence. 23 ♗ce5 (White declines and keeps a grip on the position; presumably, the queen has difficulty escaping satisfactorily after 23 fxe3 ♜g6 24 ♜ad1 dxe3 25 ♗xb6 axb6 – and not 25...♜xb6 26 ♜xa7 ♜xg3 27 ♜e2, when White wins) 23...♗c2, Karpov-Anand, Dos Hermanas 1997 and now 24 a5 ♗xe1 25 ♜xe1 ♙xa5 26 ♜xa5 wins for White.

b) 17 a4 ♗xe4 (this leads to extremely complex play; Black's strategy is solely based on the out-of-position white queen) 18 ♙a3 ♗d5 19 ♙xf8 ♗xf8 20 ♗d3 ♗d6 21 ♗xd6 (21 ♗ce5 c5, with the idea of ...♗c7, is

just one example where the white queen is in great danger) 21...cxd6 (the black pawns are a more workable unit now) 22 ♜ac1 ♜d8 23 a5 ♙xa5 24 ♜xa7 ♙c3 gave Black more than enough compensation for the exchange in Karpov-Anand, Dortmund 1997.

15 ♜e1

It is certainly worth knowing your way round the following variations: 15 bxc5 ♜xf3 (15...♗xc5 loses to 16 ♗ce5) and then:

a) 16 ♗a5 ♗e5 17 gxf3 ♗xf3+ (yes! Black is a rook down) 18 ♙g2 ♜d5 19 ♜c6 ♜f5 20 h3 ♗h4+ 21 ♙h2 ♗xf2 22 ♙g1 ♜f8 and huge material loss and mate is unavoidable for White.

b) 16 gxf3 ♗xc5 17 ♗e5 ♗xe5 18 ♜xa7 (18 ♜e2 is not forcing and allows Black ample compensation) 18...♗xf3+ 19 ♙g2 ♜b5! 20 ♜xc7 ♜f8 21 ♙f4 ♗h4+ 22 ♙g1 ♗b3 23 ♜ab1 ♜d5 and the threat of checkmates with queen and knights throughout once again provide a decisive advantage to Black.

15...♜d5 16 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 17 ♗cd2

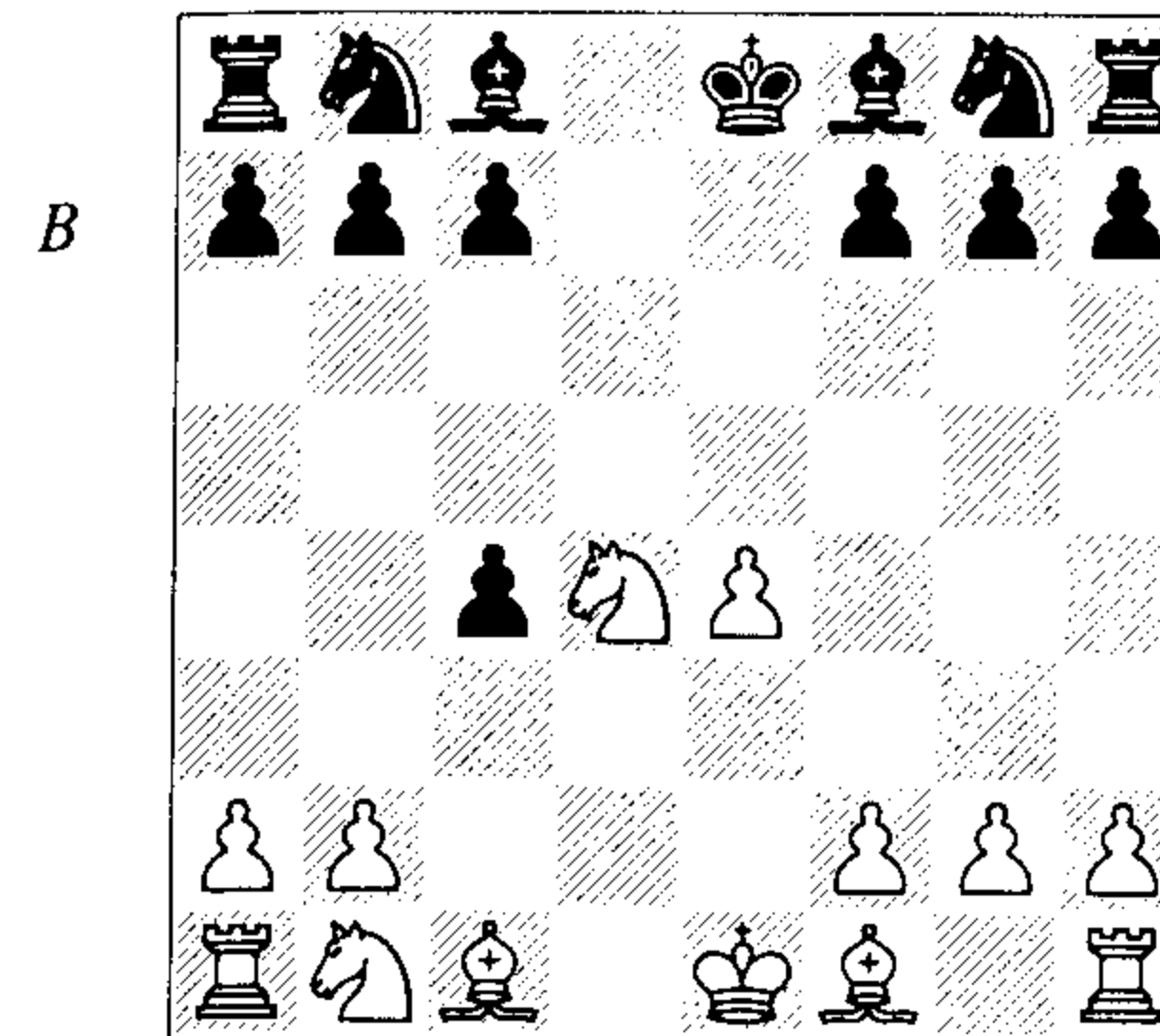
17 bxc5 ♜b1 wins for Black.

17...♜d5 18 bxc5 ♜xc5

The mist has cleared. Black has activity, a rook and two pawns for two minor pieces and thus has some advantage even though, for the time being, Black's pawns are well blockaded, Van Wely-Sutovsky, Hoogveen 1997. This was a theoretically important game.

A4)

4...exd4 5 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 6 ♗xd4 (D)



6...♙d7

6...♗f6 7 ♗c3 ♙c5 8 ♙e3 is the same as Line A11, except that White has not played f2-f3. My feeling is that this not as good for Black as the same situation with the pawn move, since here it is harder for Black to attend to the defence of the f7-pawn before castling queenside, e.g. 8...♗g4 9 ♙xc4 ♗xe3 10 fxe3 with f-file pressure.

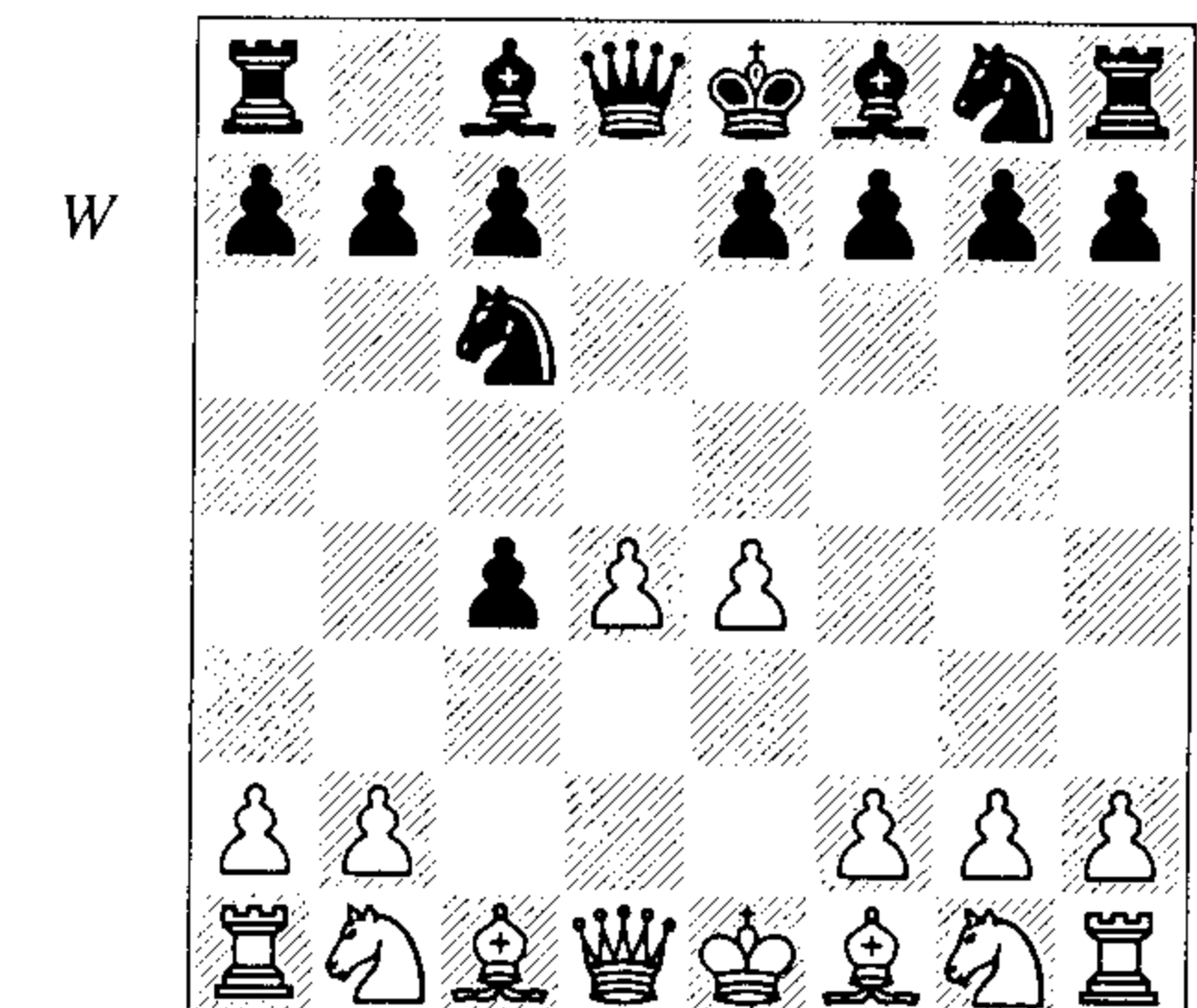
7 ♙xc4 ♗c6 8 ♗xc6 ♙xc6 9 f3 f6 10 ♗c3 0-0-0 11 ♙e3 a6 12 ♙e2 ♙d6 13 ♙d5 ♙xd5 14 ♗xd5 ♗e7

All we have here is lots of exchanges, apparently leading to a draw, Solozhenkin-Shevelev, Paris 1994.

B)

3...♗c6 (D)

The play in this section is often of a sharper nature than the play in Lines A1 and A2. Perhaps another important difference from Line A is that early queen exchanges are quite difficult to obtain. In this section, sooner or later White will be obliged to advance d4-d5. Normally, Black will answer this



with ...♗e5 but occasionally Black plays ...♗a5 and that can prove very difficult to meet. For White, there is then the immediate problem of recapturing on c4 and there are also an assortment of dangerous sacrifices by Black where he gives up the knight for several pawns. After ...♗e5, Black can either set about trying to undermine White's spatial advantage in the centre by attacking the d5-pawn, or he can play a wing attack if the centre is blocked. Finally, the game may come to resemble something of a Chigorin Defence.

B1: 4 ♙e3 33

B2: 4 d5 34

B3: 4 ♗f3 37

B1)

4 ♙e3 ♗f6 5 ♗c3

5 f3 e5 6 d5 ♗d4 7 ♙xd4 exd4 8 ♜xd4 ♙b4+ 9 ♗c3 0-0 10 ♙xc4 c6 is interesting. There is some mileage in sacrificing a pawn – the dark squares are weakened and White has one less minor piece developed than in the

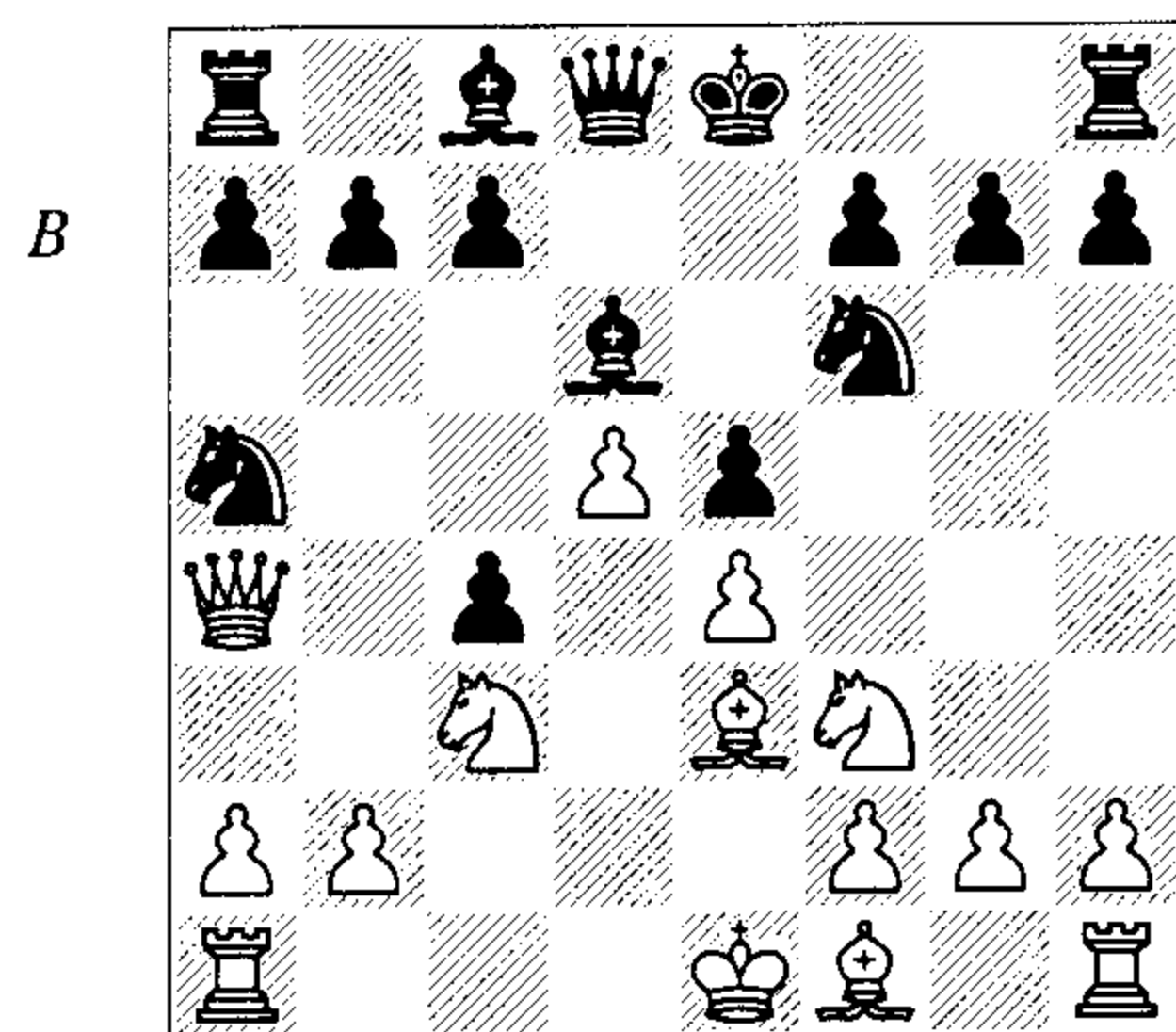
similar variation where White plays 5 dxc3 .

5...e5 6 d5 cxa5

Or 6... dxe7 7 cxc4 (there are some problems here for Black because either he must allow b5+ and the exchange of light-squared bishops – something which must surely favour White – or his king is inconvenienced and the exchange of dark-squared bishops means the exchange of the important c7 defender) 7...a6 8 c5 with a plus for White, G.Georgadze-Skomorokhin, St Petersburg 1996.

The text-move is a bit more than just a crude method of hanging on to the pawn. Black is planning on sacrificing a piece!

7 cxf3 8 d6 9 cxa4+ (D)



8... d7 9 cxa5 a6 10 db1

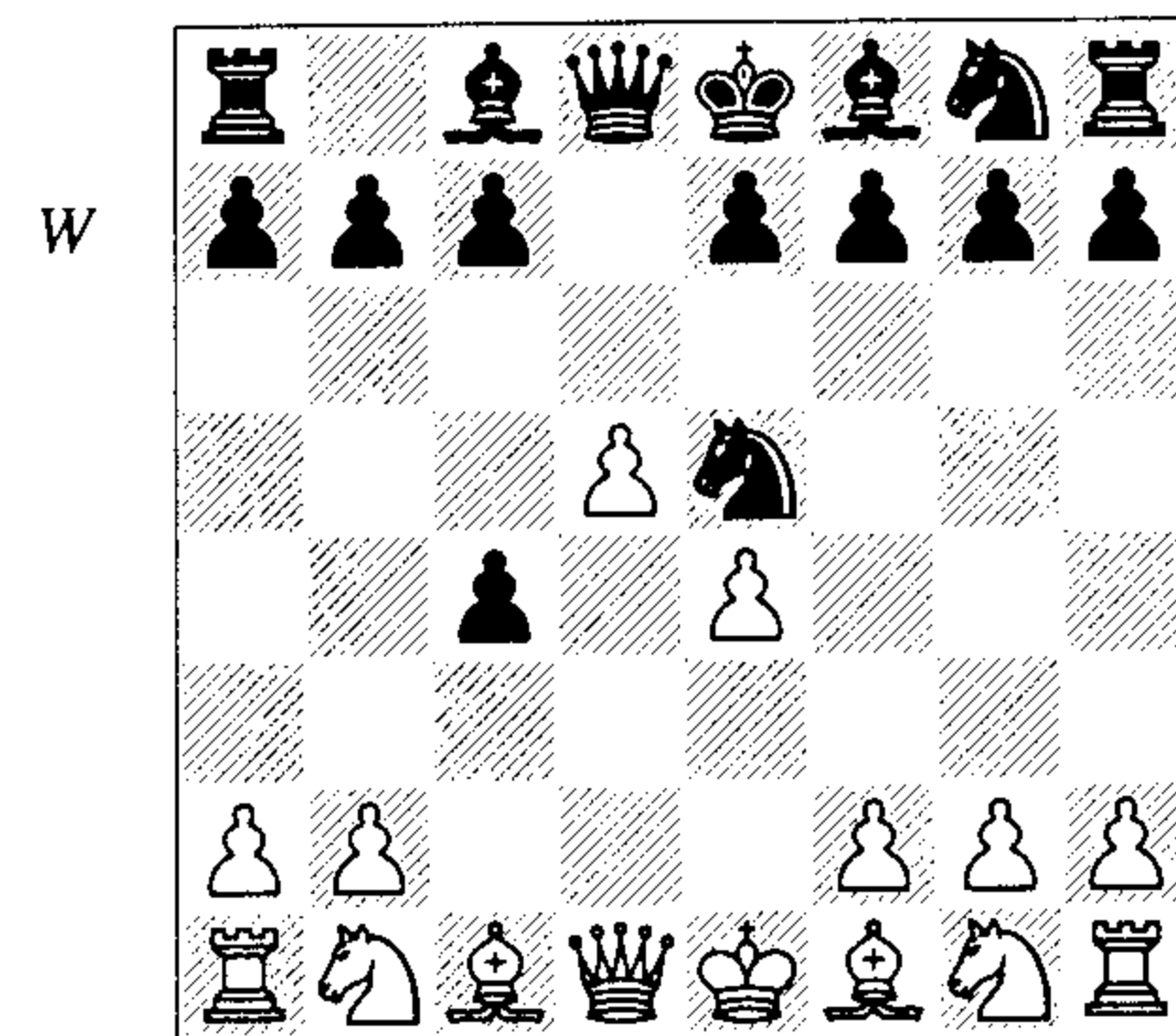
This is hardly critical, but I do not recommend 10 c4 (Neishtadt) for White either, on account of 10... b8 .

10... dxe4 11 cxd1 c3

0-1 Illescas-Sadler, Linares Z 1995. A sensational little game.

B2)

4 d5 cxe5 (D)



Now:

B21: 5 cxd4 34

B22: 5 cxc3 35

B23: 5 cxf4 36

B21)

5 cxd4

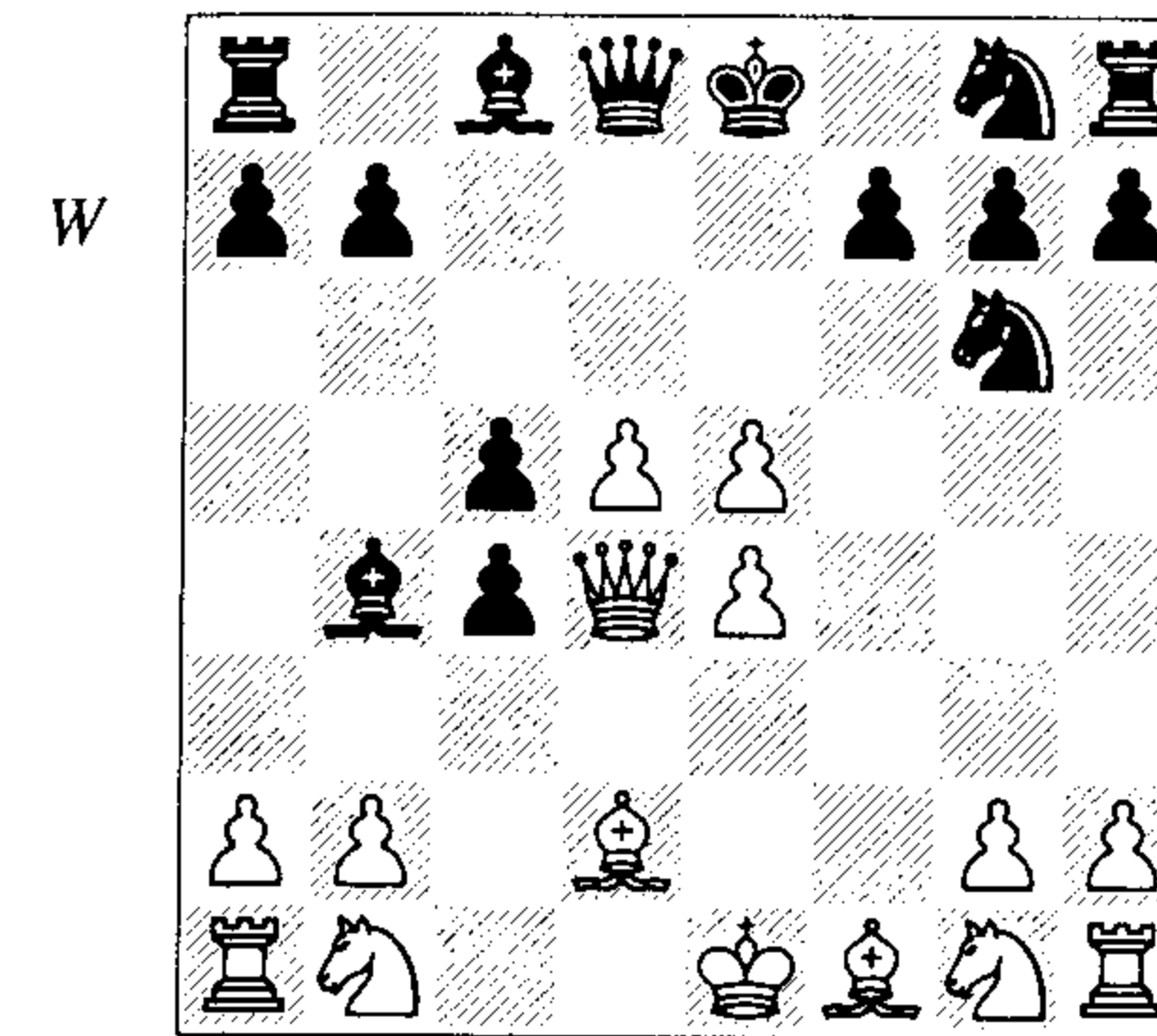
While this attacks the knight, it is not a good move. The d5-pawn is now unable to make captures because of the loss of the queen.

5... cxd6

5... d3+ is not particularly special. Play can continue 6 cxd3 cxd3 7 cxc3 c6 8 cxf3 cxf6 9 0-0 cxd5 (9...e6 10 d6 decides in White's favour) 10 exd5 e6 11 e1 e7 12 cxf4 cxb6 (by avoiding 12... exd5 13 cxb5 Black can use d5 for the knight) 13 cxd3 0-0 14 d6 d8 15 ad1 e8 16 cxb5 f6 17 cxb3 cxf8 and with all his pieces on the back rank Black is asking for trouble, Baburin-Ibragimov, Gorky 1989.

6 cxf3

Or 6 f4 e5 (normal and strong) 7 fxe5 cxb4+ 8 cxd2 c5 (D).



An important tactical theme.

6...e5

With tempo and thus regarded as best. If the queen were not on d4 then ...e6 would be a good way of attacking the centre.

7 cxc4

7 cxe5 leads to trouble for White: 7... cxb4+ 8 cxd2 c5 9 cxf7 cxd4 10 cxd8 c3 11 cxc3 (White is not doing well, but this hardly helps) 11... dxc3 12 bxc3 cxa5 and Black has the upper hand, Nunez-Valdes, Cuba 1990.

7...a6 8 g3

White's set-up is nothing to be afraid of.

8... cxd6 9 cxd2 c8e7

Better than 9... cxf6 which allows cxd6 and the pin on the knight.

10 0-0 c6 11 dxc6 cxe6 12 cxe2 cxc6

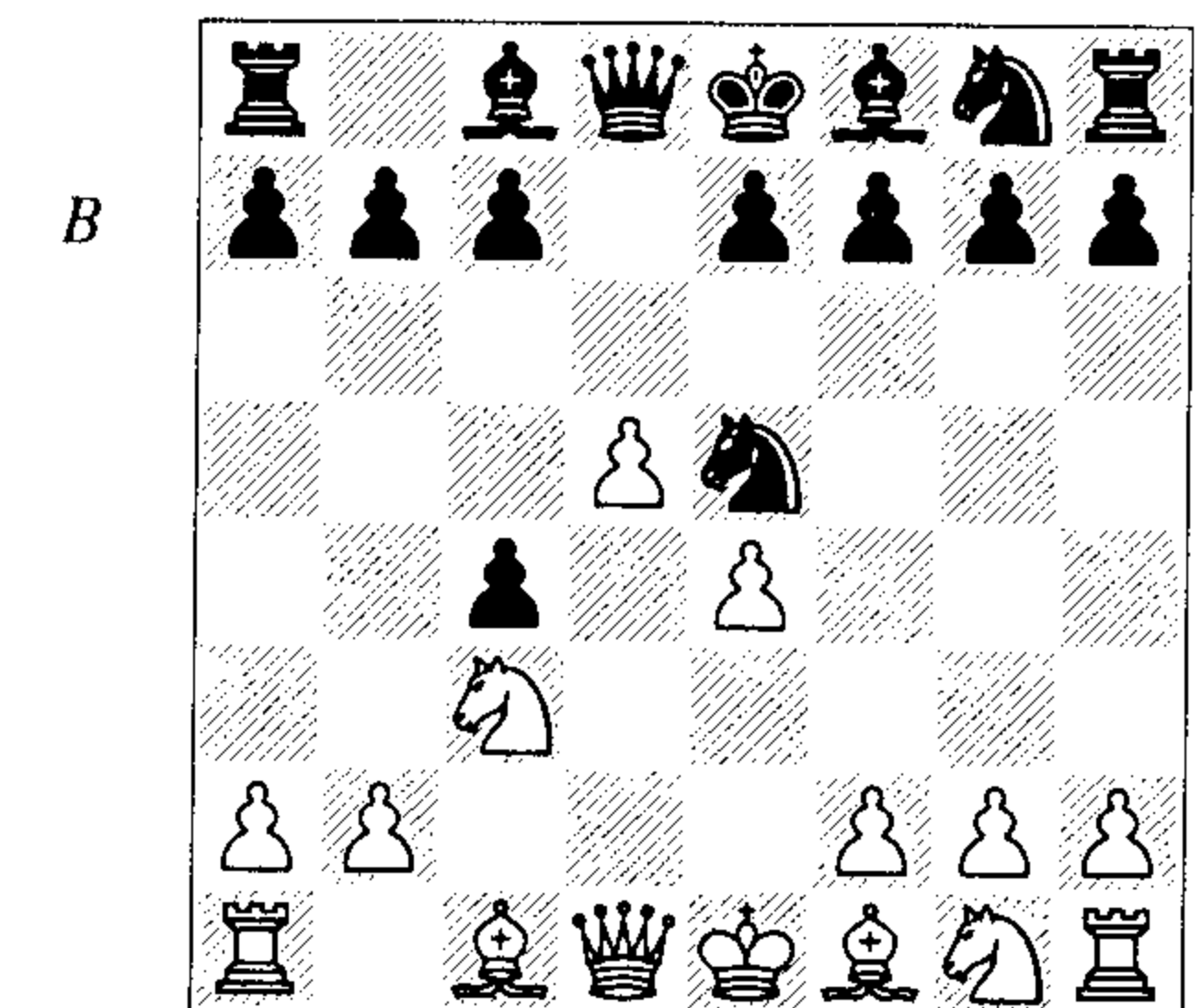
The pawn structure is now vaguely symmetrical.

13 ad1 c7 14 cxe3 d8 15 cxc3

An equal fight is in prospect, Sorokin-Maliutin, Wisla 1992.

B22)

5 cxc3 (D)



White has slightly more options after this move than after 5 cxd4 .

5... cxf6 6 cxd4 cxd6 7 cxc4

7 cxf3 e5 8 cxc4 a6 is similar, while 7 e5?! c5! gives Black the advantage.

7...e5 8 cxd6

With 8 $\text{dxe6}!$? cxe6 9 cxb5+ cxd7 10 cxb7 White wins a pawn but after 10... c5 Black has three extra minor pieces developed and that should prove more than sufficient compensation.

8... cxd6 9 cxa4+ cxf8

This theme runs through these positions. It is not so important if Black does not castle when the centre is blocked.

10 cxf3 h6 11 cxd2 a6

Sometimes Black likes to play on the queenside with ...b5 so Black's last is useful in this respect.

12 ♖e2 ♗d7 13 ♚c2 ♚e7 14 0-0 ♜f4

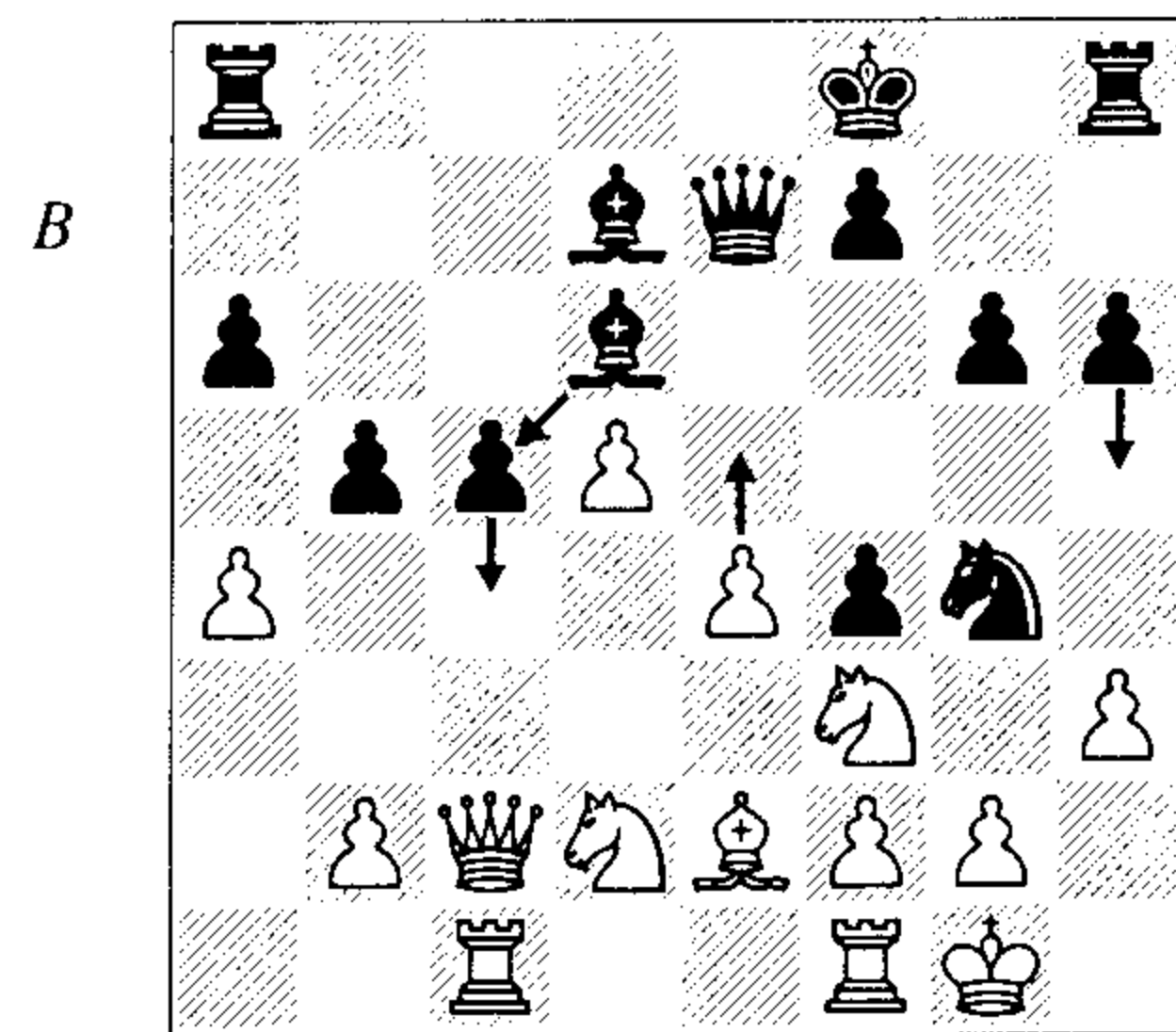
In Line B2, playing for ...c6 is one possibility, in which case Black probably would prefer to run the king to h7 first in order to connect the rooks. Sadler chooses a more aggressive option.

15 ♗xf4

Otherwise ...g5 may have been on the cards (compare Line B3).

15...exf4 16 ♖ac1 ♜g4 17 ♜b1 c5
Played to prevent infiltration of the knight via d4 now that ...♗c5 is impossible.

18 ♜bd2 b5 19 a4 g6 20 h3 (D)



20...h5

The position is full of tension. There is a potential attack down the h-file by Black. Meanwhile White is trying to crash through the centre with e4-e5 and catch Black in the middle of nowhere.

21 ♖fe1

21 b3 would have been my choice so that Black's ...c4 and ...♗c5 is prevented.

21...c4 22 e5 ♜xe5

22...♗c5 is an interesting alternative. Black gets his wish after 23 hxg4 (23 ♜e4 ♗f5) 23...hxg4 24 e6 (24 d6 ♚d8) 24...♗xf2+ 25 ♚xf2 ♚c5+ 26 ♜d4 ♚xd4+ 27 ♚f1 ♖h1#.

23 ♜xe5 ♚xe5 24 ♗xc4

The players agreed a draw in the game Romanishin-Sadler, Altensteig 1992. Presumably, the tournament situation only required a draw from Sadler; he has slightly the better chances here due to having two bishops.

B23)

5 ♗f4

I believe this to be White's best 5th move.

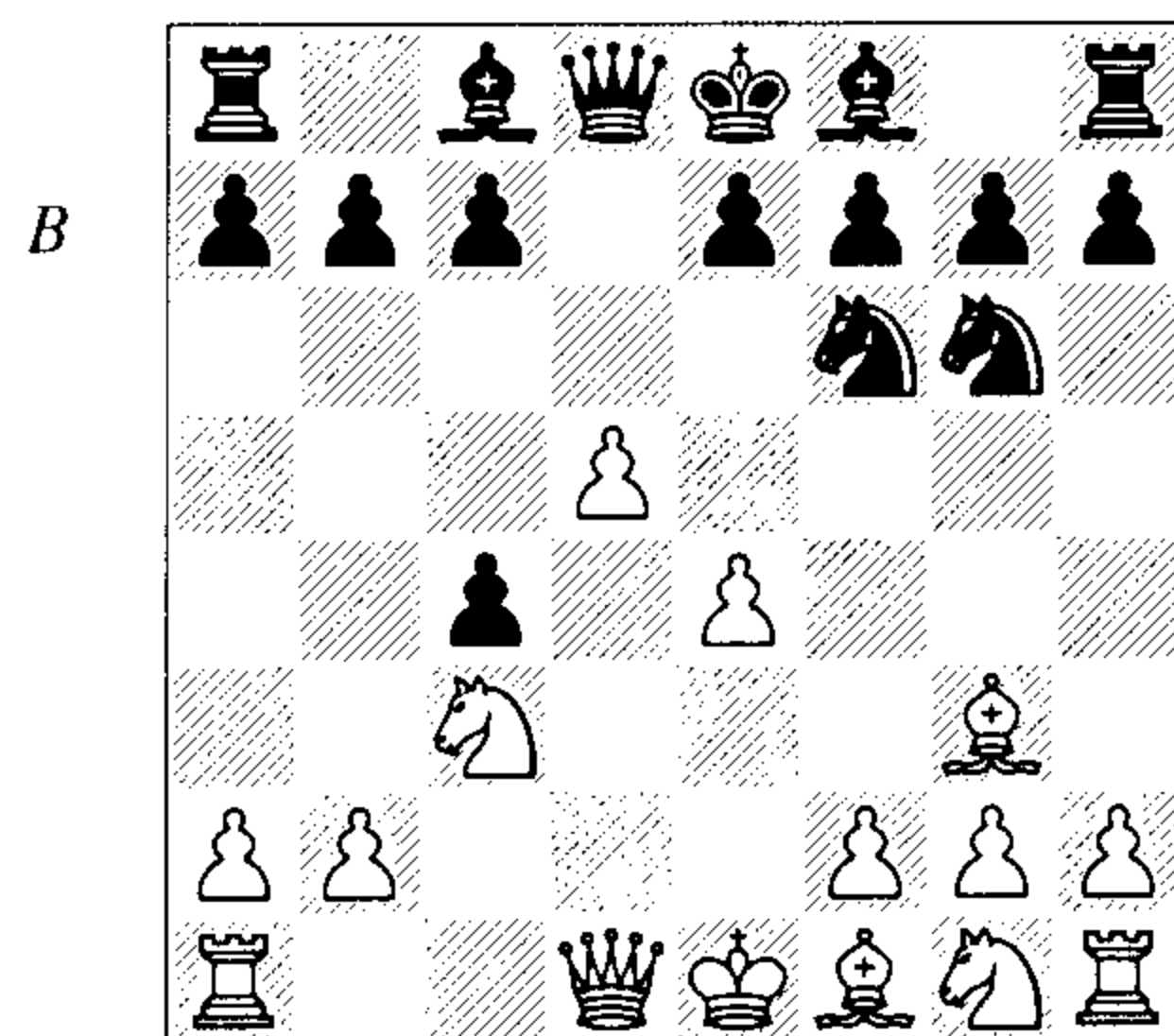
5...♜g6 6 ♗g3

6 ♗e3 is also possible.

6...♜f6

6...e5 7 ♗xc4 ♜f6 8 ♜c3 ♗d6 9 ♗b5+ ♚f8 (almost automatic now) 10 ♜f3 a6 11 ♗e2 ♜h5 12 ♜d2 ♜hf4 is promising for Black, Kumaran-Murshed, London Lloyds Bank 1990.

7 ♜c3 (D)

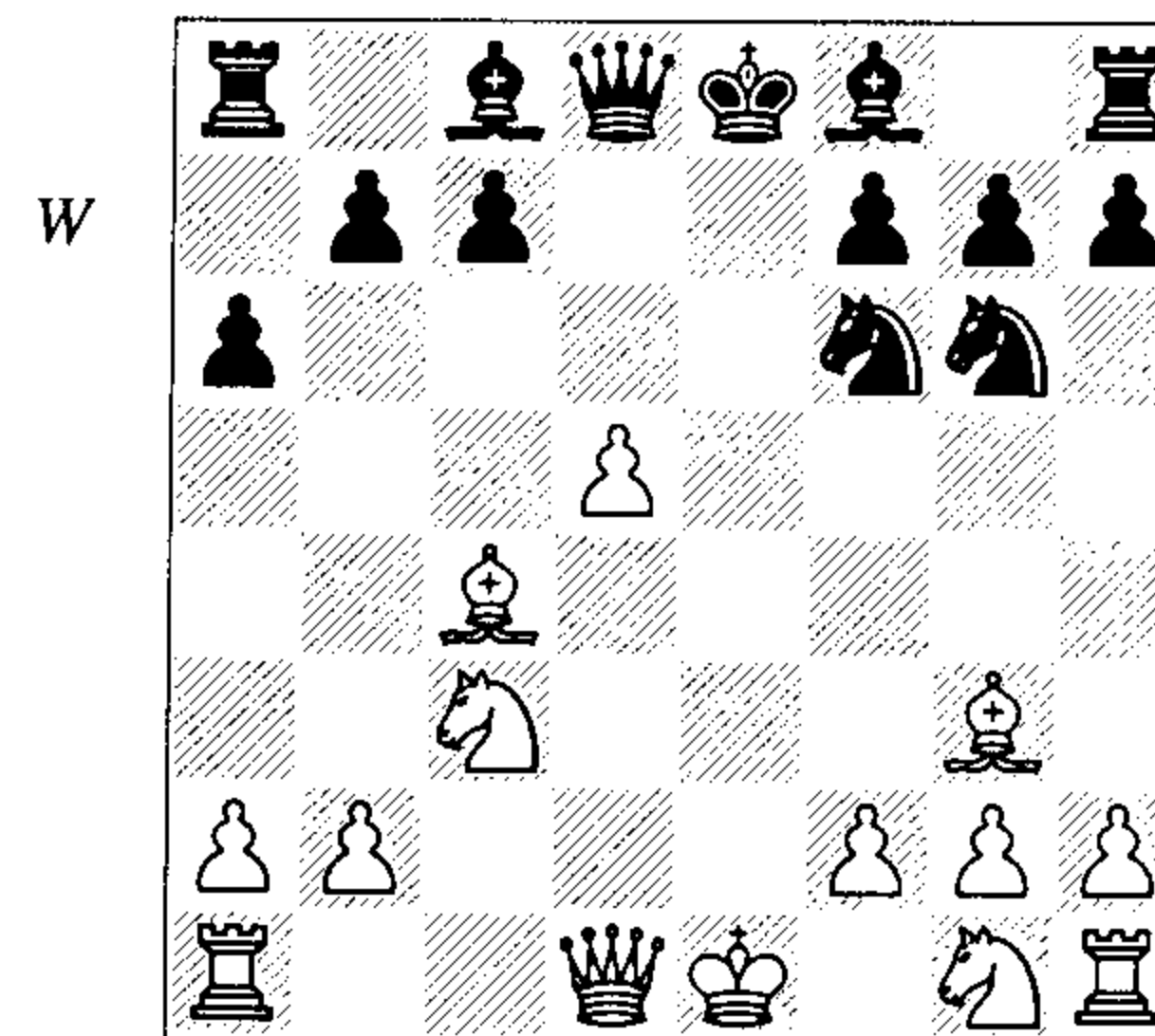


7...e6

Whether to play ...e5 or ...e6 is very much a matter of taste.

7...e5 8 ♗xc4 (the position is similar to some variations of the Nimzo-Indian where Black has played an early ...♜c6) 8...a6 9 ♜ge2 ♗d6 10 0-0 ♚e7 11 ♚h1 h5 12 f3 h4 13 ♗f2 ♜h5 14 ♚a4+ ♚f8 and in Janvari-Shaw, Cappelle la Grande 1995, Black went on to win – the kingside assault is well under way. White wasted time with his queen, whereupon Black did not castle, instead throwing his h-pawn down the board and using the f4-square for a knight.

8 ♗xc4 exd5 9 exd5 a6 (D)



The basic structure has arisen. It can be reached via a variety of move-orders and piece placements but the most striking feature is the space advantage that the d5-pawn creates.

10 ♜f3 ♗d6 11 ♚e2+ ♜e7

Even in this position 11...♚f8 should be played.

12 ♗h4 0-0 13 ♗xf6 gxf6

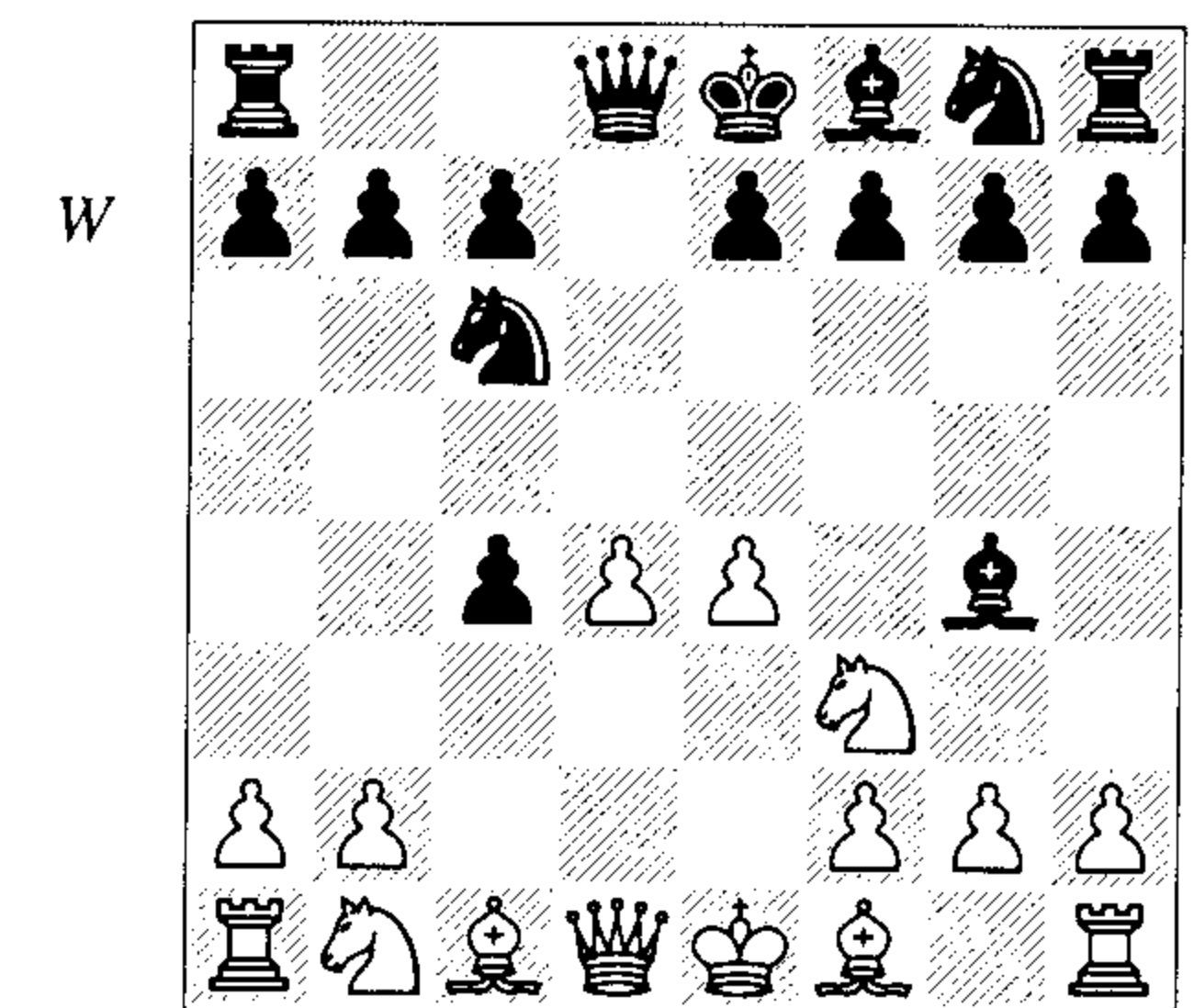
The doubled pawns are less than attractive.

14 0-0

White's position is preferable, Scherbakov-Sulava, Bled 1992.

B3)

4 ♜f3 ♗g4 (D)



5 d5

Other possibilities:

a) 5 ♗xc4 e6 and now:

a1) 6 d5 exd5 7 ♗xd5 ♚d7 8 ♚b3 0-0-0 9 0-0 ♗xf3 (9...♗c5 is more aggressive) 10 ♚xf3 ♜f6 and there is no reason why Black should have any difficulties here, Ward-Sadler, British Ch (Swansea) 1995.

a2) 6 ♗b5 ♗xf3 7 ♗xc6+ bxc6 8 gxf3 (White does not have enough for the pawn after 8 ♚xf3 ♚xd4 9 0-0 ♗d6 10 ♜c3) 8...♖b8 (interesting, presumably wanting to avoid White's strategy after 8...♗b4+ 9 ♚e2 ♜e7 10 ♗e3, but this is not scary) 9 ♜c3 ♗b4 10 ♗e3 ♜e7 11 ♚c2 0-0 12 0-0-0 ♜g6 13 ♜e2 ♚d6 (highlighting the weakness of

White's doubled pawns) 14 ♖d3 (with the idea of defending along the third rank with the rook) and an unbalanced game will unfold with kings on opposite wings, Mozetić-Draško, Jagodina 1994. The semi-open b-file and doubled c-pawns will not hamper Black unduly.

b) 5 ♗e3 ♗xf3 (5...♘f6 6 ♘c3, by transposition, is a position from the Chigorin) 6 gxf3 e6 7 ♗xc4 ♖f6 8 ♗b5 ♗b4+ 9 ♖e2 (White's strategy is again questionable) 9...♘ge7 10 ♖a4 0-0-0 11 ♖d1 ♖xd4 (also providing enjoyment for the spectators – but White had something like this coming to him) 12 ♗xc6 ♘xc6 13 ♗xd4 ♘xd4+ 14 ♖f1 ♗c5 and Black has activity, a pawn, a safe king, an attack on the opponent's king and all for just an exchange, Arbakov-Ibragimov, Biel 1997. After much pressure Black eventually went on to win.

5...♘e5 6 ♗f4 (D)

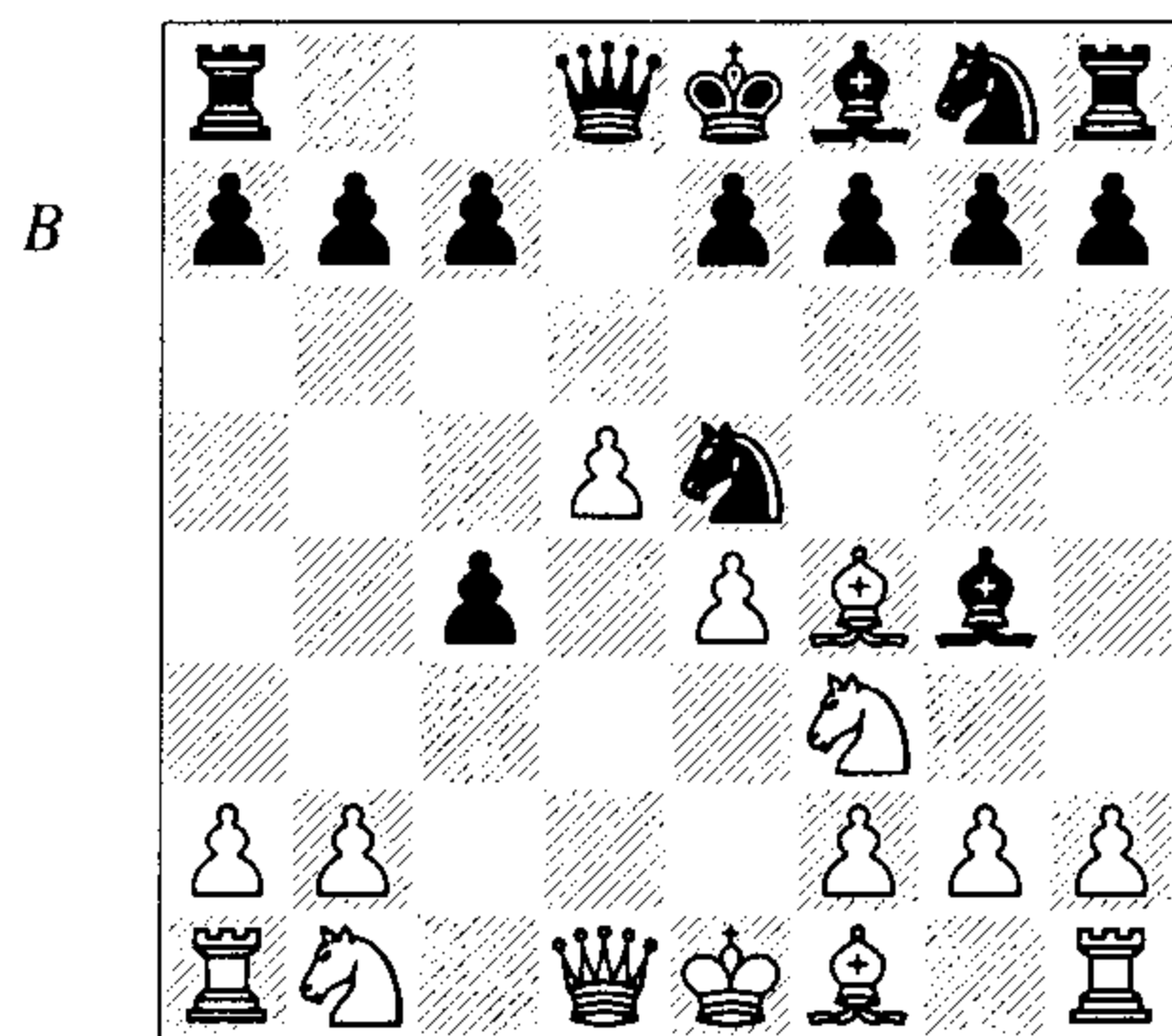
Analysis by Flear has ruined the reputation of 6 ♖d4 for White: 6...♘f3+ 7 gxf3 ♗xf3 8 ♗xc4 e5 9 ♗b5+ c6 10 ♖xe5+ ♖e7! 11 dxc6 ♖xe5 12 cxb7+ ♖xb5 13 bxa8 ♖+ ♖d7 14 ♘c3 ♗b4 15 ♖xa7+ ♖e6 16 ♖e3 ♗xc3+ 17 bxc3 ♗xh1.

6...♘g6 7 ♗e3 ♘f6 8 ♘c3 e5 9 ♗xc4 a6

The position is now of a type also studied in Line B2.

10 0-0 ♗d6 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 ♘d2 ♗d7

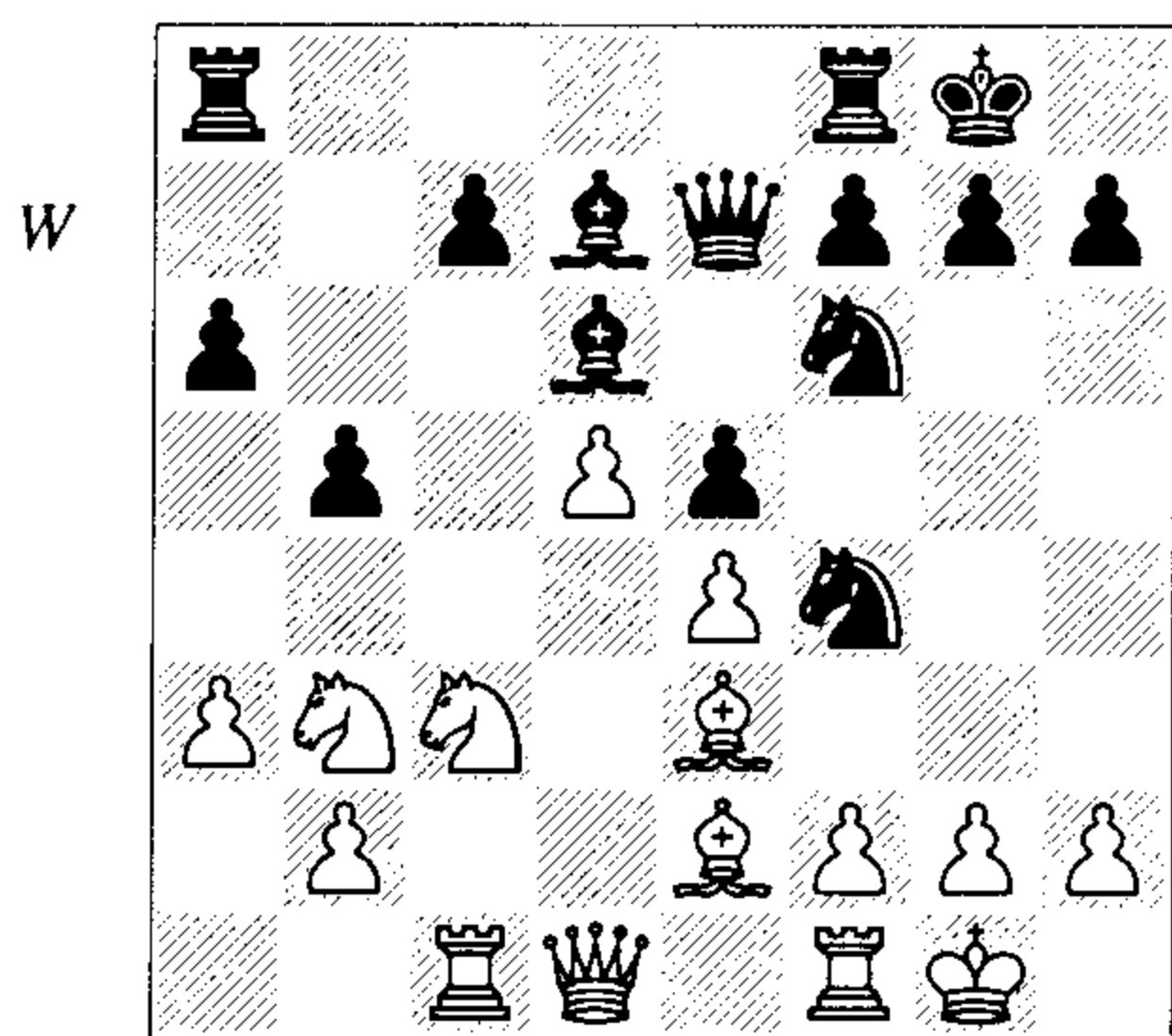
Black correctly keeps all the minor pieces on the board for the forthcoming kingside attack.



13 ♖c1 ♖e7 14 a3 b5

Black can play on both wings but I prefer 14...♘f4 here.

15 ♘b3 ♘f4 (D)



16 ♗f3 ♖h8 17 ♘a2 g5

White is manoeuvring into the queenside squares b4, c5, c6 and Black is going for White's king. An interesting battle lies ahead, Karpov-Milov, Biel 1997.

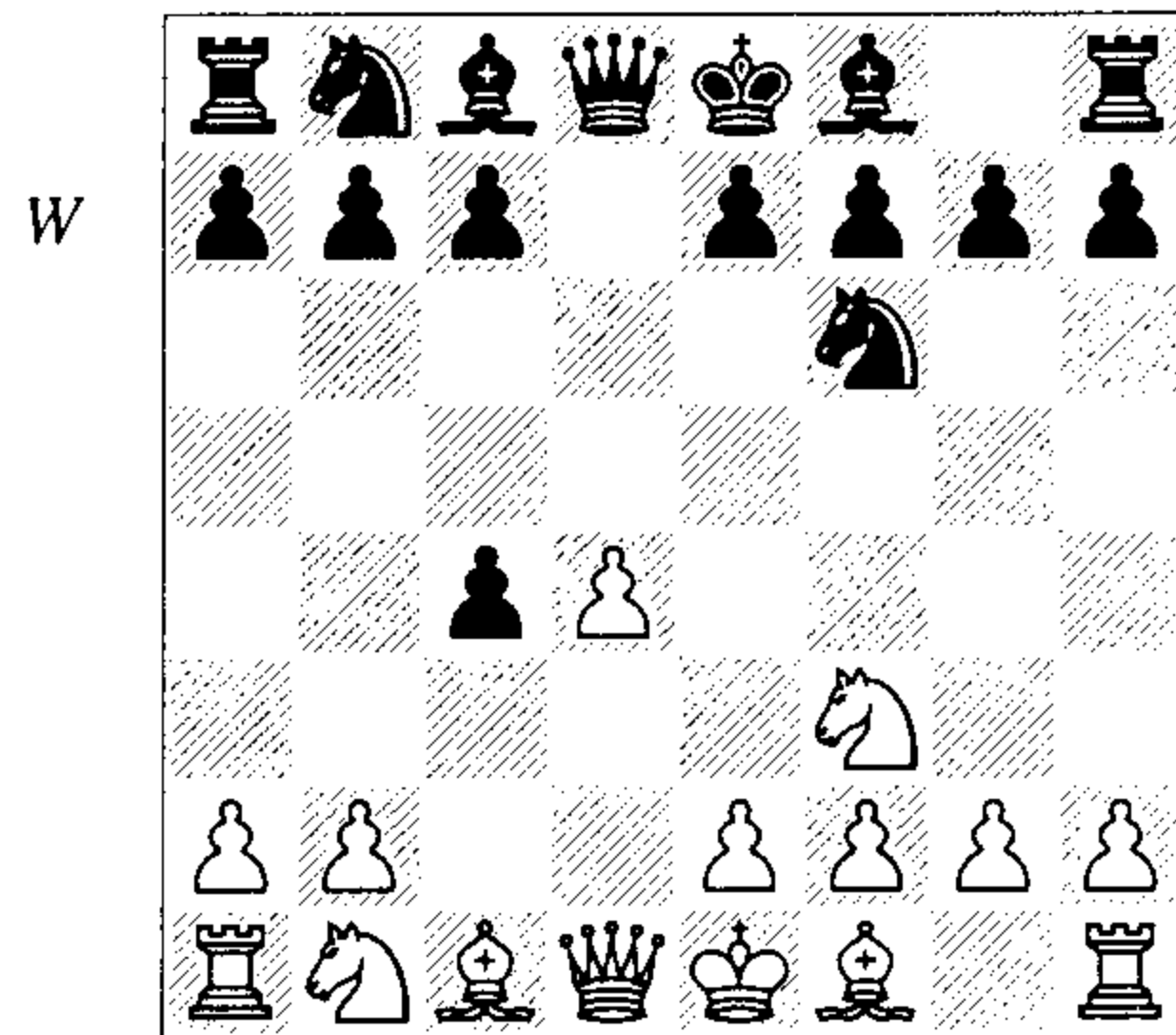
That concludes this chapter. In it we have examined 3...e5, which is where I believe Black should concentrate

his efforts. The positions in Line A1 are solid enough for Black but not without the opportunity for either player to go wrong and thus decisive results are easily possible. It is also well worth keeping an eye on developments in the relatively unexplored positions found in Line A3. In Line B, 3...♘c6 is studied. This is less common

and has been included as an alternative to 3...e5 for those readers who prefer to experiment with something slightly more spicy. There are some tricky positions for White to deal with, especially after a timely ...♘a5 or a well-played wing attack but it must not be forgotten that White often holds a spatial advantage.

3 White Plays ♖c3 and e4

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 (D)



In this chapter we consider two systems for White both involving a quick e2-e4. The first possibility is the variation which takes its name from first being played in Mannheim, namely 4 ♖a4+.

The second possibility is the Two Knights Variation, 4 ♖c3, by which White aims for a quick e4. White's urgency to play e2-e4 will, as is often the case in such set-ups, result in him sacrificing a pawn or two (or four! see Crouch's play below).

Black's response will be measured. With the right preparation and calculations at the board, Black can safely take a number of these gambits. However, I do not recommend grabbing everything that is offered and then having to

defend doggedly thereafter. I prefer an active approach.

One final point before looking at the theory is that there are a large number of transpositional possibilities which take us out of the scope of this book. I have given opening codes and variation names so that the reader can look for further information in *ECO*, *Informator* or other specialized opening books.

The Theory of ♖c3 and e4 Systems

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6

A: 4 ♖a4+ 40

B: 4 ♖c3 46

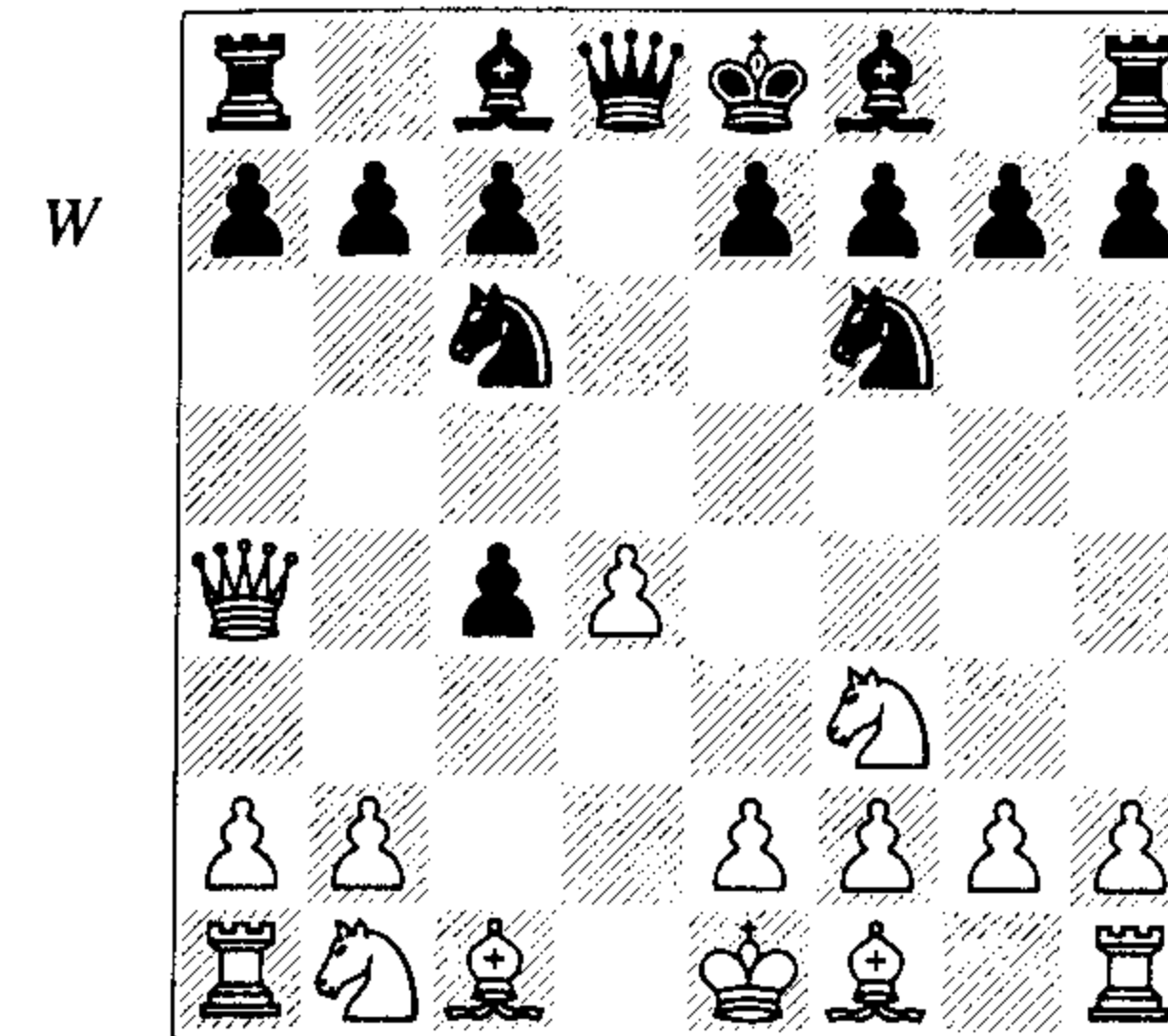
A)

4 ♖a4+

One of the reasons for trying 4 ♖a4+ is to hope for the spectacular queen sacrifice in the well-publicized variation following the moves 4...♗bd7 5 ♖c3 e6 6 e4 c5 7 d5 exd5 8 e5 d4 9 ♗xc4 dxc3 10 exf6 ♖xf6 11 ♗g5 ♖c6 12 0-0-0, one such example being Taimanov-Polugaevsky, USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1960 where White now wins in all lines. However, we have other ideas for Black.

4...♗c6 (D)

This move is distinctive and steers the opening away from having similarities to a Catalan, or Slav, which is what we get after 4...c6 5 ♖xc4.



5 ♖c3

White's alternatives are less testing:

a) 5 e3 ♗d7 6 ♗xc4 ♗b6 7 ♖b3 ♗xc4 8 ♖xc4 ♗e6 9 ♖a4 ♗d7 10 ♖b3 e6 11 ♖c3 ♗a5 12 ♖c2 c5 and Black has two bishops and his queenside expansion is under way, Andersson-Miles, Wijk aan Zee 1984. It is a good sign to get in ...c5 so early.

b) 5 ♖xc4 ♗e6 6 ♖a4 ♗d5 (6...a6, with the idea of ...b5 followed by a knight move and then ...c5 is my preference here, but with more minor pieces developed there are certainly no opening difficulties for Black; 6...g6 and ...♗g7 is an alternative, and completely satisfactory way of developing) 7 e3 e6 8 ♖c3 ♗e7 (better is 8...♗b4) 9 ♗d3 0-0 10 e4 gives White too much of what he wants, Lundin-Mataev, Moscow 1996.

c) 5 g3 ♗d5 (5...♗e6 is now a funny-looking Catalan where White is a pawn down: 6 ♗g2 ♖d7 7 ♖c3 and now, rather than 7...♗d5, Tukmakov-V.Kozlov, USSR 1984, 7...♗d5 is strong, as the standard knight manoeuvre to b6 retains Black's extra pawn) 6 ♖xc4 ♗b6 7 ♖d3 e5 8 dxe5 (8 ♖xe5 trying to exchange some pieces limits the already substantial damage) 8...♖xd3 9 exd3 ♗g4 10 ♗bd2 ♗b4 11 ♖d1 0-0-0 is satisfactory for Black, Moutousis-Ibragimov, Khania 1993.

There are now two possibilities for Black:

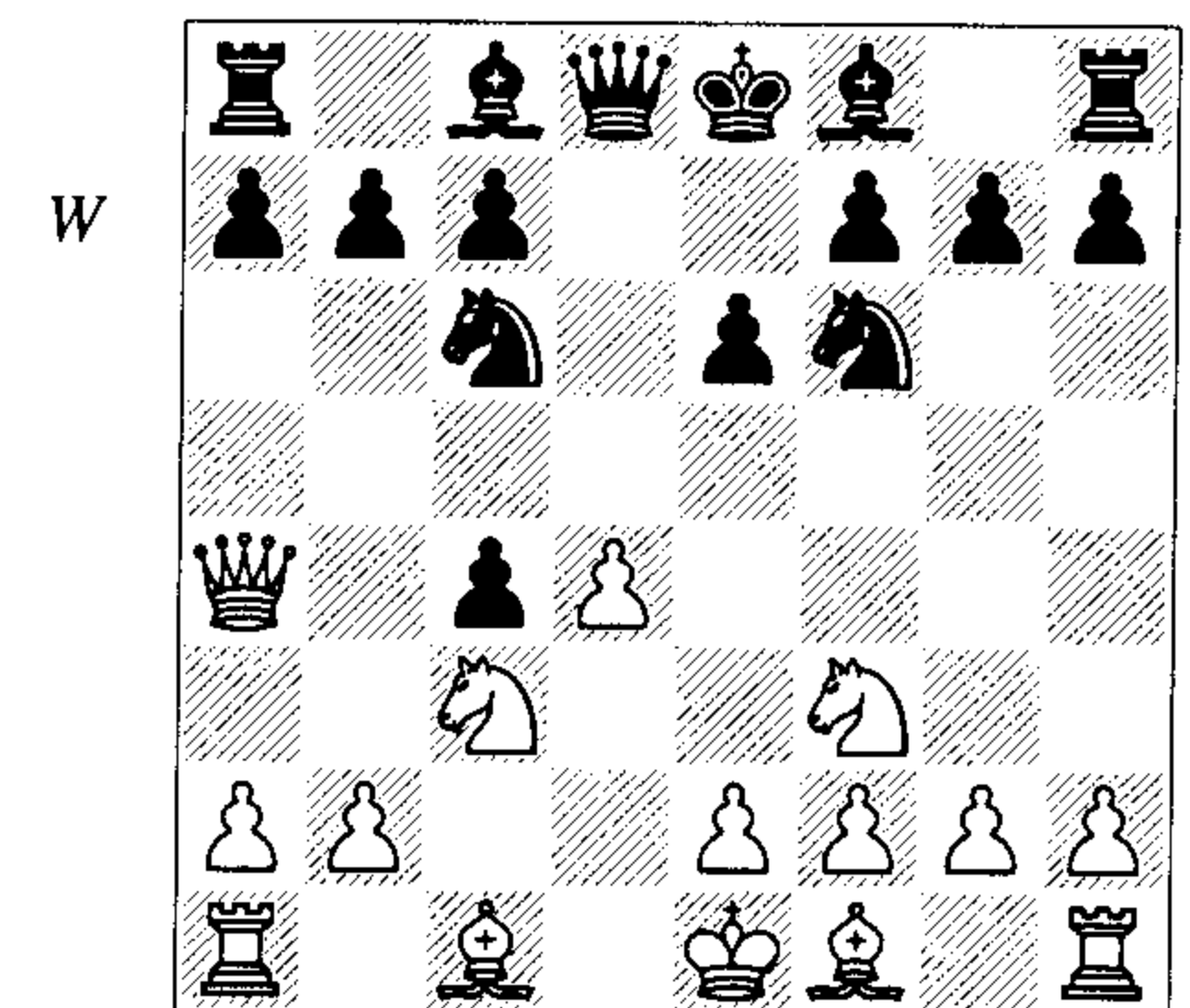
A1: 5...e6 41

A2: 5...♗d5 43

A1)

5...e6 (D)

Play after this move tends to be as dynamic as other QGA positions after ...♗c6. It has not been tested much but Black has done well in a few recent games.



6 a3

White rules out ... $\text{d}b4$. Instead 6 ♖xc4 is met by the annoying $6... \text{d}b4$, forcing the queen to move again. 7 ♖b3 c5 (that is a weight off Black's shoulders; in the ... $\text{d}c6$ QGA systems, the c7-pawn is sometimes a problem in that it lies on a semi-open file). Now:

a) 8 e3 gives Black two possibilities, both of which saddled White with an IQP (see Chapter 8) while his queen is somewhat misplaced on b3:

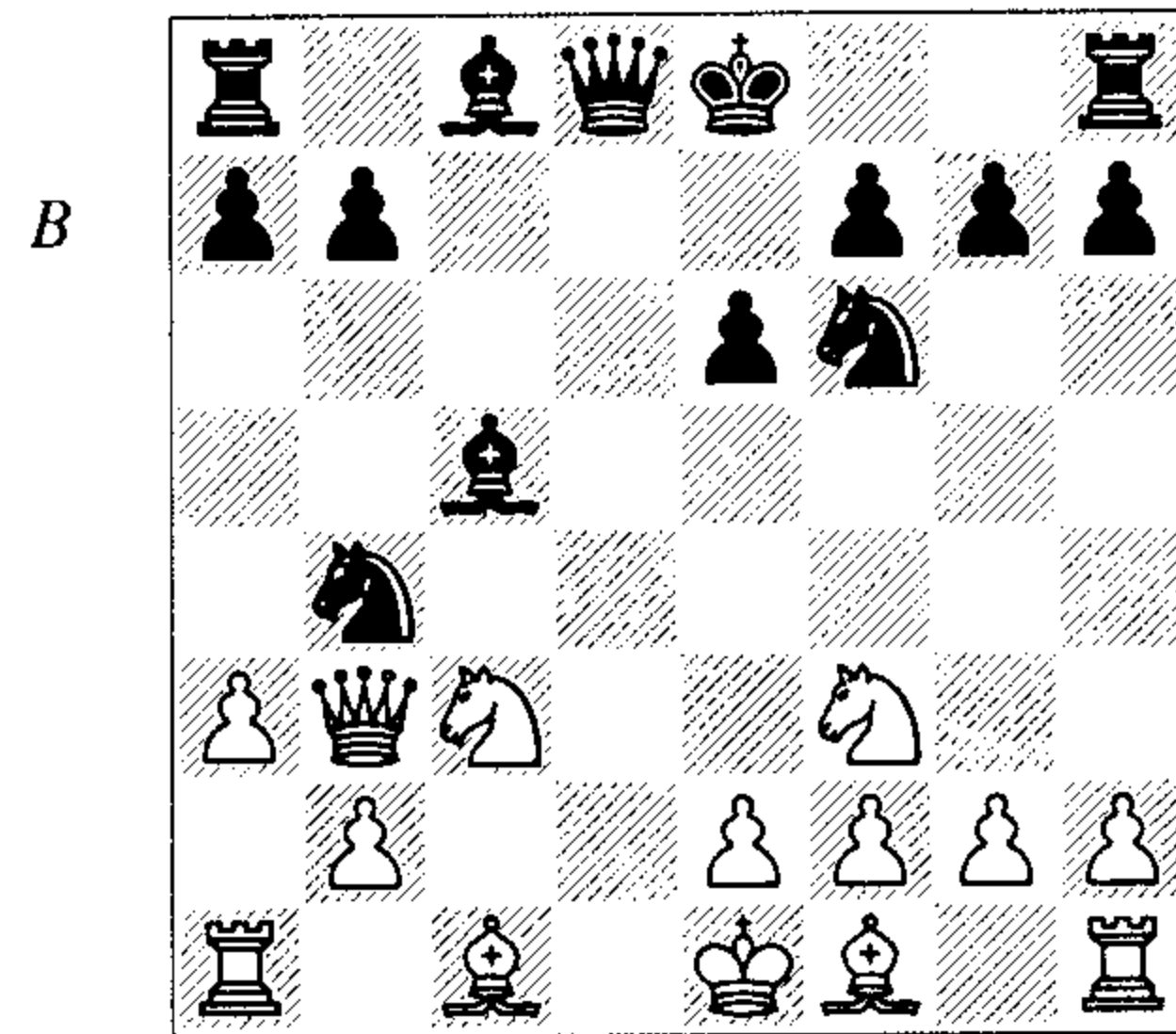
a1) $8... \text{a6}$ 9 ♕e2 (9 dxc5 allows $9... \text{d}d3+$) $9... \text{cxd4}$ 10 exd4 ♕e7 11 0-0 12 ♖d1 b6 $13 \text{ a3 d}b5$ 14 ♕g5 ♕b7 looks very sensible for Black, Harper-Keres, Vancouver 1975. He has used his knight to good effect by blocking the d5-pawn.

a2) $8... \text{cxd4}$ (it is not necessary to capture immediately) 9 exd4 ♕e7 $10 \text{ ♕g5 d}c6$ (I prefer d5 for the knight, if it can be arranged, since it has already moved to b4 as if in preparation for this) 11 ♖d1 0-0 12 ♕d3 b6 13 a3 ♕b7 with a reasonable position for Black, Illescas-Wolff, Biel IZ 1993.

b) 8 dxc5 ♕xc5 9 a3 (9 g3 allows $9... \text{♖b6}$ 10 e3 0-0 , when White is in some trouble because 11 a3 loses to $11... \text{d}d3+$) and now (D):

b1) $9... \text{♕xf2+}$ is enterprising but bad for Black. There is no checkmate after 10 ♖xf2 ♖b6+ $11 \text{ ♖g3 d}h5+$ 12 ♖h3 e5+ 13 g4 .

b2) $9... \text{♖b6}$ 10 axb4 ♕xf2+ 11 ♖d1 does not give Black enough – common sense again prevails.



b3) $9... \text{d}c6$ 10 g3 (10 ♕g5 is a better way to develop) $10... \text{d}a5$ (in the short term, this looks aggressive with Black having an eye on b3 for the knight) 11 ♖c2 (11 ♖b5+? ♕d7 $12 \text{ ♖xc5 d}b3$ $13 \text{ ♖c4 d}xa1$ and the knight escapes with interest) $11... \text{♖b6}$ 12 e3 (safe now that the black knight has been kicked from b4; earlier ... $\text{d}d3$ would have been possible) $12... \text{♕e7}$ (that is one piece pushed back) $13 \text{ b4 d}c6$ (a second) $14 \text{ d}a4 ♖d8$ (now even the queen) 15 ♕g2 ♕d7 16 0-0 ♖c8 17 ♖b3 0-0 18 ♕b2 and now, rather than $18... \text{♖e8}$, Stohl-Meister, Slovakian Cht 1994, Black should play $18... \text{b5}$ $19 \text{ d}c3 ♖b6$, when it is not much to write home about although I marginally prefer White.

b4) I suggest $9... \text{d}a6$ as an improvement; after ... ♕e7 , Black will threaten ... $\text{d}c5$ and ... a5 , while c6 is reserved for the other bishop.

6...a6

An attempt to punish White's a2-a3 with $6... \text{♕d7}$ 7 ♖xc4 a5 (eyeing up the b3-square for the knight) is thwarted

by 8 b3 a4 9 b4 . Alternatively, $6... \text{a5}$ 7 ♖xc4 a4 $8 \text{ d}xa4 \text{ e5}$ 9 dxe5 ♕e6 10 ♖c2 is also unsuccessful for Black – White can be happy having bagged a couple of extra pawns.

7 ♖xc4 ♕d6 8 ♕g5 h6 9 ♕h4

In theory, 9 ♕xf6 ♖xf6 10 g3 should ease Black's problems. However, with the bishop now on h4, White cannot fianchetto the king's bishop.

9...0-0 10 ♖d1

This discourages ... e5 , but Black is planning something else.

10...g5 11 ♕g3 ♖b8 12 e4 b5

That was the idea of the previous move; now 13 ♖xc6 ♕b7 wins the queen.

13 ♖e2 b4

A complicated situation has arisen but it suits Black, the better-developed player, Sosonko-Piket, Amsterdam 1995.

A2)

5...d5

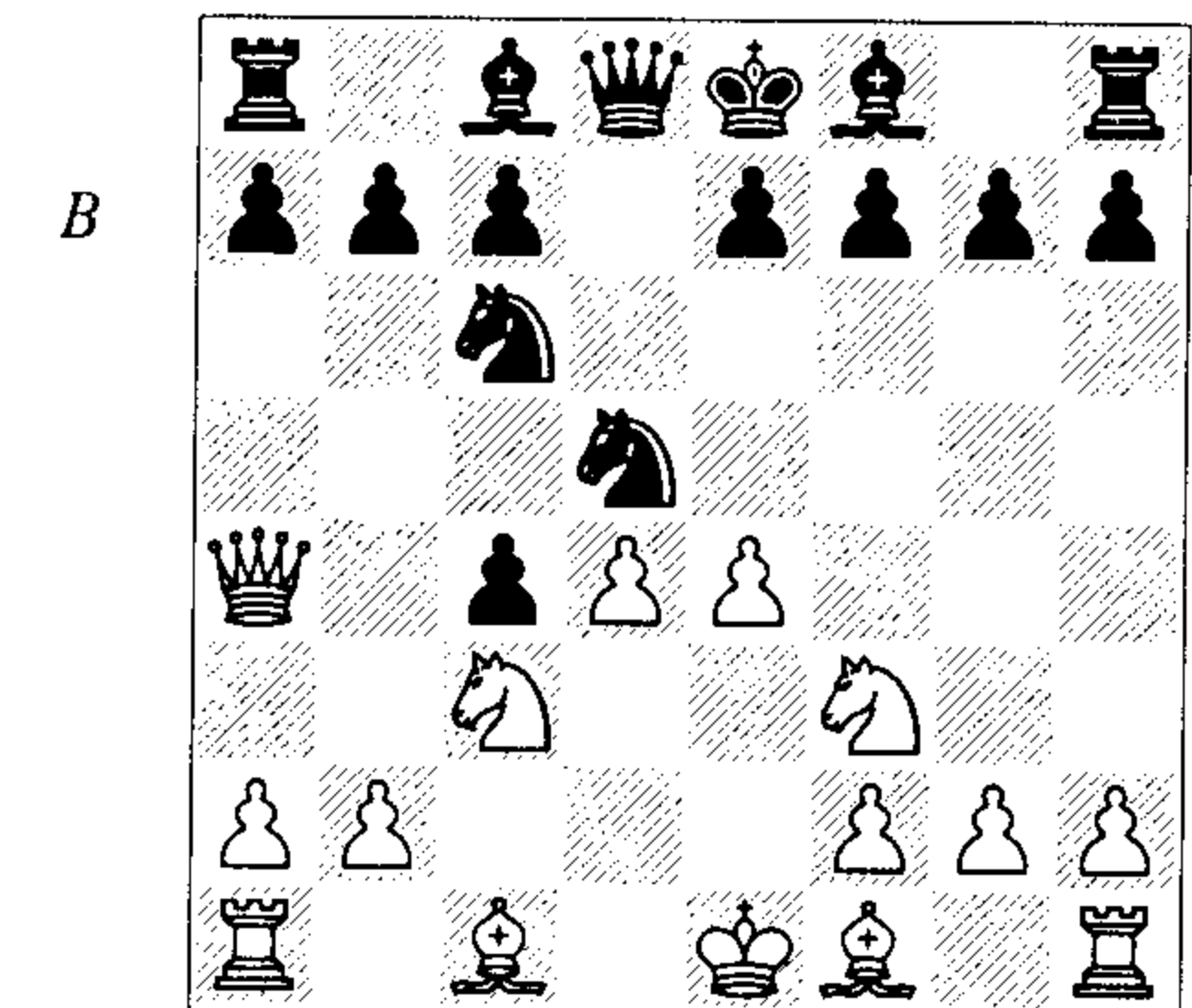
Trying to exploit White's developed queen. It is certainly rather more than a crude method of trying to hold on to the c4-pawn.

6 e4 (D)

$6 \text{ ♖xc4 d}b4$ 7 ♖b3 e5 (a good active response to the numerous queen moves that White is making) $8 \text{ d5 d}d4$ $9 \text{ d}xd4 \text{ exd4}$ $10 \text{ d}b5 \text{ d3}$ is extremely unimpressive for White, Telljohann-Beckmann, NRW-Liga 1990.

6...d6

This knight manoeuvre was first introduced by Petrosian.



7 ♖d1 ♕g4

From a logical point of view, it really is quite strange to suggest an opening variation for White where the queen's second move, the 7th of the game, only returns it to its home square. Black has three minor pieces developed and is a pawn up!

8 d5 d}e5

The reader might like to compare this position to similar ones found in the last chapter after $3 \text{ e4 d}c6$. The main difference is that in this chapter, after ... ♕xf3 it is more difficult to play ... e7-e6 since this would ruin Black's pawn-chain. In the last chapter, ... e7-e5 had normally been played but the c4-pawn is easy for White to capture there.

9 ♕f4

The main move, so to speak. Other possibilities have been less successful and have rather a suspicious appearance.

a) 9 a4 (another fairly odd-looking move; development is not the name of the game) $9... \text{e6}$ (I prefer $9... \text{♖d6}$) 10

♖d4 ♗xf3+ 11 gxf3 ♕xf3 12 ♖g1 ♗f6 (Black was faced with something of a dilemma; compare line 'b') 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 ♖g3 ♕h5 15 a5 ♗d7 and now 16 a6, Barkhagen-Jepson, Swedish Ch (Haninge) 1997, is an idea reminiscent of positions from the Slav. The a-pawn breaks up Black's queenside and White now stands fine.

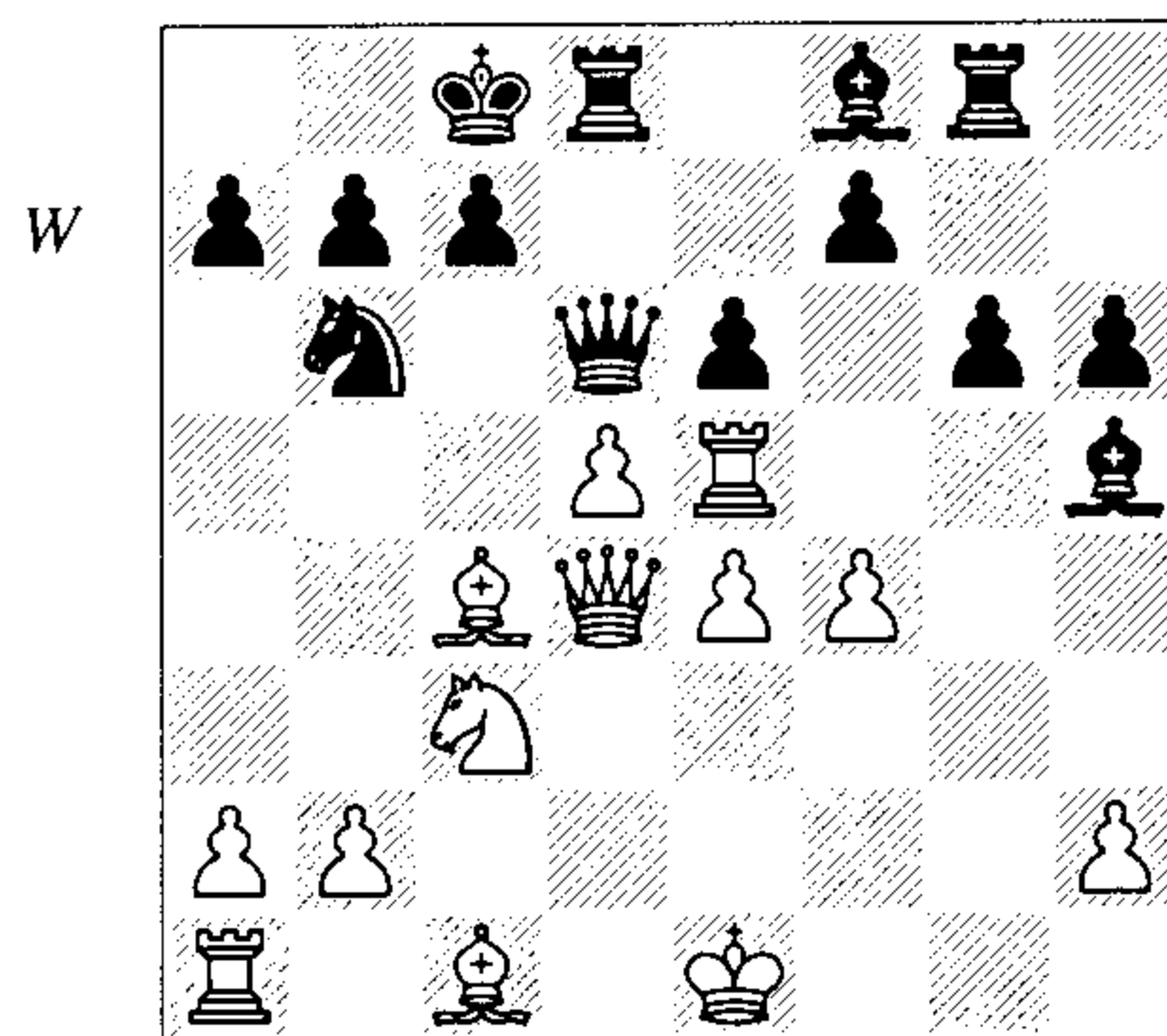
b) 9 ♖d4, White's third queen move, signals aggressive intentions and involves another pawn sacrifice. It still remains to be seen if White will win the first sacrificed pawn back. On the whole, I do not believe that this move should succeed, but it is a different proposition to prove it during practical play!

b1) 9...♗xf3+ 10 gxf3 ♕xf3 11 ♖g1 ♗d6 (a very important move, improving on 11...e6, as in an earlier game Crouch-Sadler where White got a very strong attack) and now:

b11) 12 a4 a6 (not 12...e5 13 ♗e3 ♕h5 14 a5 ♗d7 15 a6, when White is attacking on all fronts and is generally causing some mayhem; Sadler's move stops the white a-pawn advancing and puts b5 under Black's control) 13 e5 (Black's intention of playing ...e5 is such a problem for White that he resorts to pushing his own e-pawn; unfortunately, the bishop on f3, which in some situations can feel out of the game, suddenly exerts additional pressure on d5, and now that pawn is doomed) 13...♗d7 14 e6 (or 14 ♕xc4 ♗xc4 15 ♗xc4 0-0-0 and the d-pawn is still doomed) 14...fxe6 15 ♕h3

♗xd5 16 ♖g3 (White is still going for 'glory' but it all looks wrong) 16...♗xc3 17 ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 18 ♖xf3 ♗e4 and in Crouch-Sadler, Cappelle la Grande 1993, White did not have enough for four pawns.

b12) 12 ♗e3 is a fourth queen move, but who is counting? Note that Crouch tried this move after his loss to Sadler – this was a prepared line. So where does his optimism come from? Crouch-Duncan, Hampstead 1998 turned out badly for him: 12...♕h5 13 f4 e6 14 ♖g5 g6 15 ♗d4 ♖g8 16 ♕xc4 h6 17 ♖e5 0-0-0 (D).



The English IM's imaginative approach has landed him in deep trouble. His queen and rook are on very strange squares. Black is now winning everywhere and is spoilt for choice on what to do next.

b13) 12 ♖g5 is certainly in the spirit of things and threatens to trap the bishop in some lines. The advance e4-e5 must also be borne in mind. The immediate point is that it stops ...e5.

Unfortunately, the dream rook turns into a nightmare one after 12...f6 (12...e6 13 ♗b5 ♗b4+ 14 ♕d2 ♗xb5 15 dxe6 ♗c6 16 exf7+ ♖xf7 17 ♖f5+ is the sort of fantasy that White is hoping for, but Black does not need to be so obliging) 13 ♖f5 and now the odd-looking 13...♕h1 threatens ...g6, ...e6 and ...e5 leaving Black with a healthy material advantage.

b2) 9...♗g6 rejects the second sacrifice. Black bases his play on quick development and central control rather than risk getting steam-rolled by White's d- and e-pawns. 10 ♕e3 (10 ♕xc4 would get White's pawn back and must surely be best, although 10...♕xf3 11 gxf3 e5 12 ♗d3 ♕c5 is favourable for Black) 10...♕xf3 11 gxf3 e5 (a typical thrust with the queen on d4, although on this occasion at least *en passant* is possible because the d5-pawn is not pinned due to the queen being defended) 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 14 f4 ♕b4 leaves Black a pawn up with no problems, and White regretting his decision not to recapture on c4 earlier, Hellsten-Volzhen, Gistrup 1996. Still, I prefer to tackle White head-on in line 'b1'.

9...♕xf3

9...♗g6 10 ♕g3 e5 11 dxe6 ♕xe6 12 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 13 ♕xc7 does not look hugely tempting for Black either:

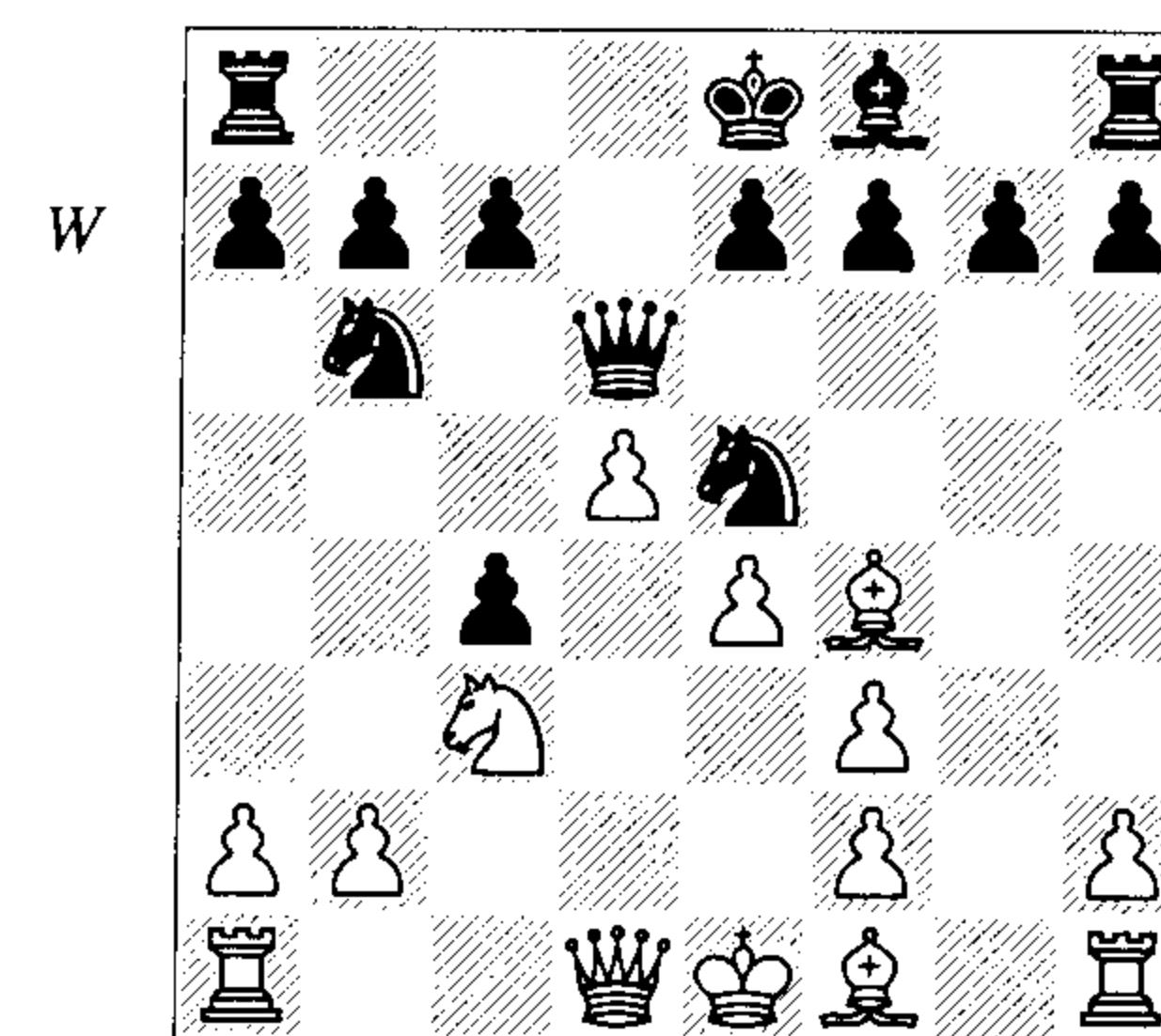
a) 13...♖d7 14 ♕xb6 axb6 15 ♗g5 ♗e5 16 ♗xe6 fxe6 17 f4 ♗d3+ 18 ♕xd3 ♖xd3 19 ♖d1 and Black's weakened queenside gives White the better

chances, Dokhoian-Yakovich, Khar-kov 1985.

b) 13...♖c8 (better since it defends c4) 14 ♕g3 a6 (on one database 14...h6 was given as the move played but this looks like a finger slip to me on the part of the computer operator; perhaps neither pawn move is necessary and 14...♕c5 could be played) 15 ♗d4 ♕c5 16 0-0-0 17 ♕e2 ♕d7 18 ♗f5 and White has the better chances, Alburdt-Dlugy, USA Ch (Berkeley) 1984.

10 gxf3 ♗d6 (D)

Black can side-step some kind of ending (see last note), with 10...♗g6 11 ♕g3 e5 12 dxe6 ♗e7 (12...fxe6 13 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 14 ♕xc7 is more problematic) 13 ♕xc4 fxe6 (13...♗xc4 14 ♗a4+) 14 ♕b3, but, his bishop-pair and superior development give White a better game, Barkhagen-Brynell, Swedish Ch (Haninge) 1997.



11 ♕g3 g5

The move is designed to hold up White's pawn-front.

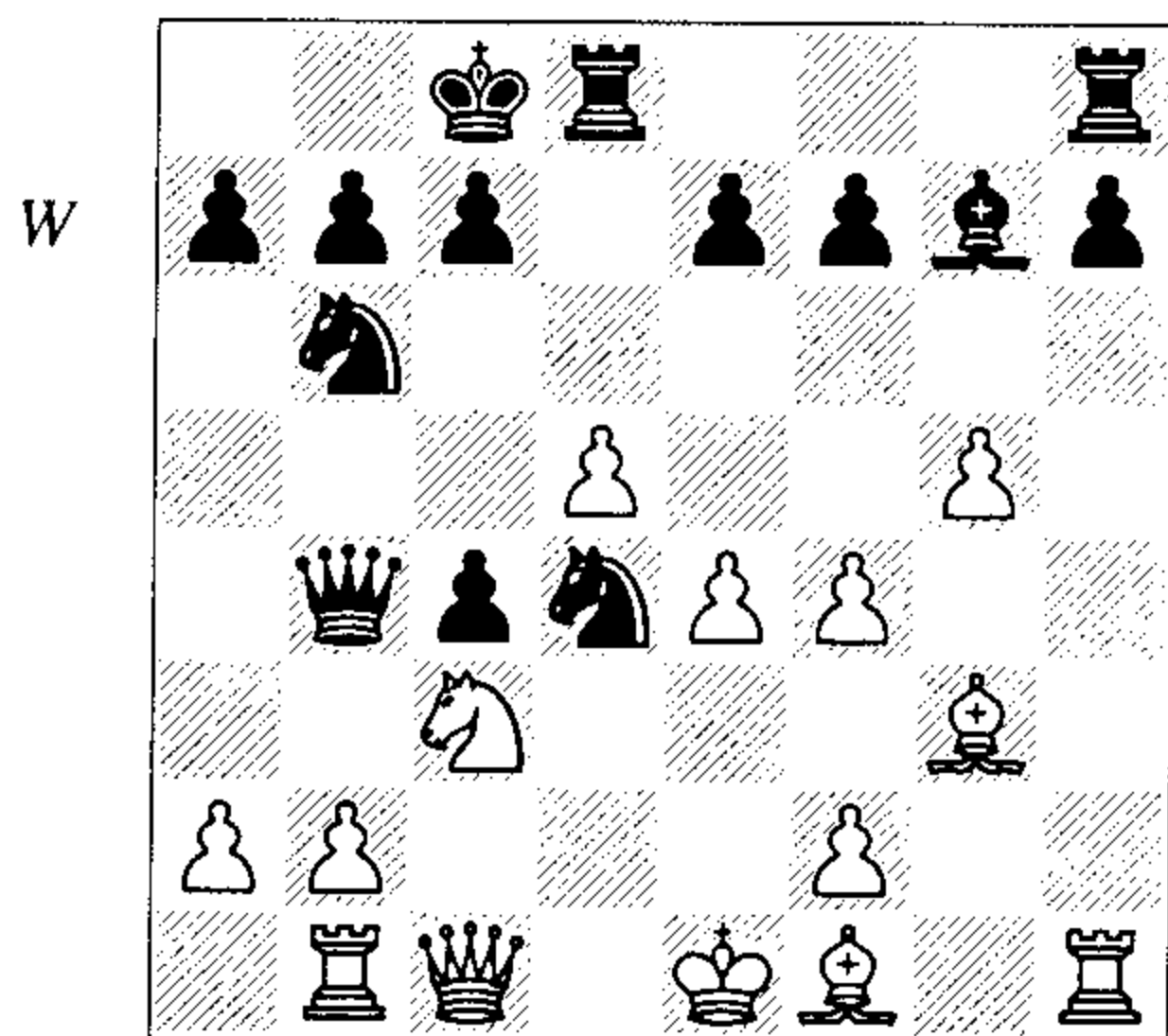
12 h4 ♕g7

Black returns the pawn but strives for activity. I would suggest 12...♖f6 as a possibility, except that after the king-walk 13 hxg5 ♘xf3+ 14 ♔e2 ♘d4+ 15 ♔e3 White wins. Instead 12...gxf3 13 ♖xf3 ♗g7 14 f4 ♘ed7 15 ♖d2 is too passive for Black.

13 hxg5

White restores material equality and now his e- and f-pawns are guaranteed to advance, although it may take some time for White to sort out his king. Black relies on his activity to strike quickly at White's king.

13...♖b4 14 ♖b1 0-0-0 15 f4 ♘c6 16 ♖c1 ♘d4 (D)

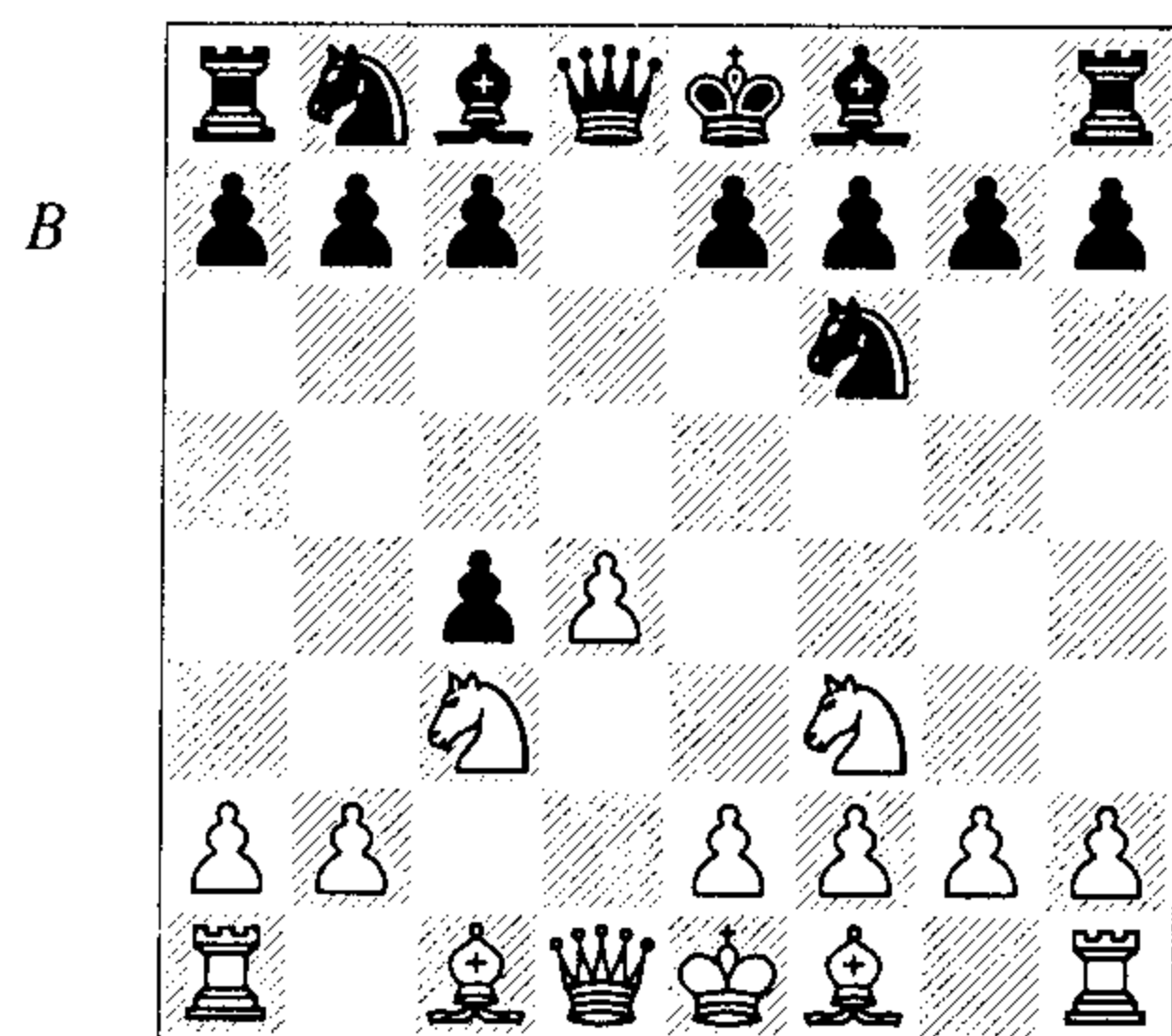


17 ♗h3+ ♔b8 18 ♔f1

This is Engqvist-Sadler, Isle of Man 1995. White is wriggling out of immediate danger but in the long term, his king will not be safe from attack. Black has the outpost on d3, which will come in handy, and his position is preferable.

B)

4 ♘c3 (D)



This move provides substantial possibilities for transpositions to non-QGA openings.

4...♘d5

This strange-looking move is my tip. Other moves:

a) 4...♘c6 can be found in D07, the Chigorin Defence, and is therefore outside the scope of this book.

b) 4...c6 is the main line of the Slav.

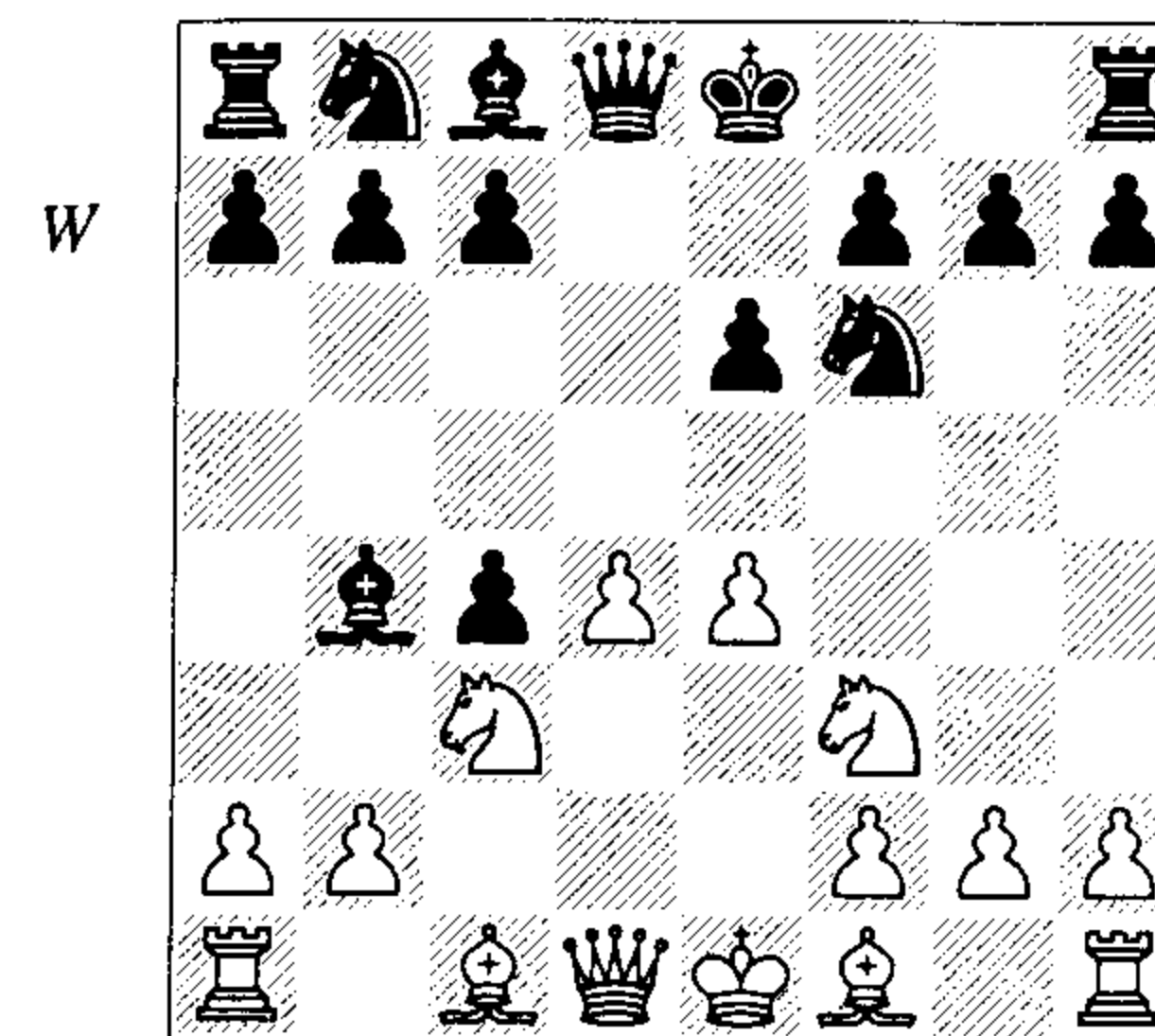
c) 4...e6 and now:

c1) 5 e3 a6 6 ♗xc4 c5 is discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 8 and with 7 a4 in Chapter 6.

c2) White can play 5 ♖a4+, when 5...♘c6 transposes into Line A above. If you want some variety then you can answer the queen check with 5...c6 6 ♖xc4, but then you are in a line of the Semi-Slav (coded as D43), which is most commonly encountered after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♖b3 dxc4 6 ♖xc4.

c3) 5 e4 ♗b4 (D) and now the main problem from Black's viewpoint is that White can transpose to the highly theoretical Vienna Variation,

which has the ECO code D39, and is outside the scope of this book. If you are ready for this transposition, I can recommend 4...e6 for Black.

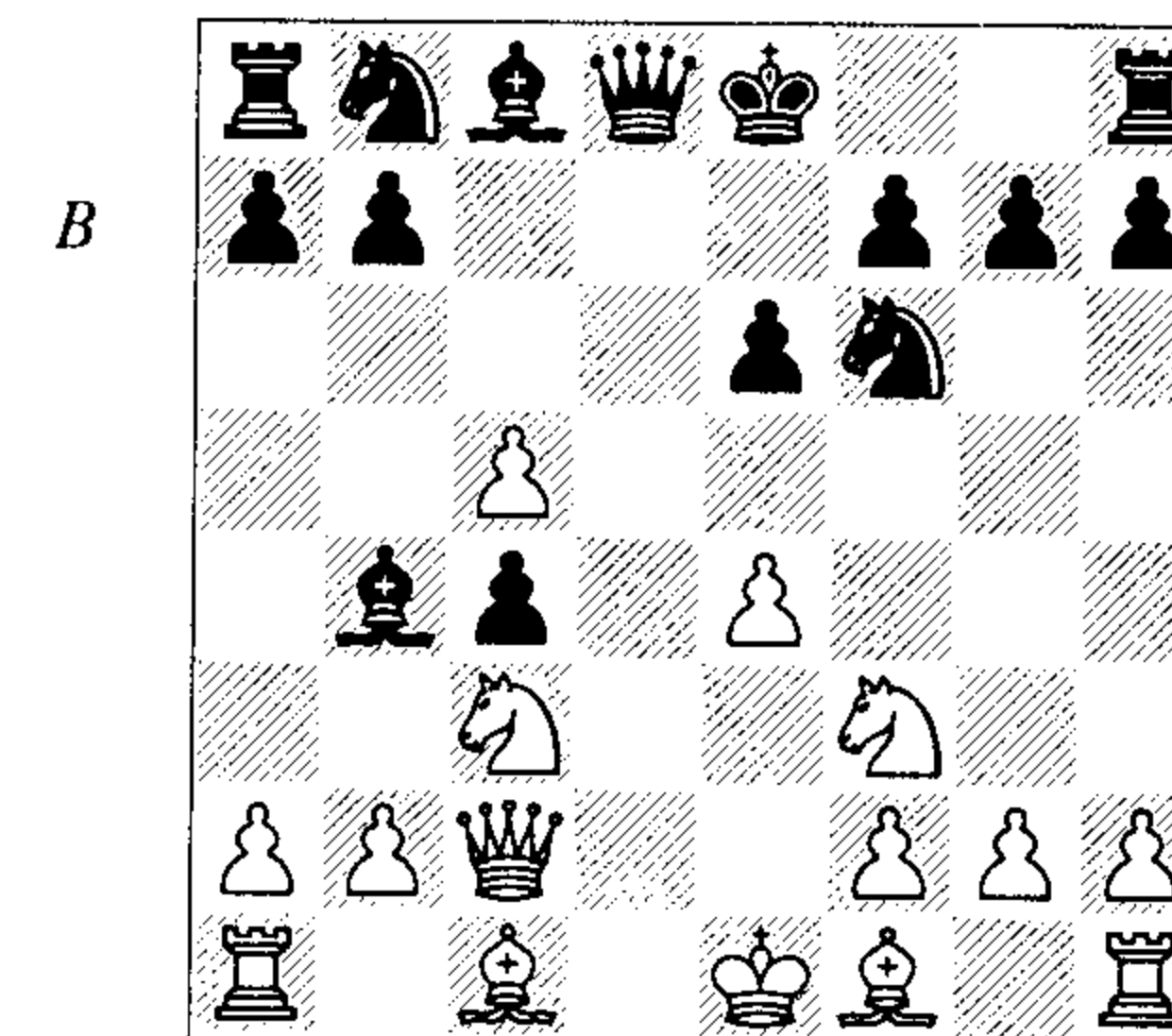


c31) 6 ♗g5 is the aforementioned transposition to the Vienna. Here is one recent example: 6...c5 7 ♗xc4 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 ♗xc3+ 9 bxc3 ♖a5 10 ♗b5+ ♗d7 11 ♗xf6 gxf6 12 ♖b3 a6 13 ♗e2 ♘c6 14 0-0 ♖c7 15 ♖a3 ♖c8 16 ♗ad1 ♘a5 and now 17 ♖c1, as in the game Piket-Topalov, Groningen FIDE KO Wch 1997, asks some serious questions about Black's variation.

c32) 6 ♗xc4 (sacrificing the central pawn is a bit optimistic) 6...♘xe4 7 0-0 ♘xc3 8 bxc3 ♗e7 (Black is able to keep his dark-squared defender and he also has the luxury of being able to use the f6-square for defence) 9 ♘e5 0-0 10 ♖e2 ♘d7 11 ♗b3 ♘xe5 (more exchanges cannot hurt Black) 12 dxe5 ♗d7 13 ♗d1 ♖e8 14 ♖g4 ♔h8 15 ♗c2 ♗c6 and Black is winning, Arbakov-Kishnev, Moscow 1989. White does not have much of a striking force and a

timely ...f5 will either block the attack if White leaves the pawn, or bring more defenders towards Black's king if White takes *en passant*.

c33) 6 ♖c2 c5 7 dxc5 (D) and now:



c331) 7...♘bd7 8 c6 ♘b6 (8...♘c5 is possible, but the pawn sacrifice 9 ♗xc4 ♘fxe4 10 0-0 leaves Black's dark squares weak) and now 9 cxb7 ♗xb7 10 ♘d2 ♖d4 leaves the initiative very much with Black.

c332) 7...♘a6 8 c6 b5 is another original approach.

c333) 7...♖a5 8 ♘d2 ♖xc5 9 ♘xc4 and now:

c3331) 9...0-0 10 ♗e3 ♖c7 (the advantage of ...♖c7 over ...♖e7 is that on c7, after ...♗e6 the knight on c4 is attacked) 11 ♗e2 ♗xc3+ 12 bxc3 e5 13 ♗g5 ♗e6 14 ♗xf6 ♗xc4 15 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 16 ♗xc4 ♘d7 17 0-0 1/2-1/2 (in view of 17...♗ac8) P.Nikolić-Hübner, Skellefteå 1989.

c3332) 9...♘c6 10 ♗e3 ♖e7 11 ♗e2 e5 12 0-0-0 13 ♗fd1 (13 ♘d5 is tempting, but Black could have taken

on c3 first and avoided this possibility) 13...♙xc3 14 bxc3 ♘g4 15 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 16 f3 ♙e6 with a roughly equal position, Foessmeier-Dückstein, Austrian Cht 1992.

c34) 6 e5 ♘d5 7 ♙d2 ♘b6 (7...♙xc3 8 bxc3 b5 9 a4 c6 10 ♘g5 gives White more than enough compensation for the pawn) seems the point of no return, where White must play in sacrificial mode anyway:

c341) 8 ♖c2 ♙d7 9 ♙g5 f6 10 exf6 gxf6 11 ♙h4 ♙a4 12 ♖d2 ♖e7 13 ♙e2 ♘8d7 14 0-0 0-0-0, and White's attack is non-existent, Dražić-S.Nikolić, Kladovo 1996.

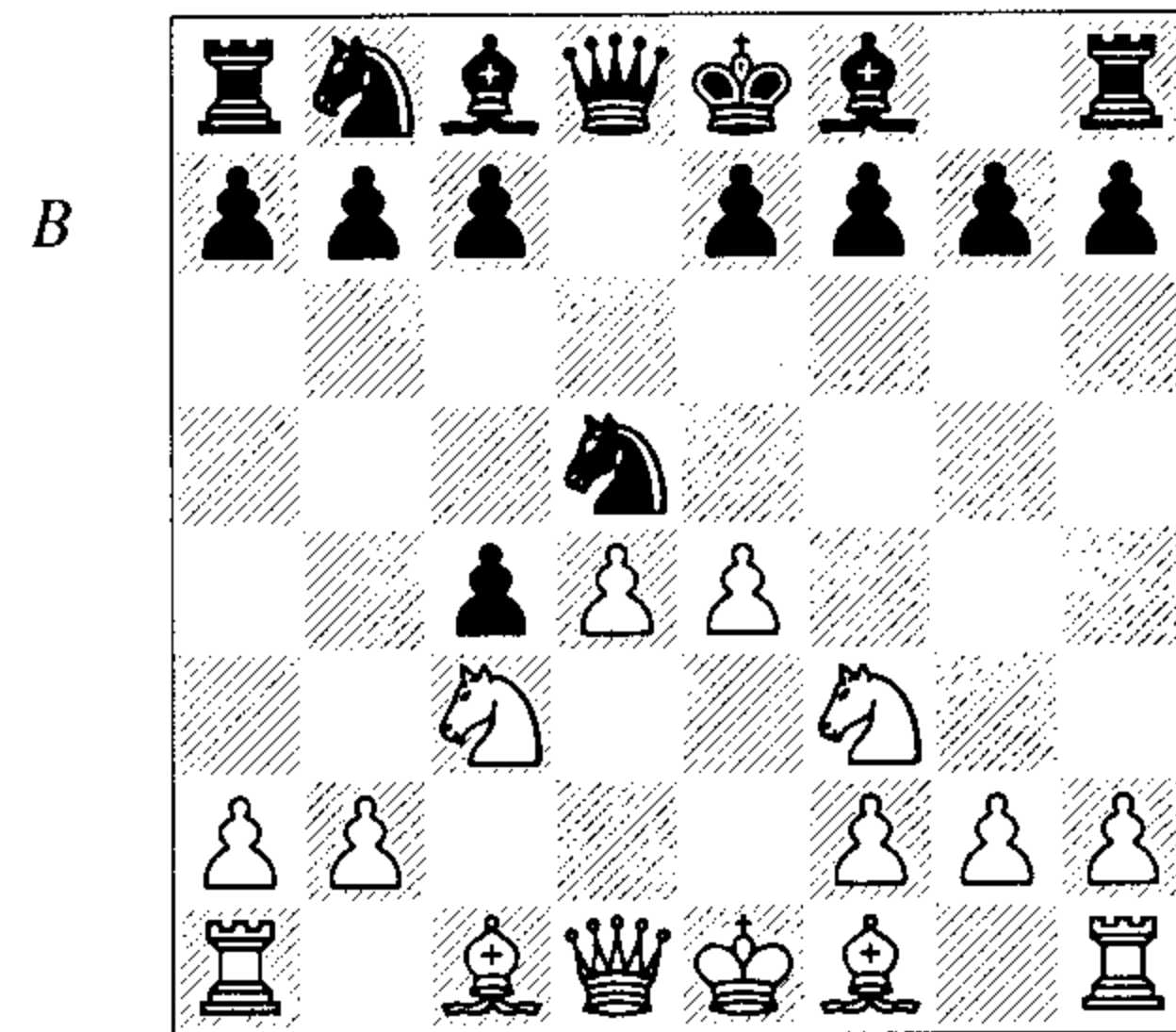
c342) 8 h4 ♘c6 9 a3 ♙e7 10 ♙e3 ♘a5 11 ♘d2 0-0 12 ♖c2 f5 13 exf6 ♙xf6 14 ♖d1 ♙d7 and once again it is difficult to see how White is going to recover, Bareev-Mikhalchishin, Tallinn 1988.

c343) 8 a3 ♙e7! (this is more than satisfactory for Black, though hanging on to the pawn is not necessarily bad for Black, e.g. 8...♙xc3 9 bxc3 ♙d7 10 ♘g5 h6 11 ♖h5 ♖f8 12 ♘e4 ♙c6 13 f3 ♘8d7 14 ♖g4 ♖e7 15 ♖xg7 ♙xe4 16 fxe4 ♖h4+ and after walking a tightrope, Black has emerged on top, Konopka-Gyimesi, Hungarian Cht 1993) 9 ♙xc4 (White cannot continue to play in gambit style and recaptures the pawn) 9...♘xc4 10 ♖a4+ ♙d7 11 ♖xc4 ♙c6 puts the bishop on a very useful diagonal – Black has won the opening duel, Av.Bykhovskiy-Chekhov, Irkutsk 1983.

5 e4 (D)

This is the critical move.

5 ♖a4+ ♘c6 transposes into Line A2 of this chapter.



5...♘b6

Instead 5...♘c3 6 bxc3 b5 allows White considerable compensation: 7 a4 c6 8 ♘e5 e6 9 ♖h5 ♖c7 10 ♙f4 (10 h4 is also part and parcel of this sort of position with the subsequent development of the rook via h3) 10...a6 11 g3 ♖e7 12 ♙g2 ♙b7 13 ♙g5 ♖c7 14 0-0 (14 ♙d8 is better; there is no need to delay this strong move) 14...♙d6 (probably Black did not see White's next; 14...g6 is best) 15 ♙d8! makes decisive material gains, Esposito-Monostori, Buenos Aires 1958.

6 ♘e5

Alternatives:

a) 6 ♙e3 ♙g4 7 ♙xc4 ♘xc4 8 ♖a4+ ♘d7 9 ♖xc4 and now 9...e6 led to an advantage for White in McDonnell-Brady, Irish Ch 1991. I would prefer the consistent 9...♙xf3 10 gxf3 g6, which saddles White with some weaknesses.

b) 6 ♙xc4 ♘xc4 7 ♖a4+ c6 8 ♖xc4 g6. Now the game Arencibia-Velikov, Cienfuegos Capablanca mem 1989 continued in original fashion: 9 ♘g5 e6 10 e5 ♙e7, when Black's bishop-pair compensated for White's strong pawn-centre.

c) 6 h3 is an attempt by White to be noncommittal, but it does not pay off. 6...♘c6 is a good way for Black to continue developing, after which White must embark upon a time-consuming or unfavourable manoeuvre just to get his pawn back.

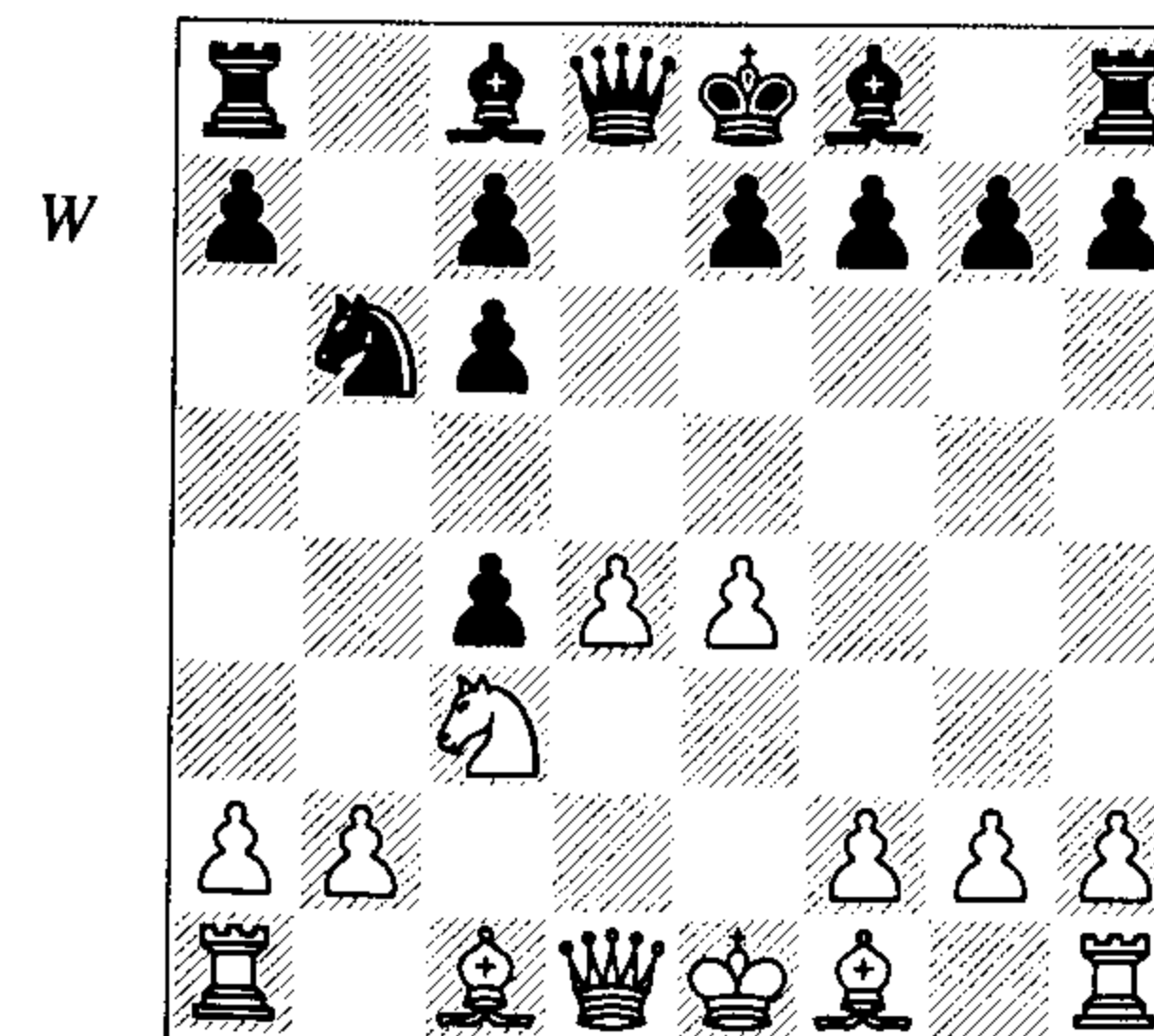
6...♘c6

A good, challenging move by Black. He is willing to accept trebled c-pawns, but for the time being will hang on to his extra pawn.

7 ♘xc6

7 ♘xc4? only results in the loss of the d4-pawn.

7...bxc6 (D)

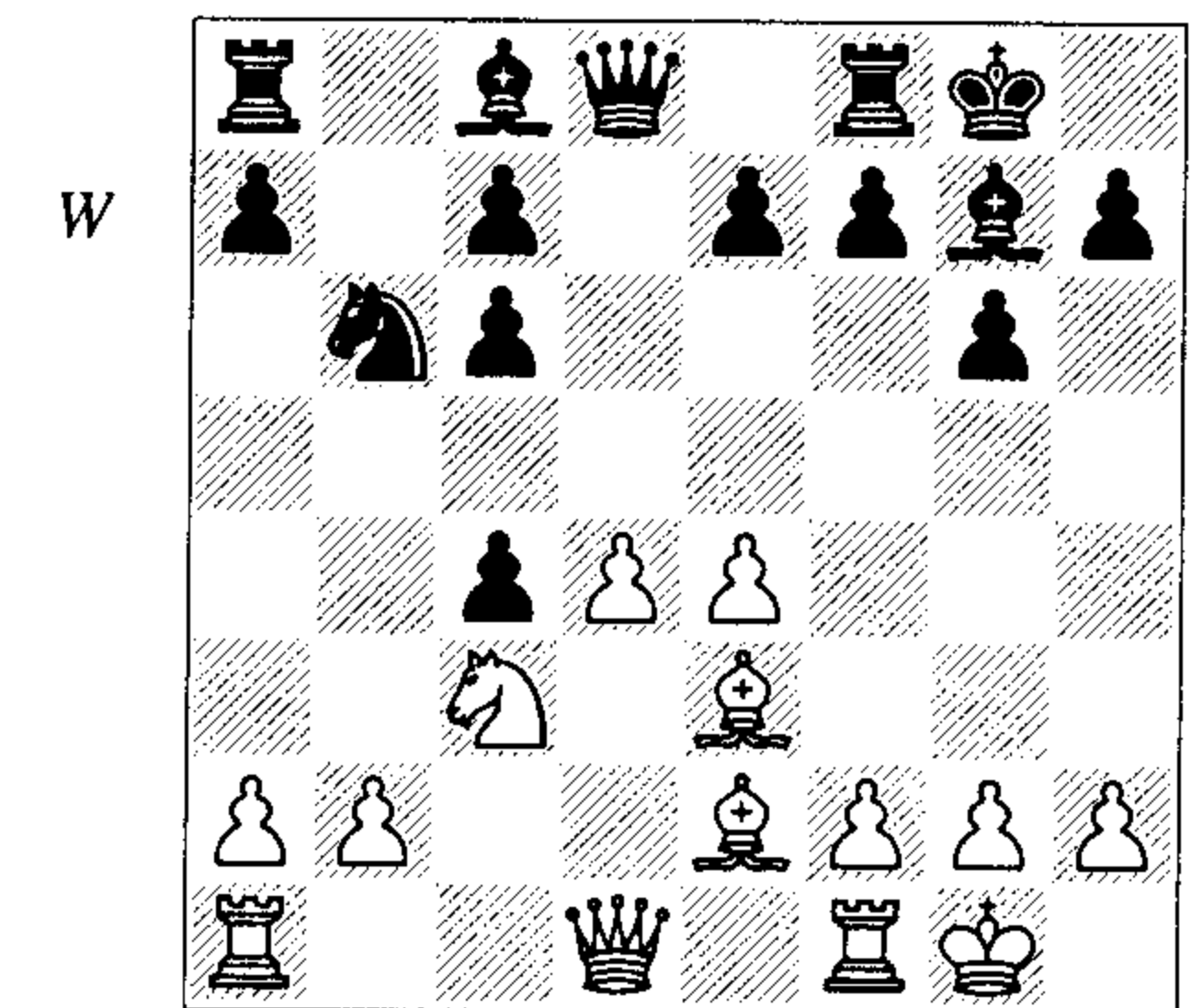


8 ♙e2

8 ♙e3 g6 will most probably only transpose after a subsequent ♙e2.

However, Ambartsumian-Ye Rongguang, China-CIS, Beijing 1991 went off at a tangent with 9 g4 ♙g7 10 ♙e2 0-0 11 g5, and after 11...♙h3 12 ♖g1 ♖d7 13 ♖g3 ♙e6 14 ♖d2 f5 15 gxf6 ♙xf6 16 0-0-0, the opening of the kingside favoured White. Black should not have wasted time, and would have done better to play 11...f5.

8...g6 9 0-0 ♙g7 10 ♙e3 0-0 (D)



11 f4

This move stops ...f5-f4 but it allows Black's light-squared bishop to stand firm in the centre of the board (see move 12 below).

G.Flear-Brady, London Lloyds Bank 1989 followed a different course with 11 ♖c1 ♙e6 12 ♖c2 f5! (Black need not wait for f4 before playing this; note also that 12...♙xd4 13 ♖fd1 c5 14 ♘b5 succeeds only in surrendering Black's dark-squared bishop) 13 g3 and now rather than 13...fxe4 (this only helps White to carry out the manoeuvre ♘xe4-d2xc4) 14 ♘xe4 ♙d5 15 ♘d2 ♖d7 16 ♘xc4 ♖h3 17 f3

♞xc4 18 ♜xc4 with some advantage for White, Black should have played 13...♞d7 intending ...♞ad8.

I suspect that White's best set-up involves the moves ♞d2, ♞fd1, ♞ac1 and f3, but even then Black's c4-pawn is well-defended.

11...f5 12 e5 ♜e6

There is no reason for Black to struggle, Lalić-Djurić, Yugoslav Ch 1988.

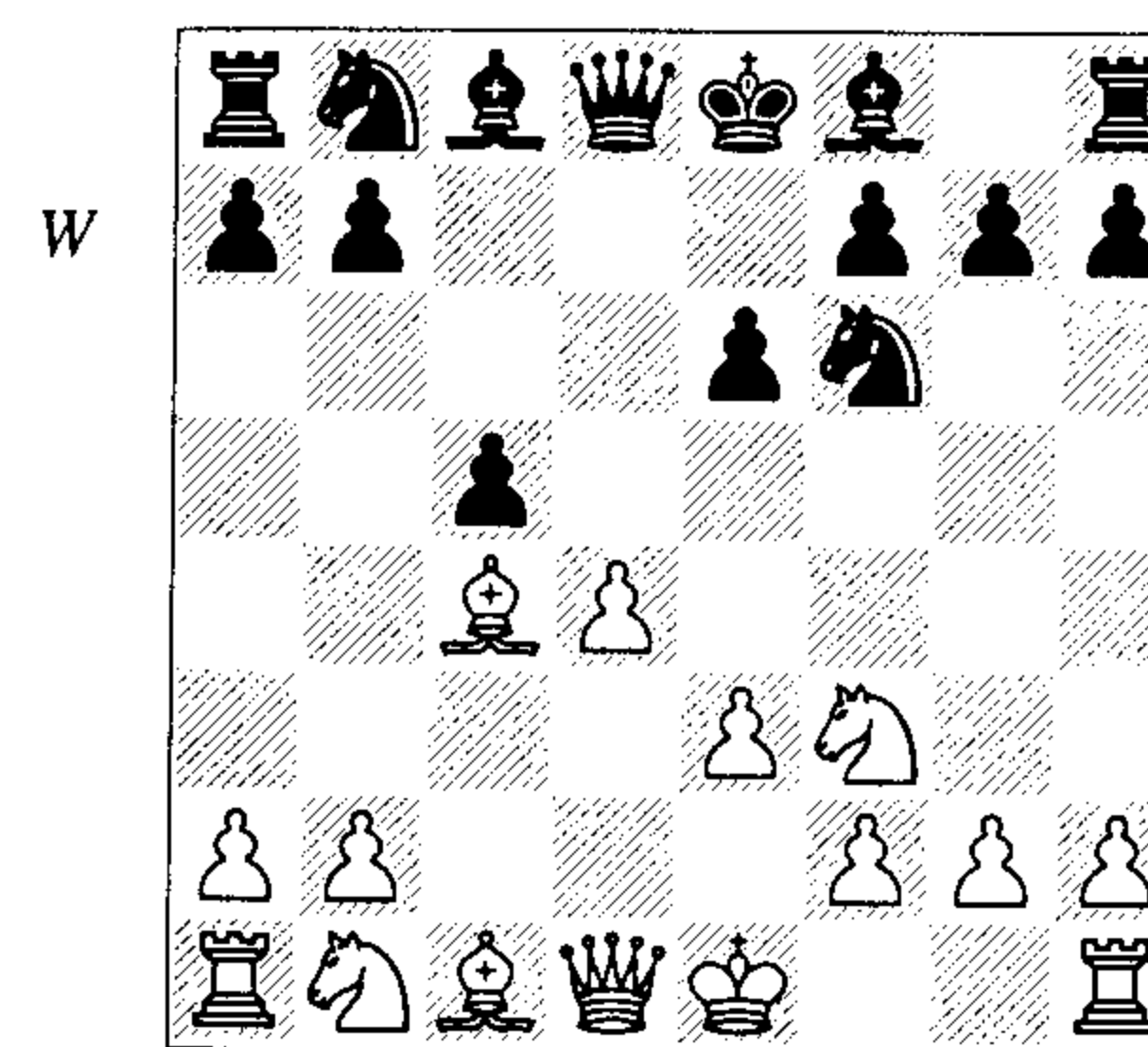
I believe that the 4 ♞a4+ line is best used only for its surprise value. Black has a number of satisfactory replies, and White's attempts to mix the game up and create complications are not

correct. Nevertheless, in practical play, they succeed sometimes. Every player, including your author, has at one time or other walked straight into an opponent's home preparation.

Against 4 ♞c3 we have examined two approaches for Black. 4...♞d5 avoids a lot of theory and seems fully playable. Black has achieved satisfactory results in practice, although it should be noted that it has only been played in a small number of games. 4...e6 requires more homework by Black, as he needs to be ready to play the Vienna Variation of the Queen's Gambit.

4 Classical Variation with a Quick e4

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♞f3 ♞f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♜xc4 c5 (D)



This is the first of several chapters looking at the Classical Variation.

In comparison to the Central Variation (Chapter 2), in this chapter we investigate ways whereby White makes some developing moves before trying to advance e3-e4. The idea is that White will wait for a better moment than in the Central Variation before advancing. The aim of the central advance is to give him a spatial advantage with which he can attempt to build up an attack against Black's king.

Much of the time Black will have to consider further central pawn advances by White. Both d4-d5 and e4-e5 can

be dangerous tools used by White to open central lines in order to attack Black's king and for much of the time Black must tread carefully. In this chapter we will approach the positions using a positive piece-play method. Alternatively, we could choose to play against White's isolated queen's pawn, but that will wait until Chapter 8.

Often, Black's counterplay will be centred around the queenside advances ...a6 and ...b5. This will be a debating point because if the advance ...b5 comes too soon then White can organize ways to play into the gaps – namely the squares a5 and c5, or even to weaken the structure by playing a2-a4. However, timely advances even as far as b4 and c4 can force White to retreat his bishop and knight from their natural squares c4 and c3. Black will then look to make a minor opening victory by 'trapping' White's light-squared bishop and thus exchanging it for the queen's knight. We will consider the various possibilities for the queen's knight during the course of the chapter; it can have quite a varied role. In this chapter we will not look at White playing a2-a4 in order to prevent ...b5; that will come in Chapter 6.

Black will look to maximize the potential of his two bishops, which will often be positioned on c5 and b7. These two pieces will cut through the centre of the board and are even directed at White's king! The b7-bishop can sometimes capture the knight on f3 and, after gxf3, double pawns in front of White's king – though in some situations White may opt for this anyway and try to attack down what will then be a semi-open g-file.

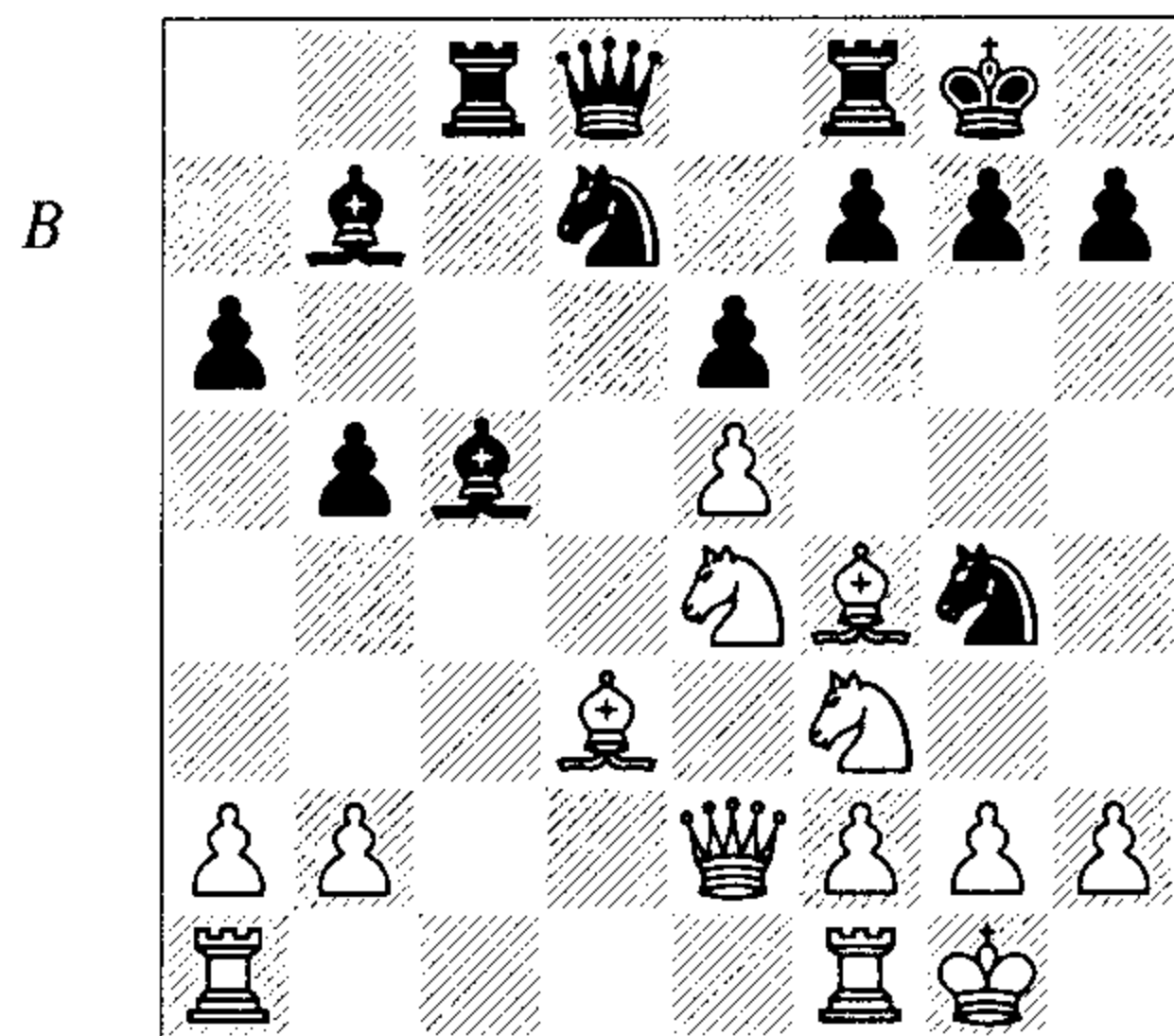
Before looking into the theory we will look at some key ideas, plans and tactics.

The e5-pawn

Once White has advanced his pawn to e4, one of his main follow-up ideas is the further advance of this pawn to e5. Indeed, White will be quite content to reach a position like the following diagram (see note 'c2' to White's 8th move of Line A, the Furman Variation).

Here, White has a spatial advantage, the well-defended e5-pawn is like a thorn in Black's side, and Black has a problem with his knight on g4. Retreating to h6 and accepting doubled pawns is certainly not ideal. Additionally, the white rooks are connected and they could cause the black queen some hassle along the open c- and d-files.

Black now opted for 14...f6, which ruins his pawn structure. The position favours White.



Taimanov – Bazan
Buenos Aires 1960

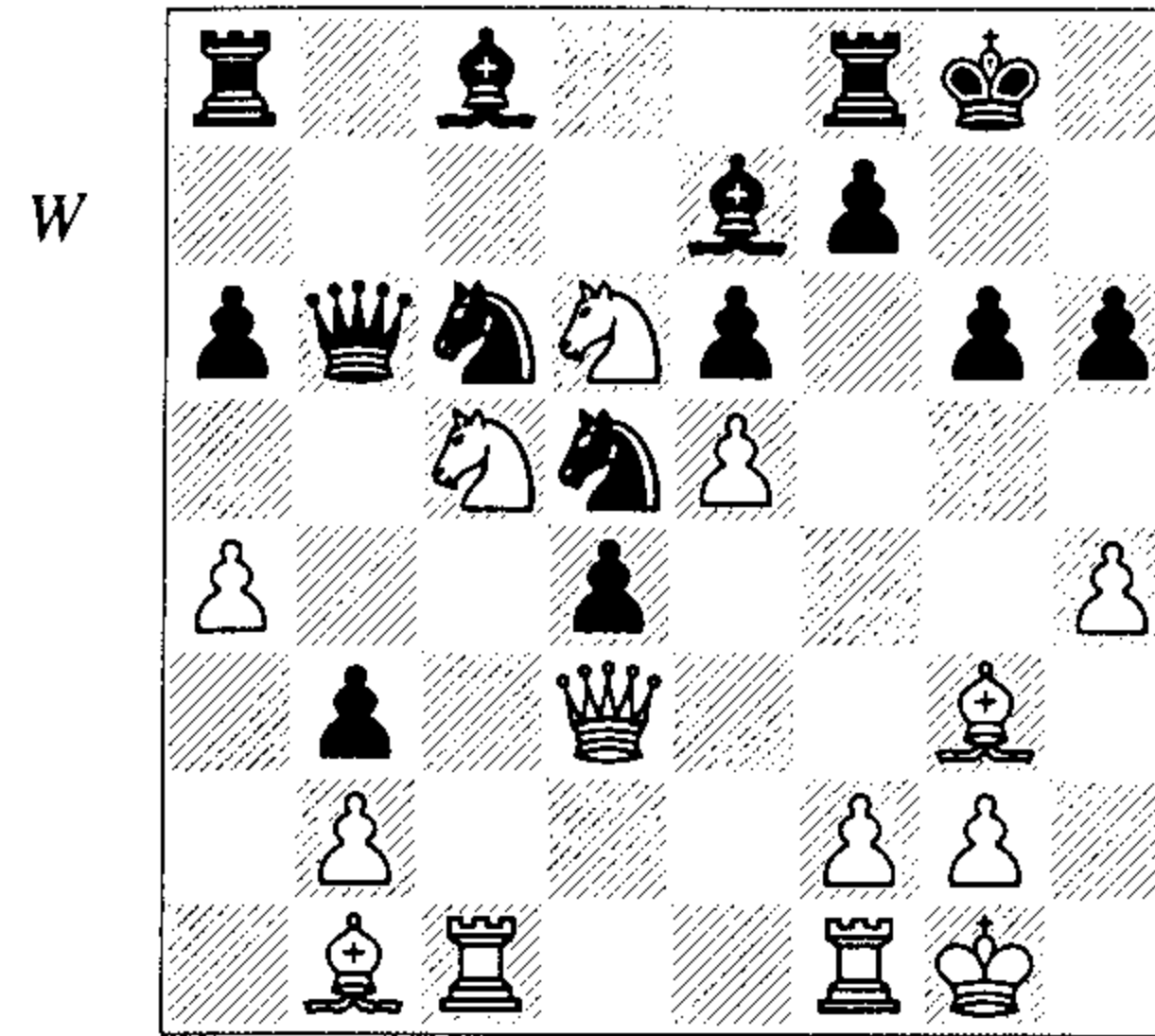
In other situations Black will counter with the typical ...c5 and capture on d4. White may ignore this and still push e4-e5, this time having played a pawn sacrifice. In return he hopes to be able to play around the extra pawn and build up a strong attack (see Kasparov's ruthless demonstration from the next diagram).

Steinitz Knight

Over the years a huge number of players have tried, with White, to secure a knight on d6 (or e6) defended, of course, by a pawn on e5 (or d5). I believe Steinitz was the first great player to make a statement about the strength of such a combination and in the following example we see Kasparov taking advantage.

25 a5!

The idea is to force either the queen or the knight to move. Both of these



Kasparov – Piket
Tilburg 1997

pieces have a valuable job to do on their current squares.

25... ♖xa5

After 25... ♖xa5 26 h5 Black can no longer take on e5 with the knight.

26 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 27 ♖xg6+ ♔f8 28 ♖xe6+

Note how the other knight was also on another key square, c5.

28... ♜xe6 29 ♜xc6 ♜d7

29... ♖c7 30 ♖xh6+ ♔e8 31 ♜xc7 ♖xc7 32 ♖xe6 is winning.

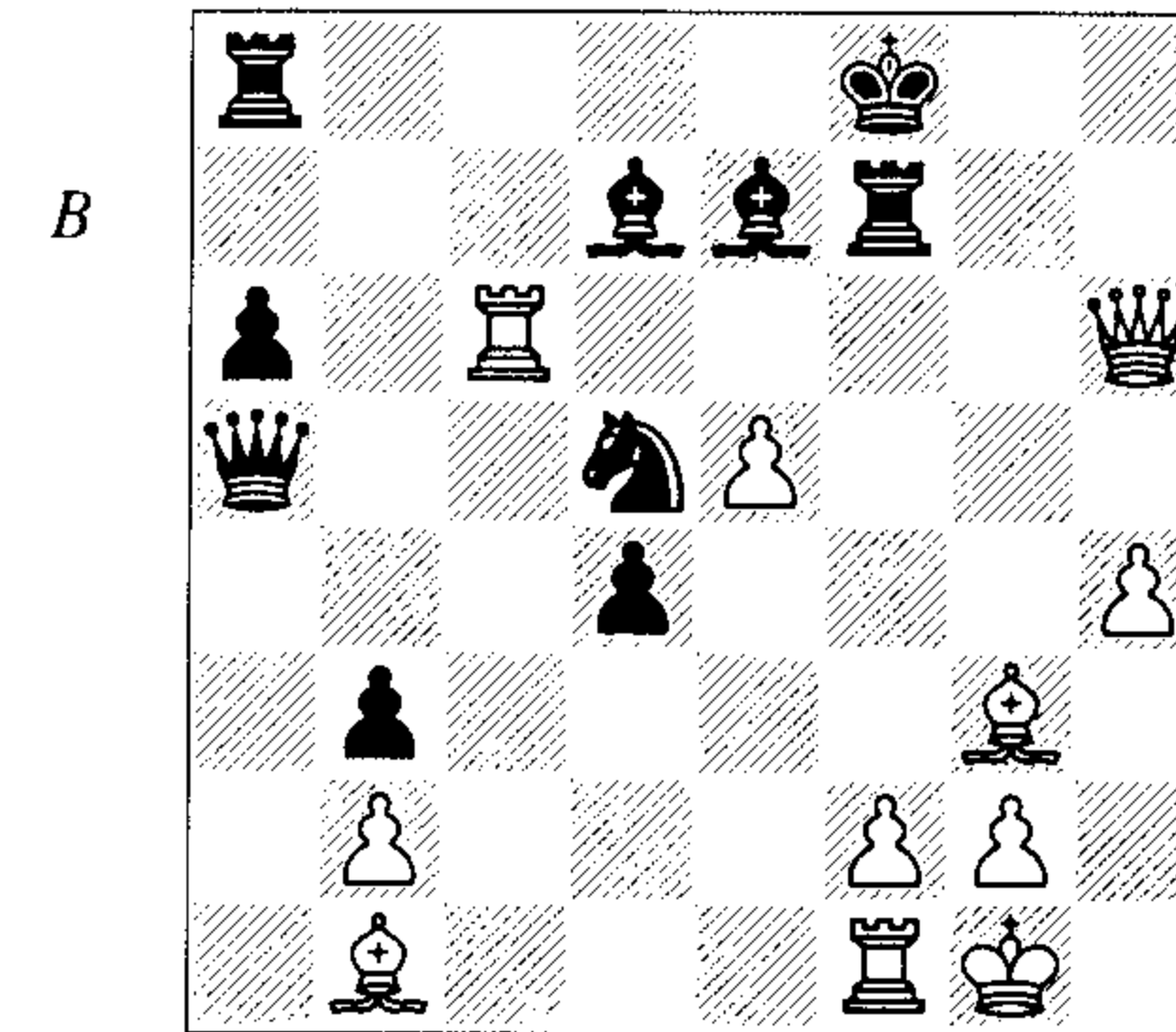
30 ♖xh6+ (D)

1-0

In view of 31 e6 and the subsequent mauling of his king by the opposing queen and bishop-pair. Ironically Black kept the d4-pawn even until the final position – this was a sacrificed pawn.

The a5-square

We constantly refer to knight manoeuvres throughout this book. Here

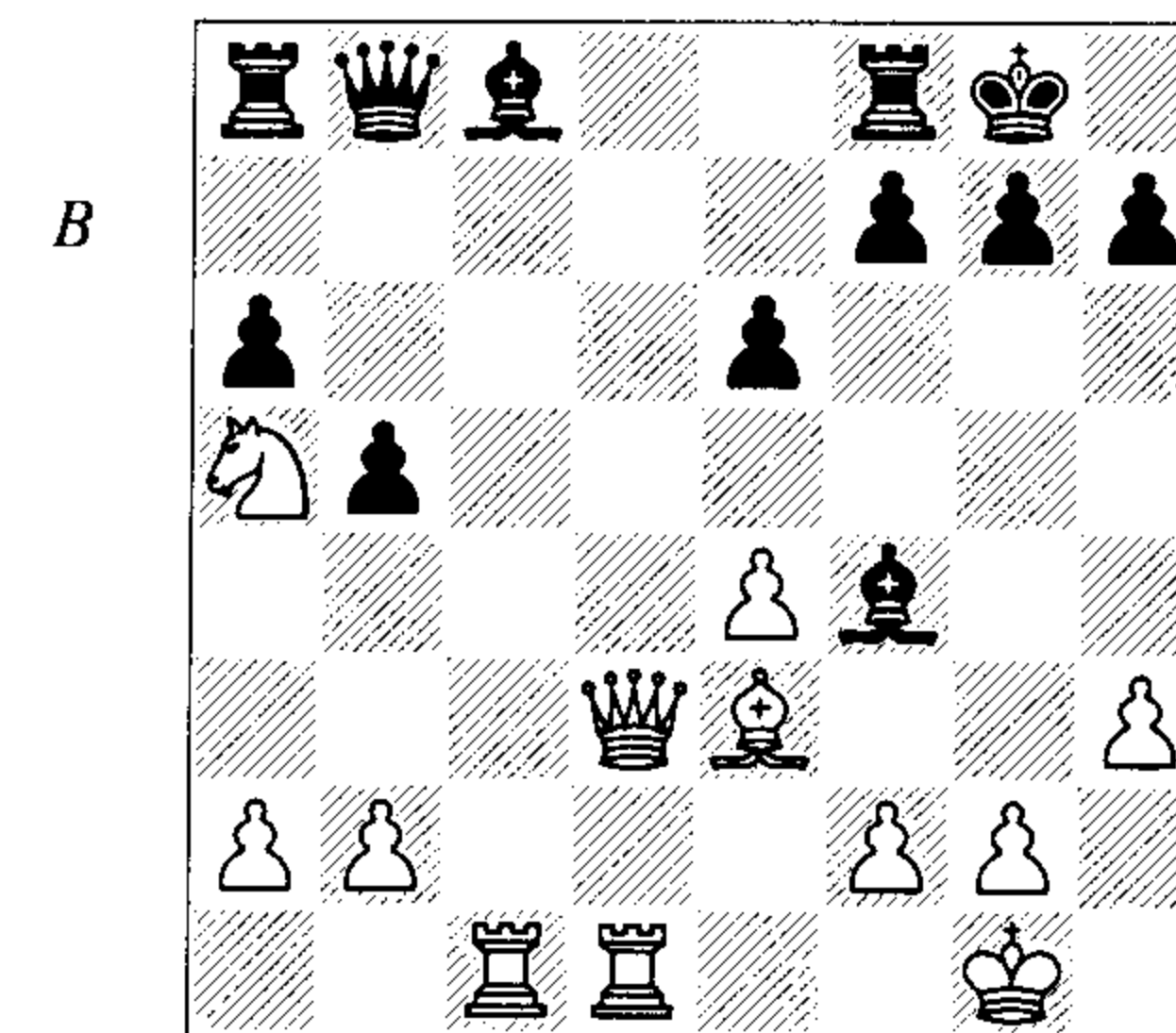


Parker – Borge
Copenhagen 1996

19... ♜xe3 20 ♖xe3 ♖e5 21 b4 ♖h5 22 f4 f5

is another example of Black being on the receiving end.

The following position shows the problem that Black may face on the a5- (or c5-) square after playing ...b5. With the favourable minor piece the English IM mops up without there ever being any doubt as to the outcome.



The future for the c8-bishop is not getting any brighter.

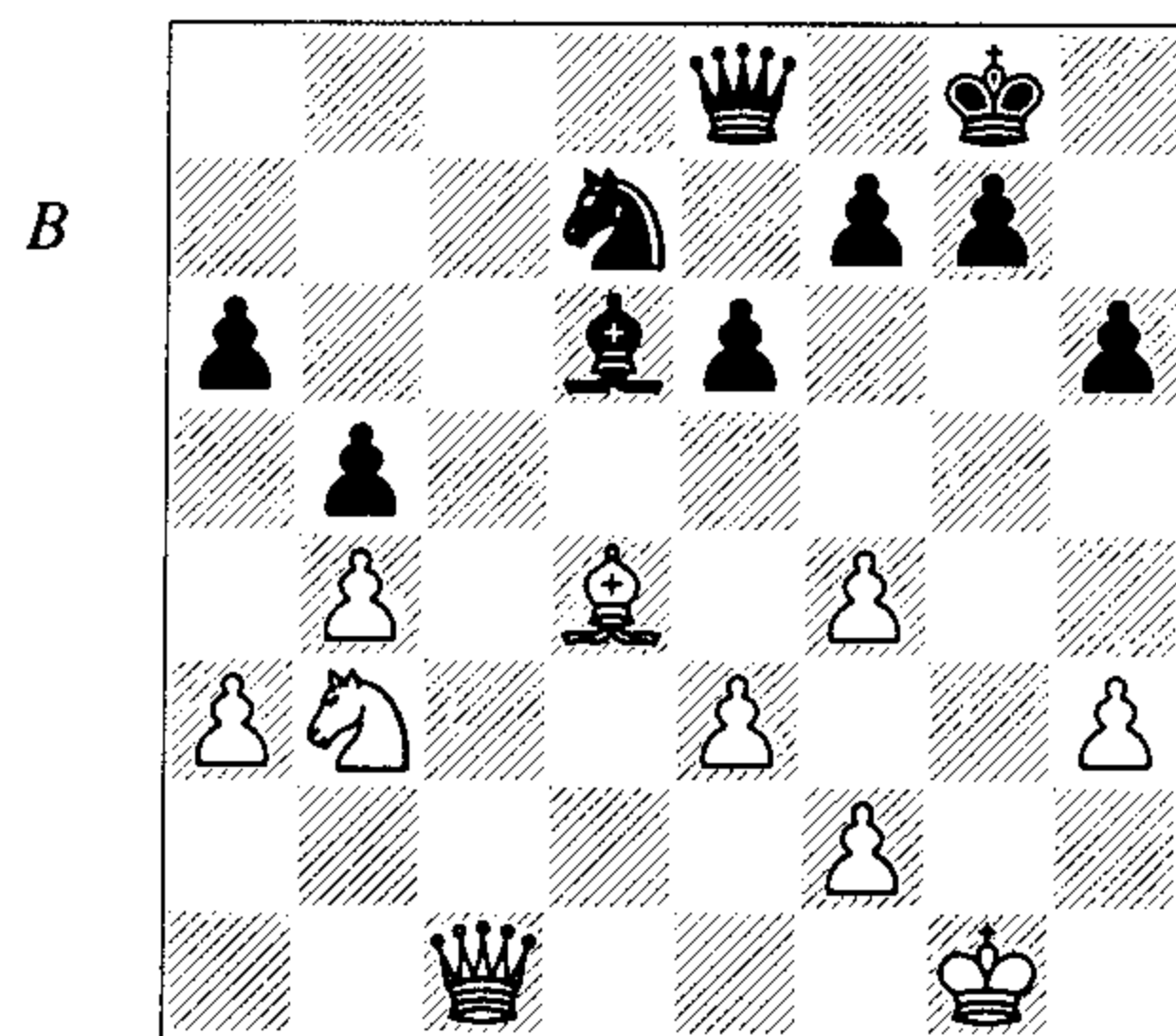
23 ♖c5 ♖h6 24 ♖c7 g5 25 ♜d8
♜xd8 26 ♖xd8+ ♖f8 27 ♖xg5+

White collects a pawn before exchanging queens.

27...♖g7 28 ♖d8+ ♖f8 29 ♖g5+
♖g7 30 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 31 ♜c7+ ♖f8 32
e5

White won from here in just a few more moves.

Black captures on f3



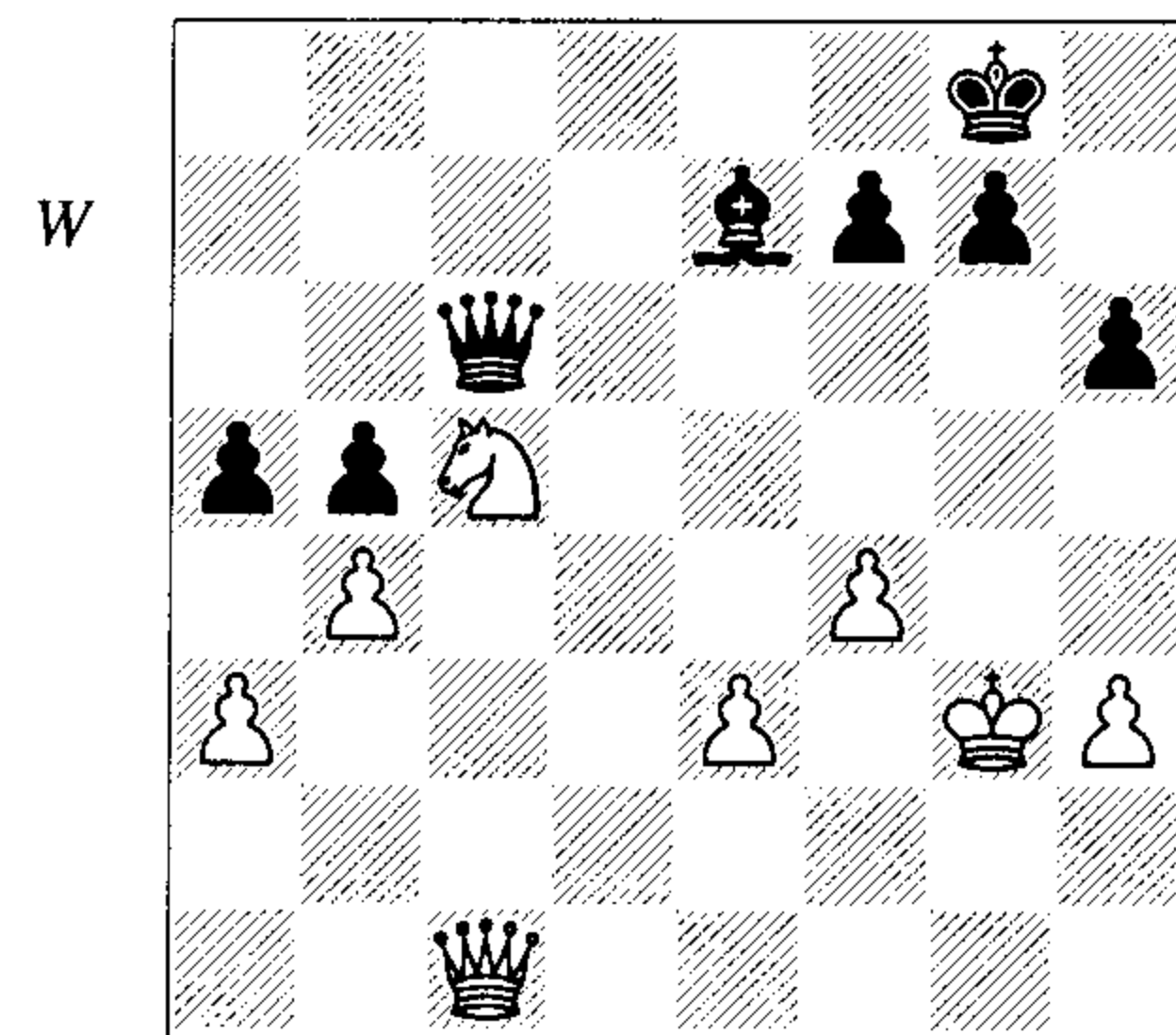
Barus – Adianto
Dubai 1996

Earlier in this game, Black had captured on f3 with the b7-bishop and doubled White's pawns. As we can see, the weakness has become permanent. Now, since White has not managed to use the open g-file for attacking purposes, he finds that he is in for some torture.

27...e5 28 fxe5 ♜xe5 29 ♙xe5
♙xe5 30 ♜c5 ♖c8 31 f4

White has no way to remedy his weak pawns, but personally I would not weaken the king further with the text-move.

31...♙d6 32 ♙g2 ♖c6+ 33 ♙f2
♙e7 34 ♙g3 a5 (D)

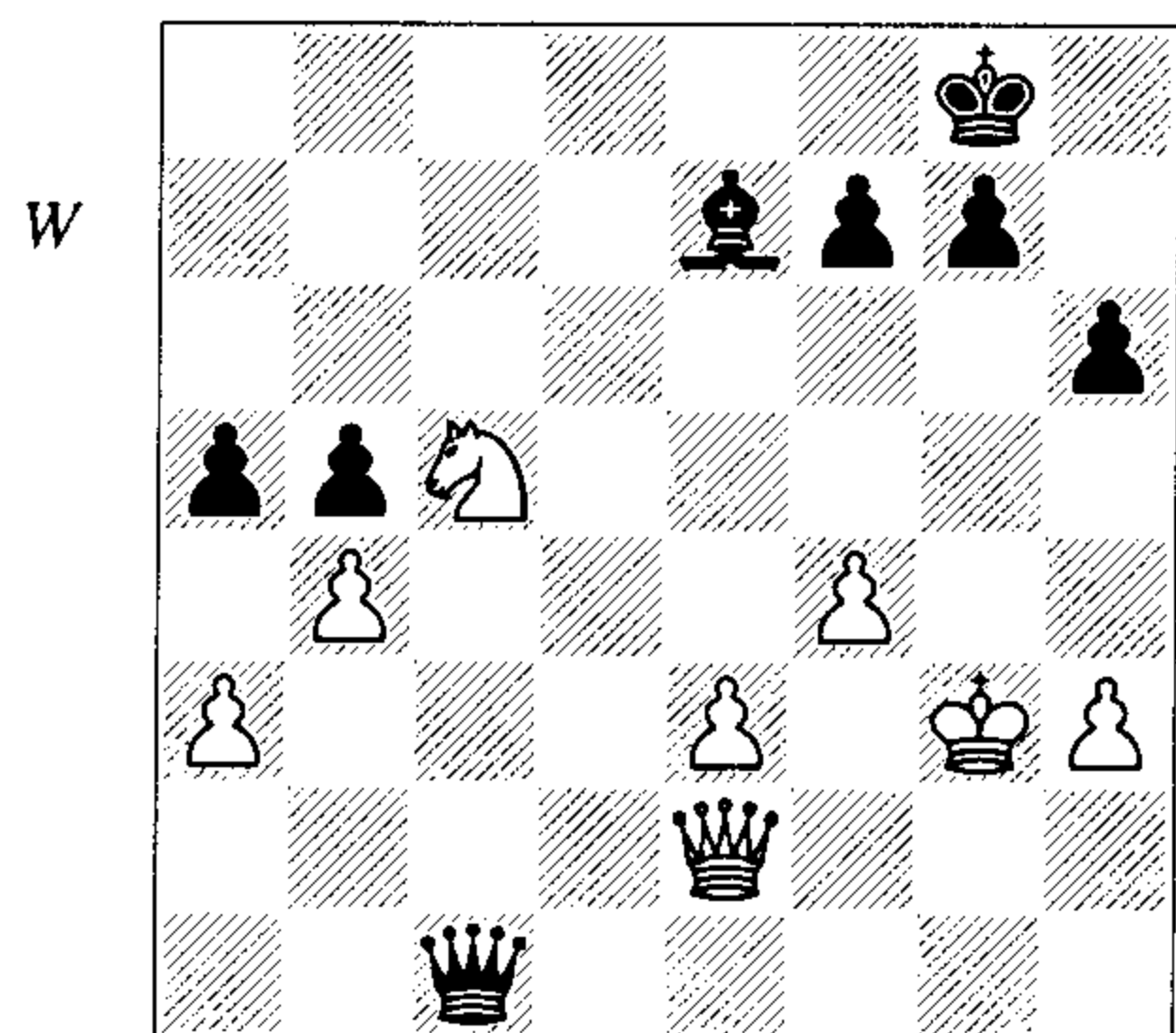


Zugzwang!

35 ♖c2

Or 35 ♙f2 ♙h4+.

35...♖h1 36 ♖e2 ♖c1 (D)

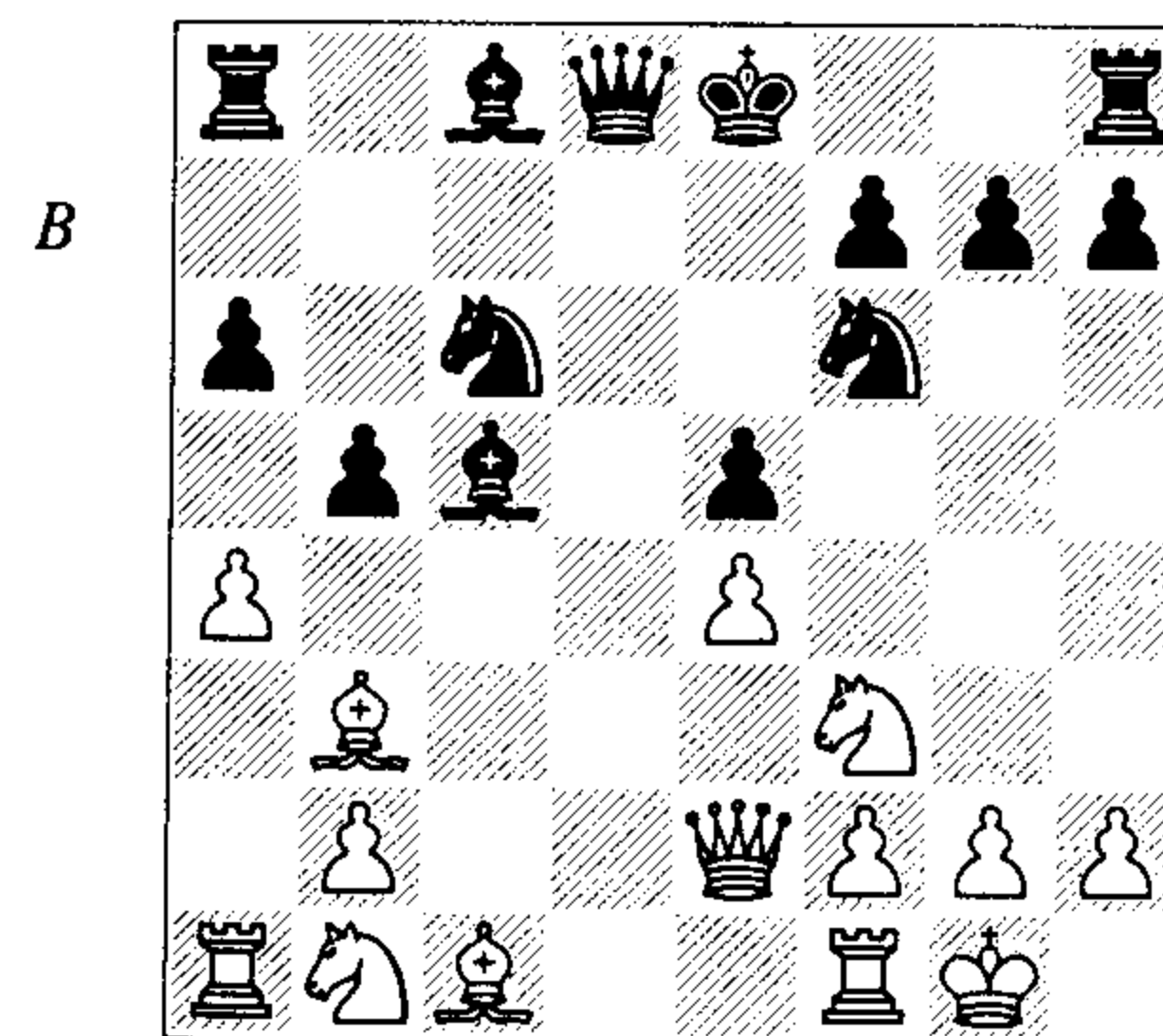


Black's patience has been rewarded and White cannot now defend all his pawns.

Tricks

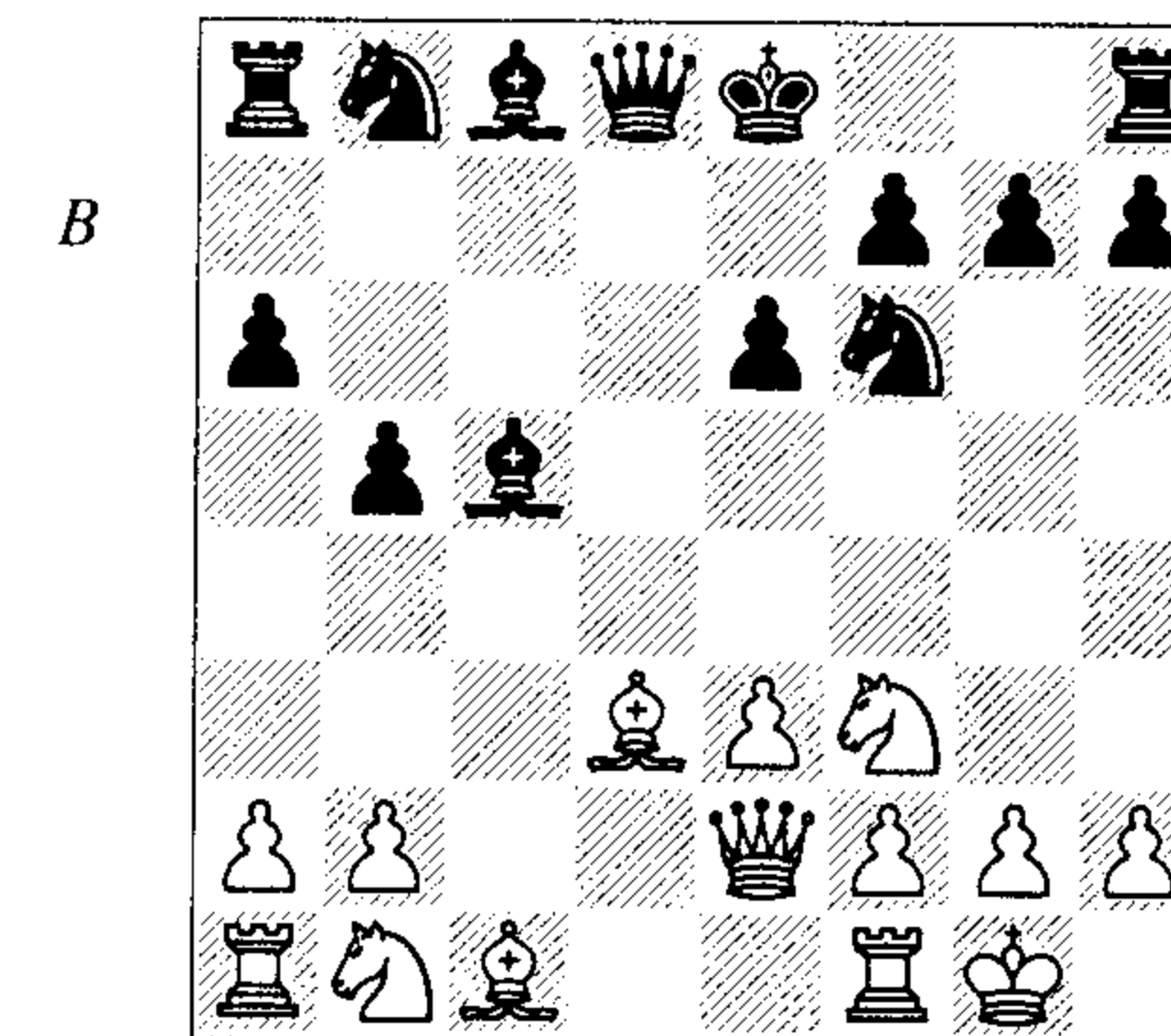
In this chapter of the classical variation the white queen generally goes to e2. This is mostly in order to assist the e-pawn in advancing but coincidentally it can team-up with the light-squared bishop which develops naturally onto the queenside and this in turn gives rise to some traps.

In the next diagram, White has just played 11 a4. What should Black do?



Not 11...b4? (11...♙g4 with the idea of ...♜d4 is sensible) because after 12 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 13 ♖c4+ White's tactic has bagged him a pawn and a healthy advantage. It is also worth noting that if White blows the chance with 12 ♖c4 then Black can defend with 12...♖e7.

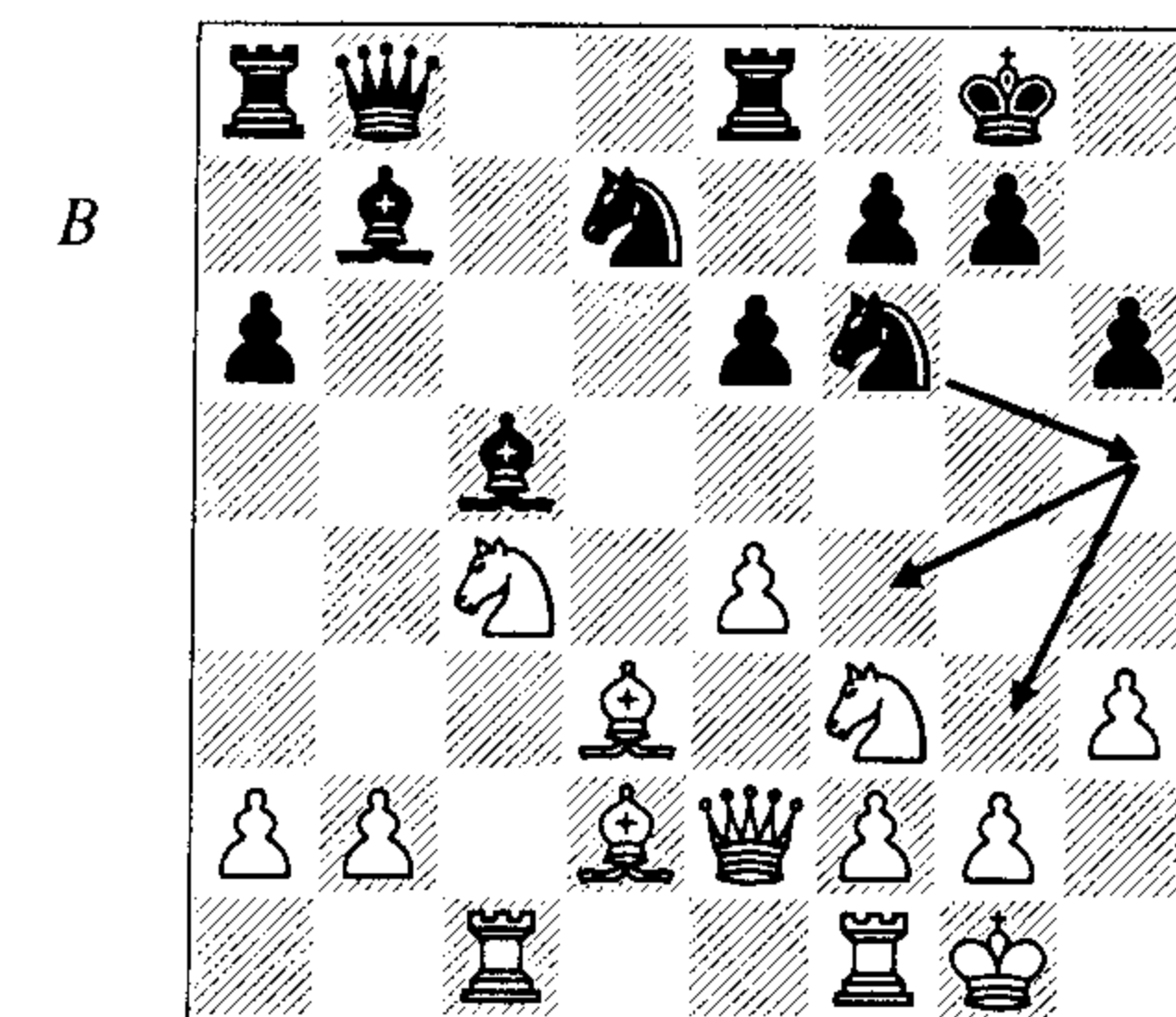
In the next position, taken from the Furman Variation (6 ♖e2), White is looking to push e4-e5 and obtain a spatial advantage.



Szeberenyi – Le Thi
Budapest 1997

Black played 9...♙b7? (9...♜bd7 is better), and was shocked by 10 ♙xb5+ winning a pawn.

Later in the same game after Black composed himself, the following position resulted (D).



White has just played h3 to prevent Black's manoeuvre ...♜g4-e5, which is a common tool to prevent the advance e4-e5.

17...♜h5

The move should sound some alarm bells but it appears as though White overlooked Black's next.

18 ♖a5

On this occasion 18 ♜fd1 was possible but maybe White expected 18... ♖f4, which sometimes happens anyway.

18... ♖g3!

Black picks up the exchange. He went on to win.

The Theory of the Classical Variation with a Quick e4

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3 ♖f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5

There are a number of possibilities at White's disposal. We will break the material into four sections and consider White's possibilities in turn, keeping the theme of the e-pawn advance in mind. First, we will begin with the Furman Variation (6 ♜e2), which has recently caused Black some problems. The rest of the chapter deals with 6 0-0 a6. Black must be constantly on his toes after 7 e4 (Line B). The positions after 7 ♗b3 (Line C) are more familiar, as are the main variations with 7 ♜e2 (Line D), but this does not stop the development of some new and interesting ideas for both players.

Thus we consider:

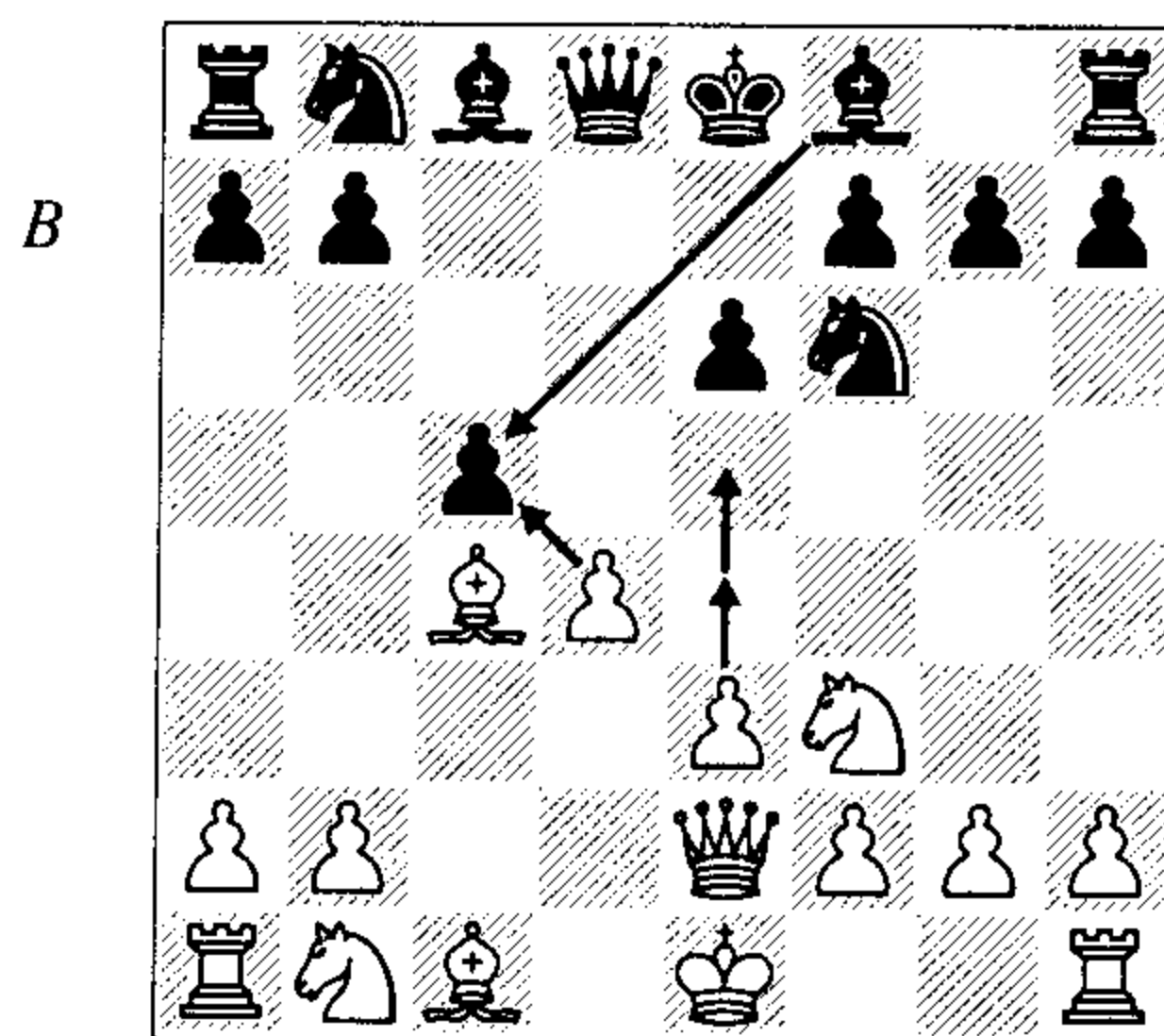
- A: 6 ♜e2 56
 B: 6 0-0 a6 7 e4 59
 C: 6 0-0 a6 7 ♗b3 60
 D: 6 0-0 a6 7 ♜e2 62

For 6 0-0 a6 7 ♖c3, see Line D on page 62.

A)

6 ♜e2 (D)

This move characterizes the Furman Variation, although in practice it can easily transpose into some other line where White plays ♜e2. The logical follow-up for White is to exchange pawns on c5, with the hope of executing the e3-e4-e5 advance, supported by the queen. An exchange of queens early on in this variation seems very unlikely.



B

6...a6

The immediate capture on d4 is analysed in Chapter 8, Line C1.

7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 0-0

Here the immediate advance 8 e4 gives rise to complex play where Black must respond correctly in order to avoid being on the receiving end of a prepared attack. Here are some examples:

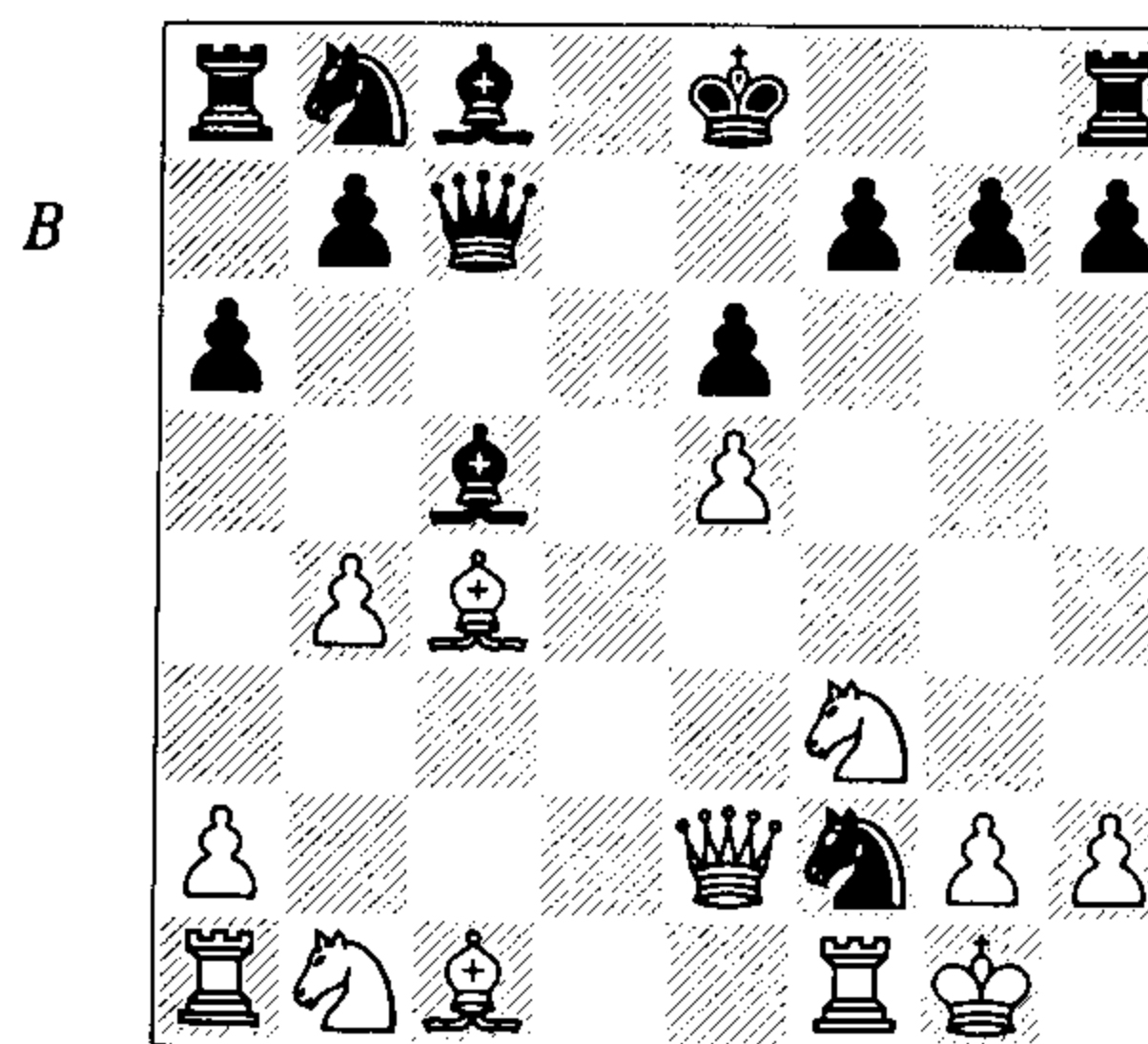
a) 8... ♜c7 9 e5! and now:

a1) 9... ♖fd7 10 0-0 ♖c6 transposes to Ehlvest-Zilberman, Eupen ECC 1997, where White's pieces began to look ominous after 11 ♗f4 b5 (I do not have any faith in 11... ♖d4 either) 12 ♗b3 ♗b7 13 ♖c3 ♖e7 14 ♖e4.

a2) 9... ♖g4 10 0-0 ♖xf2 and here:

a21) 11 ♖c3 ♖e4+ 12 ♖h1 ♖xc3 13 bxc3 and White's attack is building up nicely, although in Van Egmond-Kashtanov, Internet match 1997, Black went on to win.

a22) 11 b4 (D) is also pretty vicious:

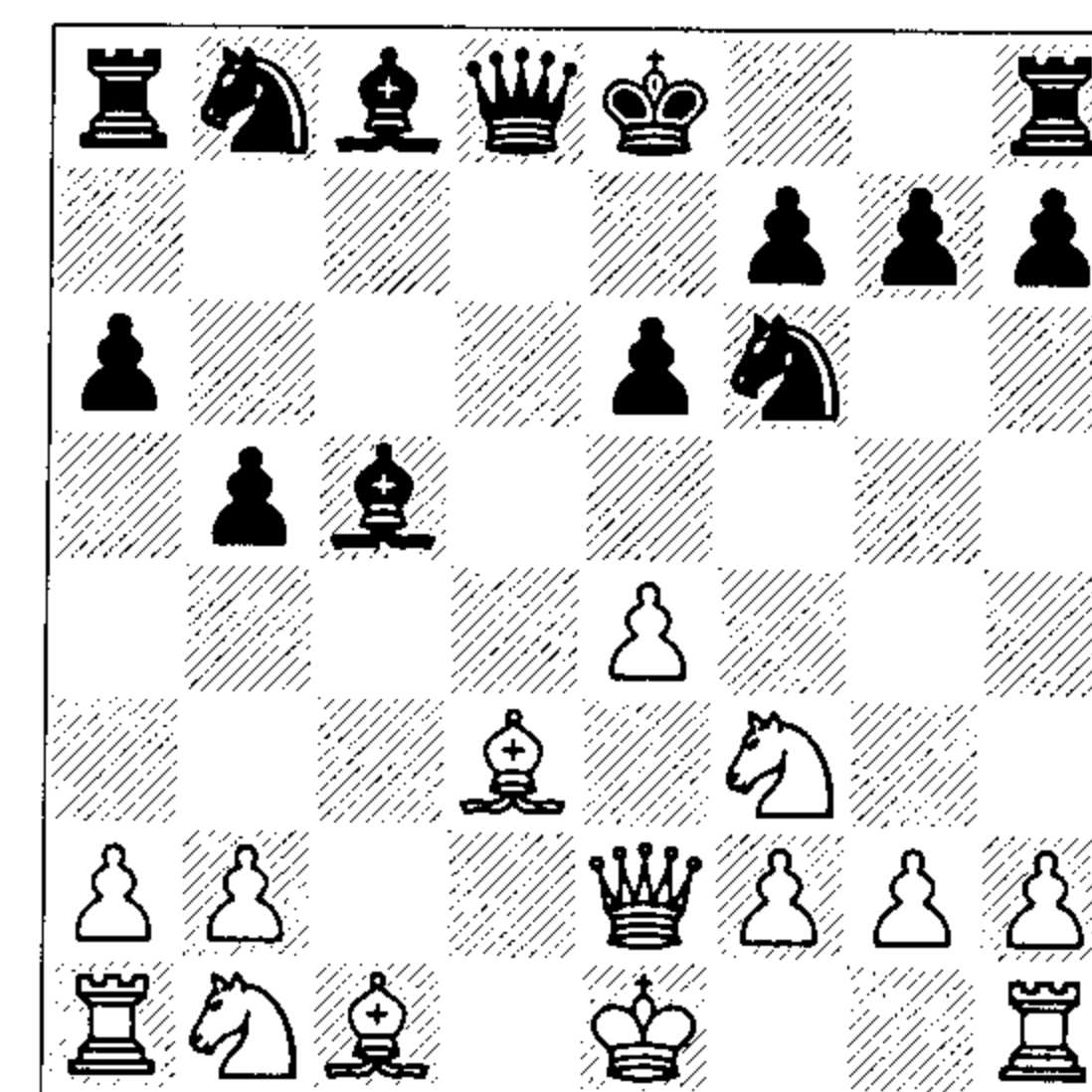


B

11... ♖h3++ 12 ♖h1 ♖f2+ 13 ♜xf2 ♗xf2 14 ♖bd2 ♗a7 15 ♖e4 0-0 16 ♖f6+ and White forced resignation shortly afterwards in Lputian-Dlugy, New York 1998.

b) 8... ♖c6 9 e5! ♖g4 10 0-0 ♖d4 11 ♖xd4 ♜xd4 12 ♖d2 ♖e5 13 ♖b3 ♜xc4 14 ♜xe5 ♗f8 gives White good play for a pawn, as in a number of examples, though Black won in Stojanović-Ibragimov, Ubeda 1997.

c) 8...b5 9 ♗d3 (9 ♗b3 is an error because it is not easy for White to defend the e4-pawn in a natural way; after 9... ♗b7 10 ♖bd2, 10... ♖bd7 gives White some problems, whereas in the game Buckley-Duncan, Hampstead 1998 Black chose 10... ♖c6 11 0-0 e5, which allowed the typical 12 a4 and suddenly Black had some problems to solve) and now (D):



B

c1) 9... ♖c6 and then:

c11) 10 ♖bd2 ♖g4 11 0-0 ♖ge5 12 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 13 ♗c2 0-0 14 ♖b3 ♗b6 15 ♗f4 ♖g6 16 ♗e3 ♗xe3 17 ♜xe3 ♜f6 and Black was fine in Van der Werf-Skripchenko, Cannes 1997.

c12) I have not seen it in this exact position but 10 e5 looks more than plausible for White, trying to keep the theme of e3-e4-e5 very much alive. After 10... ♖g4 11 0-0 Black cannot exploit the e5-pawn with 11... ♖d4 12 ♖xd4 ♜xd4 since 13 ♗e4 is curtains for Black. Therefore, Black must rely on 10... ♖d5 when ♖bd2-e4 does not work due to the bishop being on d3.

c2) 9...♖bd7 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 ♖bd2 0-0 (there is a lot less incentive for White to play e4-e5 after 11...♖c7 but 12 ♖b3 and the follow-up 13 ♗d2 reveals that White has his eye on the a5-square – a different yet awkward plan for Black to deal with) 12 e5 ♖g4 13 ♖e4 ♖c8 14 ♗f4 and White can be happy now everything is developed and defended, Taimanov-Bazan, Buenos Aires 1960 – see p. 52.

8...b5 (D)

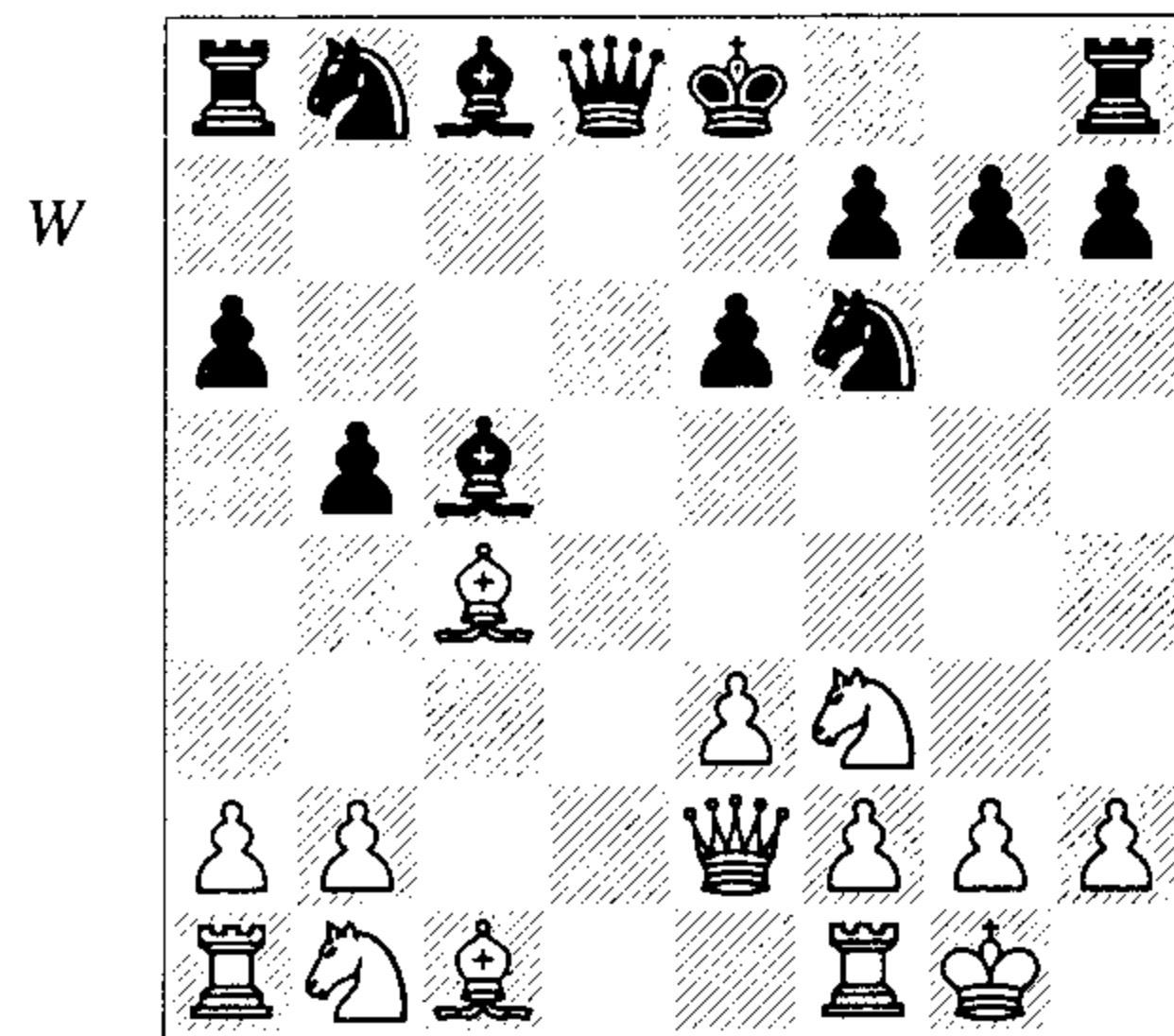
The disadvantage of ...b5 is that the a5- and c5-squares are harder to defend.

8...♖c6 is preferable. White cannot transpose into note 'b' to the previous move because 9 e4 can be answered by 9...b5 10 ♗b3 (10 ♗d3 is met by 10...♖b4; after 10 e5 bxc4 11 exf6 I suggest 11...♖d3, as in the game Yakovich-Kallai, Sochi 1989, when I expect Black's bishop-pair to rule the roost with the queens off the board) 10...e5, which can lead to a rook sacrifice analysed in 1964 by Ravinsky. The main line runs 11 ♖c2 ♖b6 12 ♗g5 ♖d4 13 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 14 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 (this capture can be played anyway!) 15 ♗d5 ♖b8 16 ♖c7 0-0 17 ♖xb8 ♗h3 and suddenly White cannot escape everything. Therefore White should play safe with 11 ♗e3.

9 ♗d3

9 ♗b3 and then:

a) If Black plays 9...♖c6 10 e4 ♖d4 11 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 12 ♗e3, then we suddenly find ourselves in Timman-Lautier, Ubeda 1997 and at the time



Black had just got hit by a strong novelty. A very fine piece of homework by the Dutchman gave him a winning position after 12...♖xe4 13 ♖d2 ♖f5 14 g4! ♖e5 15 ♖f3 ♖e4 16 ♖g5 ♖c6 (only move) 17 ♖ac1 ♗b7 18 f3 ♗xe3+ 19 ♖xe3 ♖d6 20 ♖xe6.

b) 9...♗b7 (this certainly prevents any e-pawn advance) 10 a4 b4 11 ♖bd2 and the white knight is trying to begin a familiar manoeuvre.

9...♖bd7 10 a4

Or 10 e4 ♗b7 11 a4 bxa4 12 ♖c3 (12 ♖xa4 ♗c6 and the white rook must most probably return to a1) 12...a3 13 bxa3, Komarov-Godena, Reggio Emilia 1996/7. I believe that Black has relieved himself of some problem squares here.

10...b4 11 ♖bd2 ♗b7 12 e4

In keeping with the theme of the chapter.

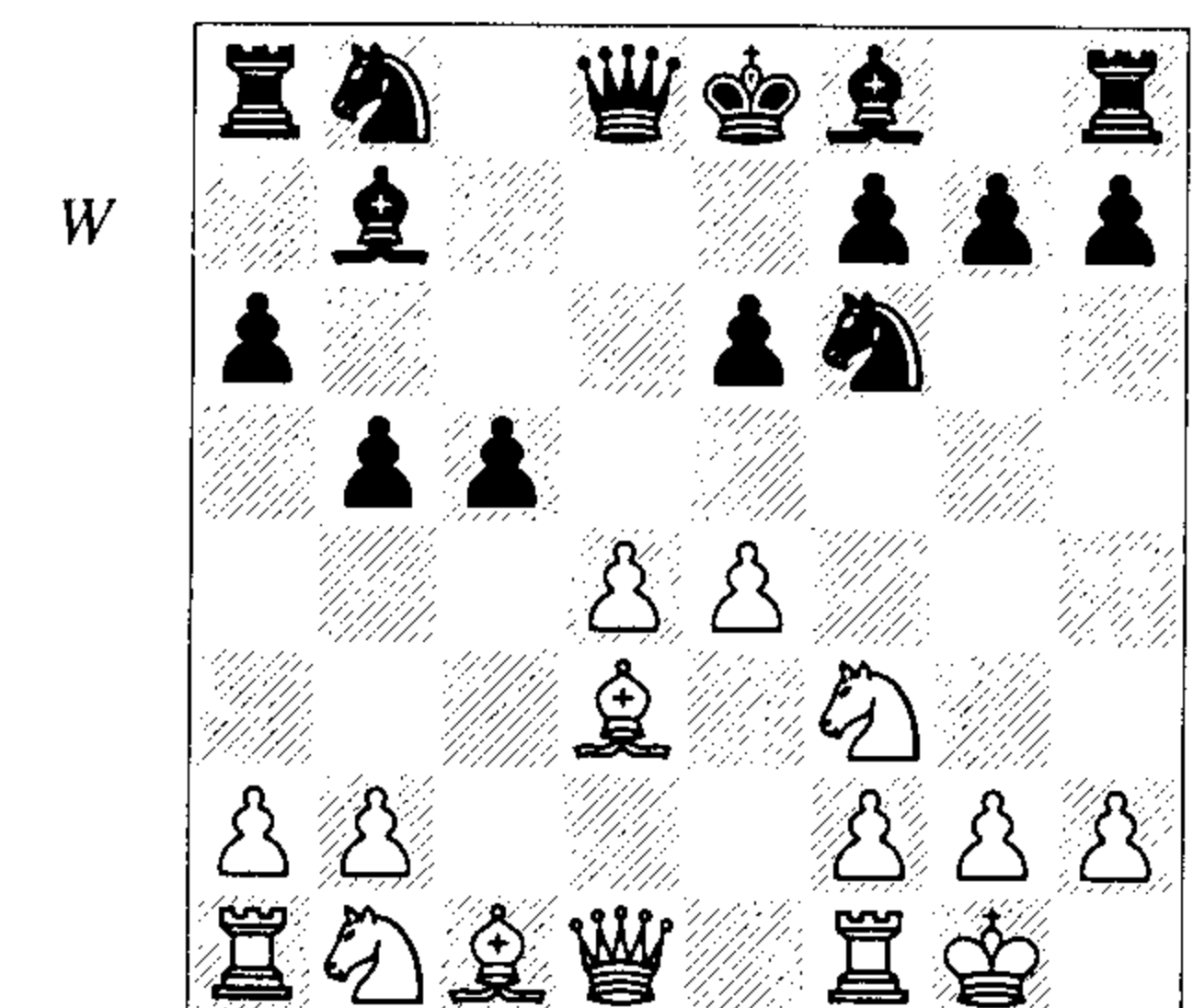
12...♖c7

12...e5 would be my choice now.

13 ♖b3 ♗d6 14 ♗d2 ♖g4 15 h3 ♖ge5 16 ♖ac1 ♖d8 17 ♗b1 ♖xf3 18 ♖xf3 0-0 19 ♖fd1

White has quite some advantage owing to her queenside pressure on the a5- and c5-squares and the b4-pawn, Prudnikova-Rucheveva, Elista 1997. The black queen has some problems here too; if it moves to the safe e7-square, then White can continue with the plan of ♖a5. An instructive demonstration by White against a premature ...b7-b5.

In this line Black should transpose into Komarov-Godena or else play 8...♖c6.



11 ♗xb5+ 11 ♖c3 ♖e5 12 ♖xb5 (Black's position is solid enough and the sacrifice does not work – 12 ♗e2 is best) 12...♖xd3 13 ♖xd3 axb5 14 ♖fd1 ♗e7 15 ♖xb5+ ♖d7 gives Black a decisive advantage, Kasparov-Gulko, Russia 1982.

9...♖d5 10 ♗g5 ♖b6 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 ♖c3 h6 13 ♗h4

The black knight on d5 will now be tempted by moving to f4 and hope for a future attack on g2 courtesy of the b7-bishop.

13...♖d7

Black has control of two diagonals that are pointing towards White's king and can now face the future with confidence.

14 a4 b4

14...♖xc3 15 bxc3 0-0 would have improved on the text-move.

15 ♖e4 (D)

White employs the normal manoeuvre. Note that the black queen cannot always stay on b6 because White has a4-a5 at his disposal. Also, since Black has played ...b4 (although

B)

6 0-0 a6 7 e4!

I have attached an exclamation mark to White's last to denote its surprise value. To be honest, it came as quite a shock to me to see that White has had some success with this move recently.

7...b5

This is eminently more sensible than grabbing the pawn. White is poised to play ♖e2 and d4-d5 should he be granted a semi-open e-file.

8 ♗d3

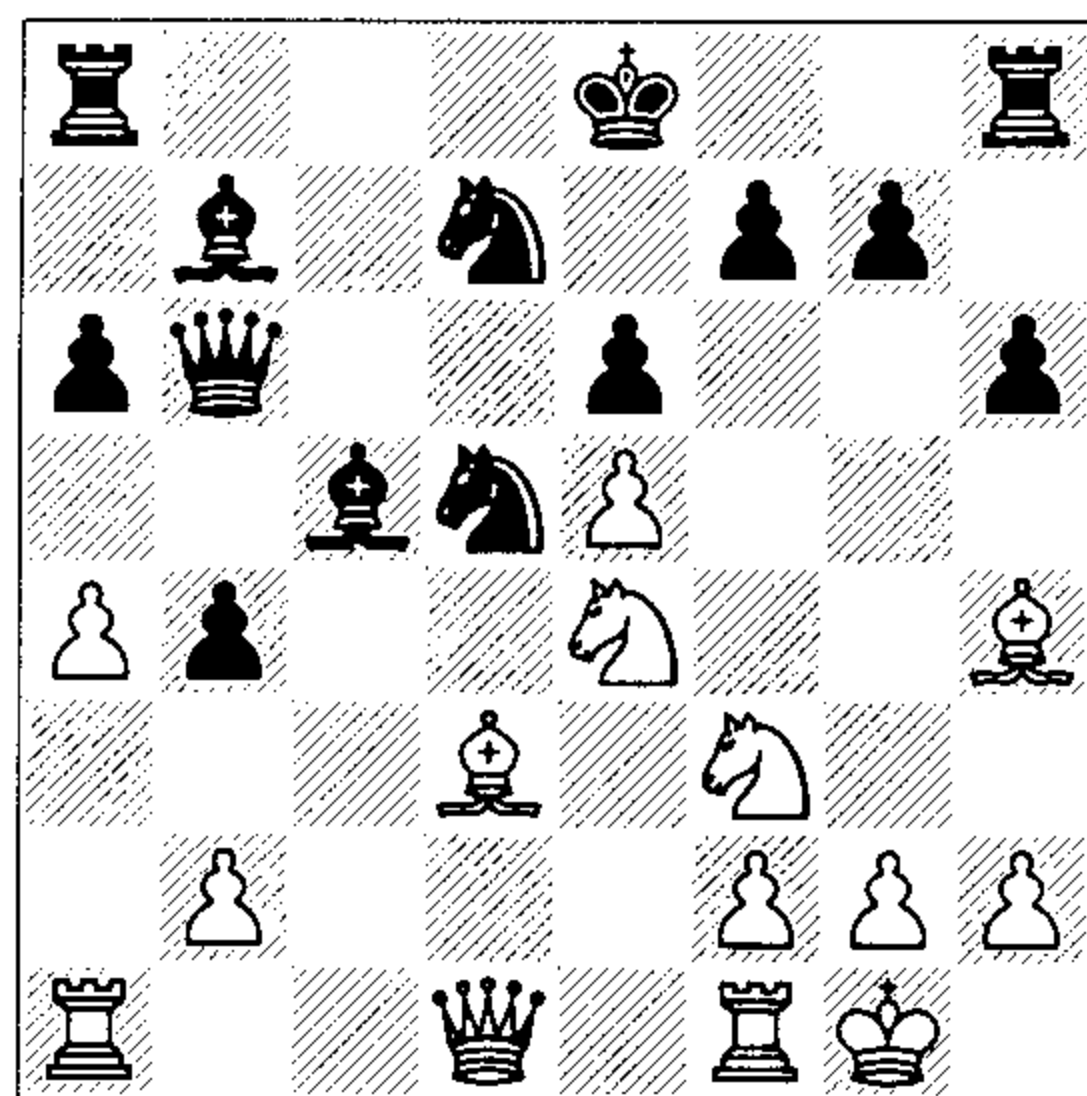
If 8 ♗b3 then Black can take on e4 and rely on ...♗b7 at a critical moment.

8...♗b7 (D)

9 e5

9 ♗g5 (as far as I can see, this does not even threaten e4-e5 because Black has ...h6 and ...g5 if necessary) 9...cxd4 (9...♖c6 10 d5 ♖b4 {10...exd5!? 11 exd5 ♖b4} is an active way for Black to play without trying to grab a pawn) 10 ♖xd4 ♖bd7 (10...♖xd4? loses to

B

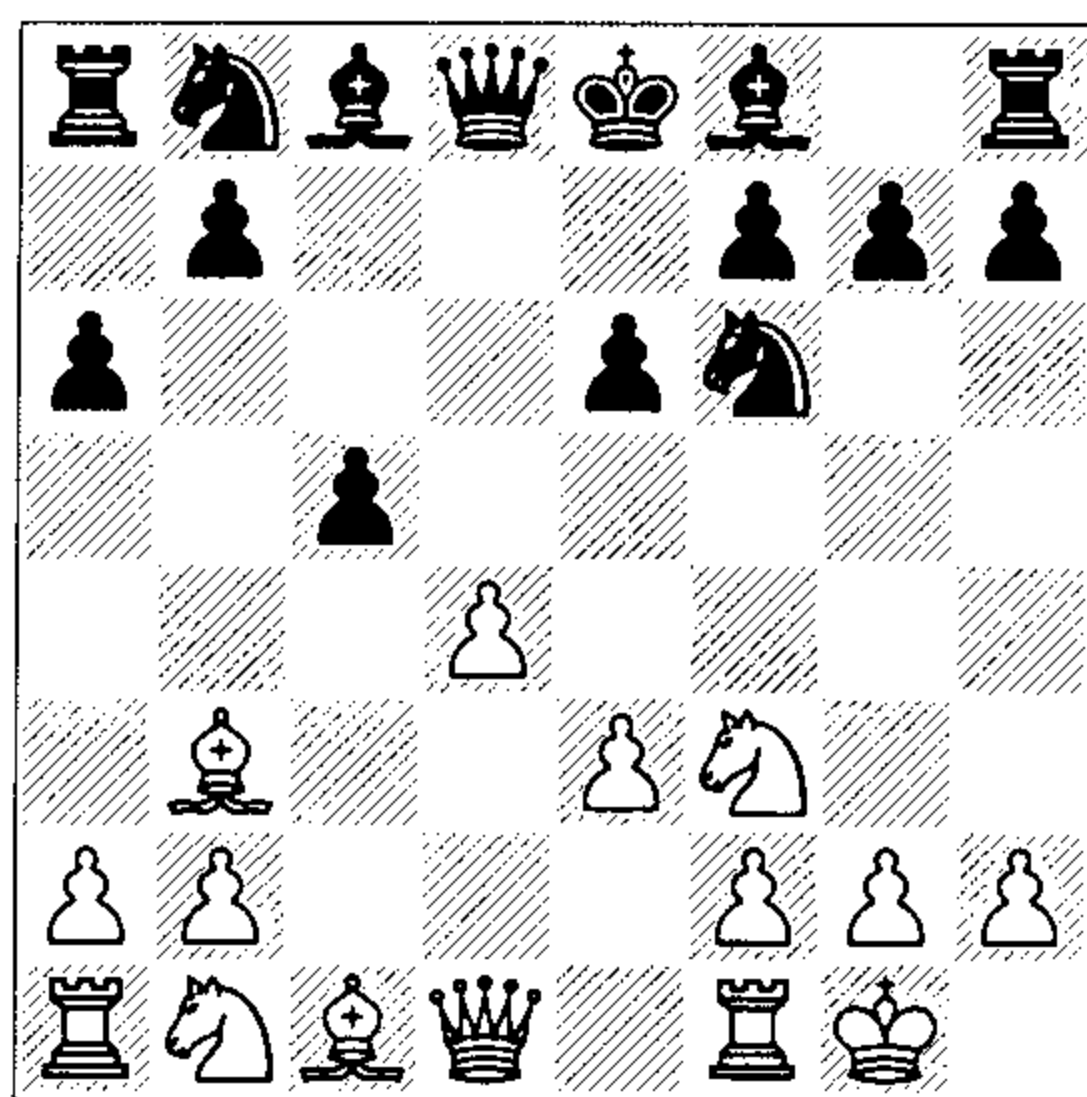


he was not obliged to do so), White has the additional possibility of playing $\text{d}fd2-c4$. The conclusion to this interesting struggle, Avrukh-Baburin, Groningen 1995, is in Chapter 1.

C)

6 0-0 a6 7 $\text{b}b3$ (D)

B



Since it seems fairly likely that White must castle and also move the bishop at some stage, White uses these moves and now Black does not have the tempo-gaining ...b5 at his disposal. 7 $\text{b}b3$ looks at first sight innocuous as

White does not threaten anything, but the move is very deceptive – Black must be careful.

7... $\text{d}c6$

Black immediately puts pressure on d4 so that White cannot have everything his own way. Alternatively:

a) 7... $\text{d}bd7$ 8 e4 (a dangerous gambit for Black to deal with – White gets a massive lead in development) 8... $\text{d}xe4$ 9 $\text{e}e1$ $\text{d}df6$ 10 $\text{c}c2$ $\text{w}d5$ 11 $\text{w}e2$ $\text{d}d6$ 12 $\text{d}c3$ $\text{w}c6$ 13 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{c}xd4$ 14 $\text{d}xd4$ $\text{w}c5$ 15 $\text{a}ad1$, Romanishin-Baburin, Linares 1996.

b) 7...b5 8 a4 (almost automatic by now) 8...b4 9 $\text{d}bd2$ $\text{b}b7$ 10 e4, Praszak-Estrada, Koszalin 1997, offers two gambit pawns but in both cases White has ample compensation (see also Kasparov-Piket, page 53). As Black, I would leave these variations well alone!

8 $\text{w}e2$ We look at 8 $\text{d}c3$ in Line D.8... $\text{c}xd4$

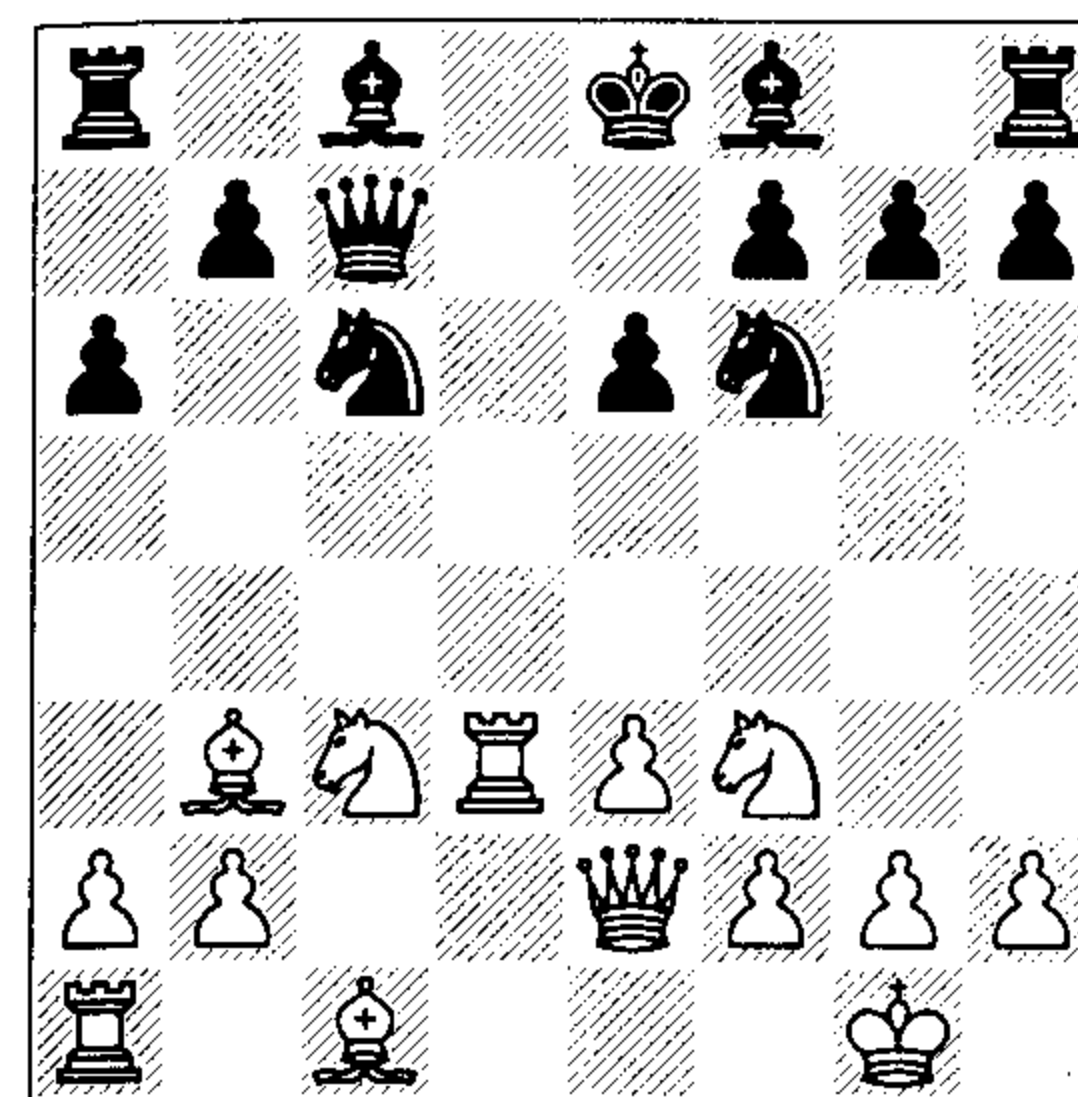
It is possible to keep the tension if desired. 8... $\text{w}c7$ 9 $\text{d}c3$ $\text{d}d6$ 10 $\text{d}xc5$ $\text{c}xc5$ 11 e4 $\text{d}g4$ 12 g3 0-0 13 $\text{f}f4$ e5 14 $\text{d}d2$ $\text{d}f6$ 15 $\text{e}e3$ $\text{e}xe3$ 16 $\text{w}xe3$ $\text{g}g4$ 17 $\text{d}d5$ $\text{d}xd5$ 18 $\text{e}xd5$ $\text{e}xf3$ 19 $\text{w}xf3$ $\text{d}d4$, S.Ionov-Bochkarev, St Petersburg 1998.

9 $\text{a}ad1$ d3

A surprisingly unpopular move. Instead (as in Chapter 8), Black can choose to play against White's isolated queen's pawn, if he prefers, by playing 9... $\text{e}e7$ and allowing 10 $\text{e}xd4$.

10 $\text{e}xd3$ $\text{w}c7$ 11 $\text{d}c3$ (D)

B

11... $\text{e}c5$

This is my preference, but we look at two other moves to familiarize ourselves with these positions:

a) 11... $\text{e}e7$ 12 e4 and now:

a1) 12...0-0 13 e5 $\text{d}d7$ 14 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{d}c5$ 15 $\text{a}ad1$ (rather than 15 $\text{e}e3$, Dautov-Waitzkin, Bad Wiessee 1997) 15... $\text{d}xb3$ 16 $\text{a}xb3$ is to White's advantage thanks to the weak d6-square.

a2) 12... $\text{d}d7$! (the exclamation mark is for correctly evaluating what is about to follow) 13 $\text{d}d5$ (an interesting novelty at the time and an idea reminiscent of something from a Sicilian Defence) 13... $\text{e}xd5$ 14 $\text{e}xd5$ $\text{d}c5$ (Black's king is hopelessly caught in the centre after 14... $\text{d}ce5$ 15 $\text{f}f4$! f6 16 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{f}xe5$ 17 d6 $\text{e}xd6$ 18 $\text{a}c1$) 15 d6 $\text{w}d8$ 16 $\text{d}g5$ $\text{d}xd3$ (the knight manoeuvre to d3 and b3, where it almost always captures something, is not at all uncommon) 17 $\text{d}xf7$ $\text{w}d7$! (if instead, 17... $\text{d}xc1$ 18 $\text{a}xc1$ then the white rook is in the game more quickly and

the black king cannot run to the safety of the queenside) 18 $\text{d}xh8$ (18 $\text{e}g5$ $\text{d}c5$ 19 $\text{d}xh8$ leads to a big mess, though this is certainly more pleasant for Black than line 'a1', so there is no doubting the correctness of 12... $\text{d}d7$) 18... $\text{w}xd6$ 19 $\text{w}h5+$ g6? (19... $\text{c}d7$ is consistent, running away to the queenside) 20 $\text{w}xh7$ $\text{e}f5$ (now the black king cannot make it there) 21 $\text{w}g8+$ $\text{e}f8$ 22 $\text{w}f7+$ $\text{c}d8$ 23 $\text{w}xb7$ and White is on top, Akopian-Volzhin, Ubeda 1996.

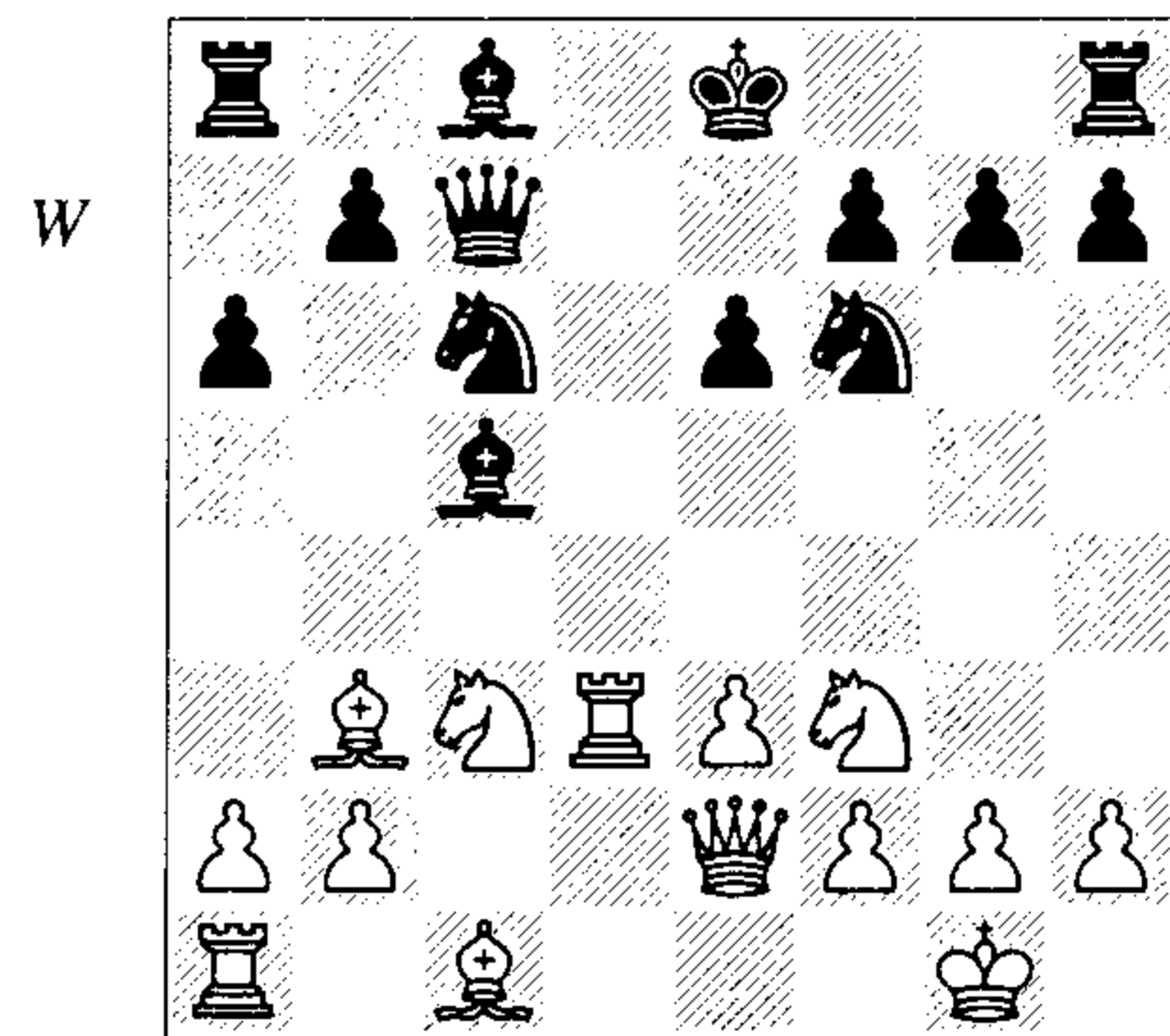
b) 11... $\text{d}d6$ 12 e4 and now:

b1) After 12... $\text{d}e5$ 13 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{e}xe5$ White really went for it in Yusupov-Ivanchuk, Riga Tal mem 1995 with 14 f4 $\text{e}xf4$ 15 $\text{e}xf4$ $\text{w}xf4$ 16 e5 $\text{d}d7$ (16... $\text{d}g4$? loses to 17 g3) 17 $\text{a}f1$ $\text{w}xe5$ 18 $\text{e}e3$ $\text{w}d4$ 19 $\text{a}d1$ $\text{w}a7$ (for two pawns, White has got an attack involving all of his remaining pieces) 20 $\text{d}e4$ 0-0 21 $\text{c}h1$ $\text{d}e5$ 22 $\text{a}h3$ $\text{d}g6$ 23 $\text{w}h5$ h6 24 $\text{d}f6+$ $\text{g}xf6$ 25 $\text{w}xh6$ $\text{e}e8$ 26 $\text{a}g3$ $\text{w}f2$ 27 $\text{a}xg6+$ $\text{f}xg6$ 28 $\text{w}xg6+$ $\text{c}f8$ 29 $\text{w}h6+$ $\text{c}f7$ 30 $\text{w}h7+$ $\text{c}f8$ 31 $\text{w}h8+$ 1/2-1/2 (perpetual check). This is not my cup of tea for Black.

b2) 12... $\text{d}g4$ 13 h3 $\text{d}ge5$ 14 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{d}xe5$ 15 $\text{a}ad1$ 0-0 16 $\text{e}e3$ $\text{e}d7$ 17 $\text{a}ac1$ gives White an advantage, Cvitan-Vaulin, Oberwart 1997. White's centralized rooks constitute a lead in development, while Black must watch out for $\text{d}d5$, and even after ... $\text{e}c6$, f4 followed by e5 is always on the cards.

Returning to the position after 11... $\text{e}c5$ (D):

12 h3



We shall look at some alternatives again:

a) 12 Qa4 Qa7 13 Qd2 0-0 14 Rc1 e5 15 e4 We7 (better is 15... Qg4) 16 Qe3 Qg4 17 Qb6 Qxb6 18 Qxb6 with advantage for White, Salov-Waitzkin, New York 1996. This game revolves around the c5-square, which is surprisingly sensitive.

b) 12 a3 (a more cautious approach) 12...0-0 13 Qd2 b5 14 Rc1 Wb6 15 e4 with equal chances, Piket-Lautier, Amsterdam 1995.

12...0-0 13 e4 Qd7 14 Qe3 Qxe3

If Akopian-Volzhin (above, see note 'a2' to Black's 11th move) had seen 13 Qe3 (instead of 13 Qd5) 13...0-0 then 14... Qe7 in the text now (with the inclusion of the free move h2-h3) would transpose to it. The value of the extra move is not clear. h2-h3 could block the transfer of the rook to the kingside, but then again it may prove useful to stop a black knight landing on g4. This observation gives Black an additional possibility.

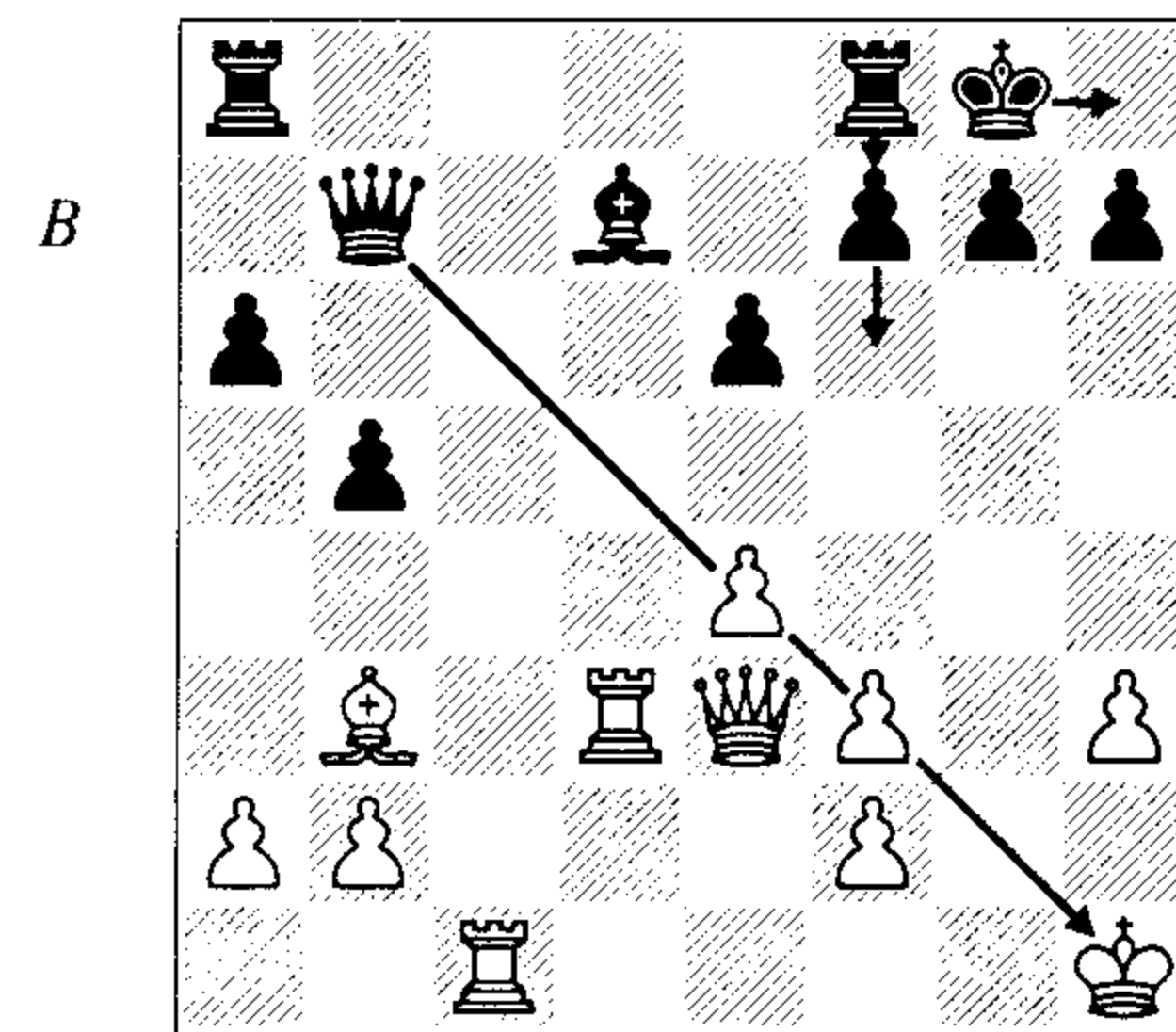
15 Wxe3 b6 16 Qa4 b5 17 Qc5

The theme continues...

17... Qce5 18 Qxd7 Qxf3 + 19 gxf3 Qxd7

...but Black is up to the task and the knight has now been removed.

20 Rc1 Wb7 21 Qh1 (D)



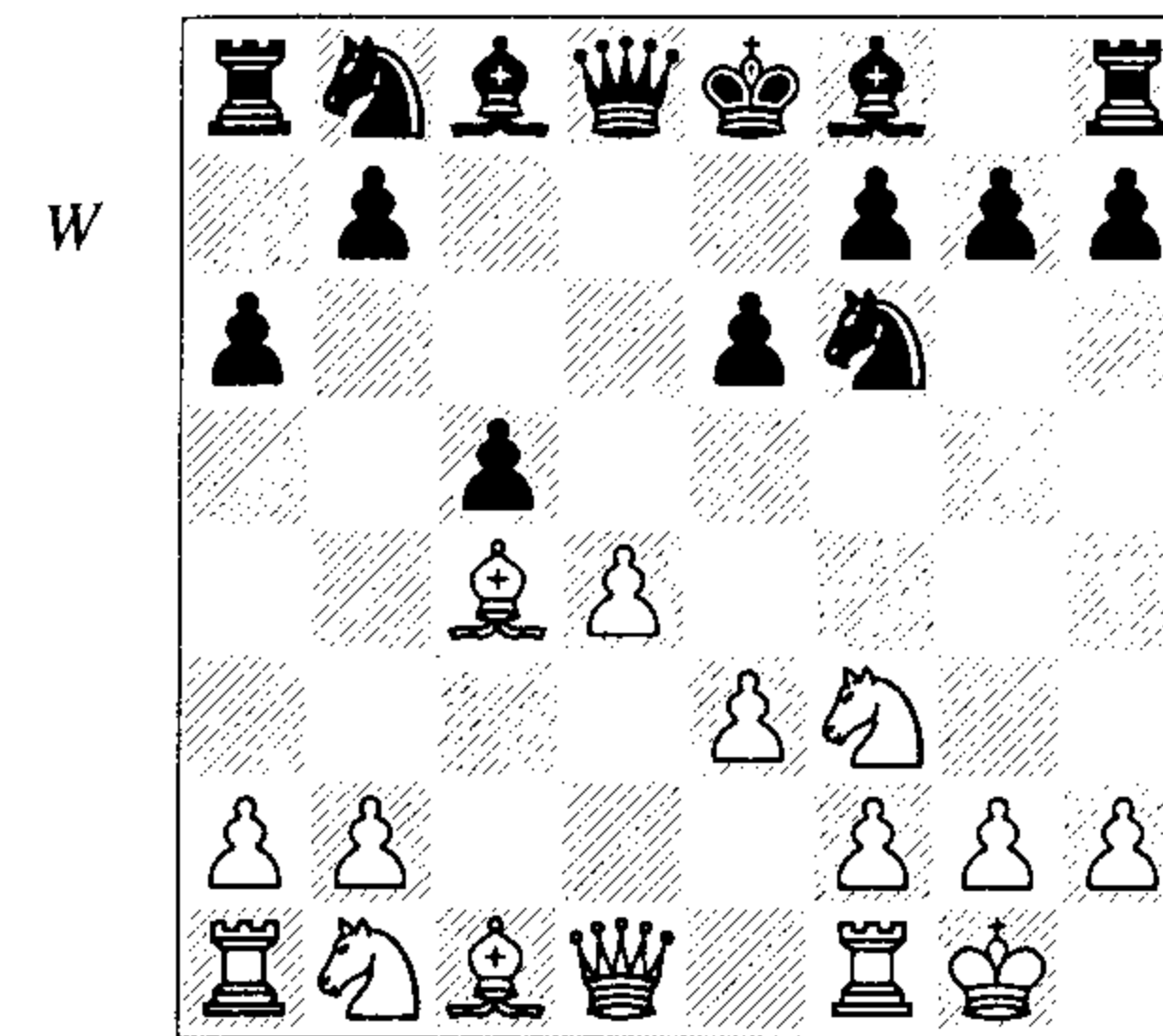
This is Lalić-Hartman, Isle of Man 1995. Taking stock, Black cannot be worse. True, White has an open g-file and is ready to attack down it ... but with what? White does not have a lot of fire-power with a queen and a rook. Black can meet any threats with ... Qh8 , ... f6 and ... Rf7 . Maybe there is even a chance to counter with ... f7 (f6)- f5 and try to attack White's king via the long diagonal. Indeed, Black should be in no hurry, as he was in the game, to play ... Wa7 .

D)

6 0-0 a6 (D)

7 We2

A slight difference to the text recommendation follows after White's move-order 7 Qc3 b5 (safe now that



Qc3 has been played) 8 Qb3 Qb7 9 We2 Qc6 10 Rd1 when I recommend 10... Qa5 although it has not been seen much. After 11 Qc2 Wb6 12 e4 cxd4 13 Qxd4 Qc5 14 Qe3 (Neishtadt) I believe 14... Rd8 to be best. Black will follow up with ... Qc4 at an opportune moment, making sure Qa4 is not possible in reply. Alternatives such as 10... Wb6 allow 11 d5 and a sharp attack, for example 11... exd5 12 e4 dxe4 13 Qxe4 Qxe4 14 Wxe4 + Qe7 15 Qd5 Rd8 16 Qg5 with a winning position for White, Reshevsky-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936.

7... Qc6 8 Rd1

Or, as promised earlier (see Line C), 8 Qc3 b5 (it is safer to advance the b-pawn now that the knight has developed to c3; if White plays a4, Black has ... b4 , when the knight must move again – the route b1-c3-b1-d2-c4 is then a loss of two tempi for White) 9 Qb3 Qa5 (a relatively new move in this position also) and now:

a) 10 dxc5 Qxb3 11 axb3 Qxc5 12 e4 Qb7 13 e5 Qd7 and the bishop-pair

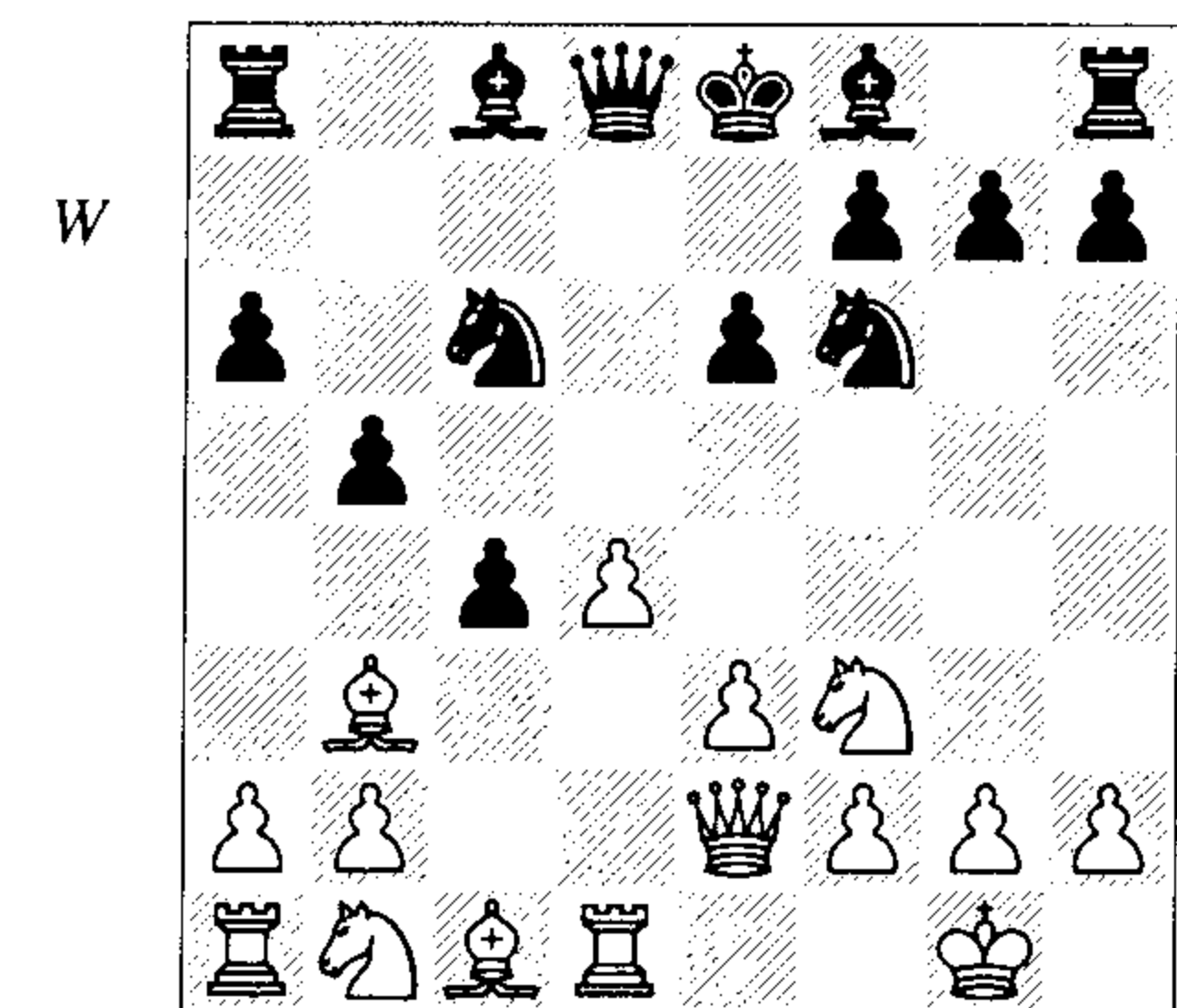
offers more than enough compensation in this position for the potential weakness of the d6-square, Oll-Tkachev, Groningen FIDE KO Wch 1997.

b) 10 Qc2 cxd4 11 Rd1 Qb7 12 Qxd4 Wb6 13 Qb3 Qxb3 14 Qxb3 Qc5 15 e4 0-0 16 Qg5 Qd4 and Black is fully developed and standing fine, Tunik-Ibragimov, Moscow 1996. Note again the positioning of the black bishop-pair.

8... b5 9 Qb3

9 dxc5 Wc7 10 Qd3 Qb4 ! (model play by Black, who is in no rush to capture on c5) 11 a3 Qxd3 12 Wxd3 Qxc5 was fine for Black in Goglidze-Em.Lasker, Moscow 1935.

9... c4 (D)



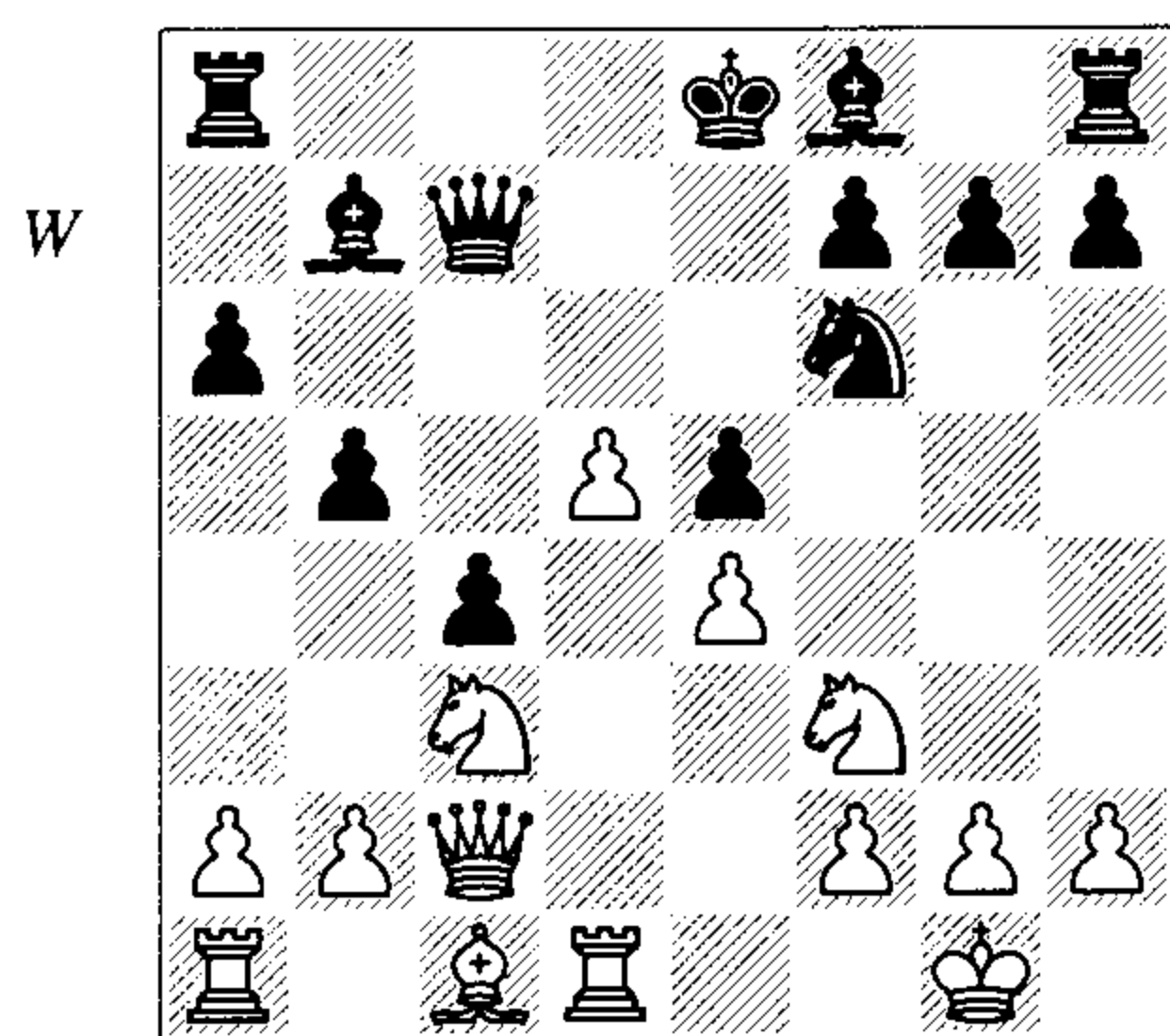
The advance of the c-pawn is in order because Black can 'trap' the light-squared bishop.

10 Qc2 Qb4 11 Qc3

11 e4 Qxc2 12 Wxc2 Qb7 13 d5 exd5 (I prefer 13... Wc7) 14 Qc3 Qc5 15 Qg5 d4 (forced) 16 Qxd4 Qxd4 17

♙e3 ♙xe3 (the only way out of trouble) 18 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19 fxe3 0-0 and now that the mist has cleared, we see that Black has sufficient material and enough of a positional plus for the queen, Barsov-Van Wely, Netherlands Cht 1994/5. The game ended in a draw.

11...♗xc2 12 ♖xc2 ♙b7 13 d5 ♖c7 14 e4 e5 (D)



15 ♙g5 ♗d7

With a blocked centre it is not a necessity to hurry with the development of Black's last piece in order to castle. There are no problems at all here for Black.

16 ♖d2 ♙d6 17 ♗d1 f6 18 ♙h4 0-0 19 ♗e3 g6 20 g4

Maybe worried about ...f6-f5, White decides to weaken his kingside, but Black was doing well anyway in Kupila-Binham, corr. 1981.

That concludes a difficult chapter for Black, but who said playing Black was easy? In it we have seen a full range of ideas. Early central advances sometimes involving a pawn sacrifice by White are extremely dangerous for Black to deal with. A slower build-up is also possible with a view to playing more positionally on the queenside. In general, as the second player, Black should develop positively but with some caution. Normally, Black must answer White's plans directly rather than by creating a diversion. Black's chances will come, after some patience and some wise exchanges, later in the game when there are fewer white pieces pointing at his king. Black will often turn to his bishop-pair and his a- and b-pawns, which as the game goes on generally become stronger and less prone to attack by a2-a4.

5 White's Queenside Fianchetto

The approach taken in this chapter by White is, at first sight, a quiet one. White avoids the early advance e3-e4 discussed earlier in this book and with it the main thrust of opening theory. Instead he places the bishop on b2 and places his hopes on his queen's knight, which he hopes can manoeuvre into the opponent's position. In addition, White may be able to strike at Black's king by using the bishop-pair in tandem along the b1-h7 and a1-h8 diagonals.

Black will rely on sensible placements of his pieces. Generally, the queen's bishop should develop onto b7, but a premature ...b5 will, as normal, get hit by a4 and cause more problems than it solves. The other debating point is when to play ...e6-e5, in order to blunt the b2-bishop, and when to leave the pawn on e6. In this chapter there is not much opportunity for swashbuckling counter-attacks by Black. White generally leaves the pawn on e3, which blunts the bishop sitting on c5.

We will start this chapter by looking at some pawn structures that are important to understanding these lines. Later we will look a little more closely at the opening moves but I have avoided drowning the reader in opening analysis in this chapter. The

actual opening moves are of much less importance here than the middlegame and late middlegame positions that come from them. The message here is that to avoid slipping up and ending up having to defend an unpleasant position, a surprising amount of care is needed.

Symmetrical Structures

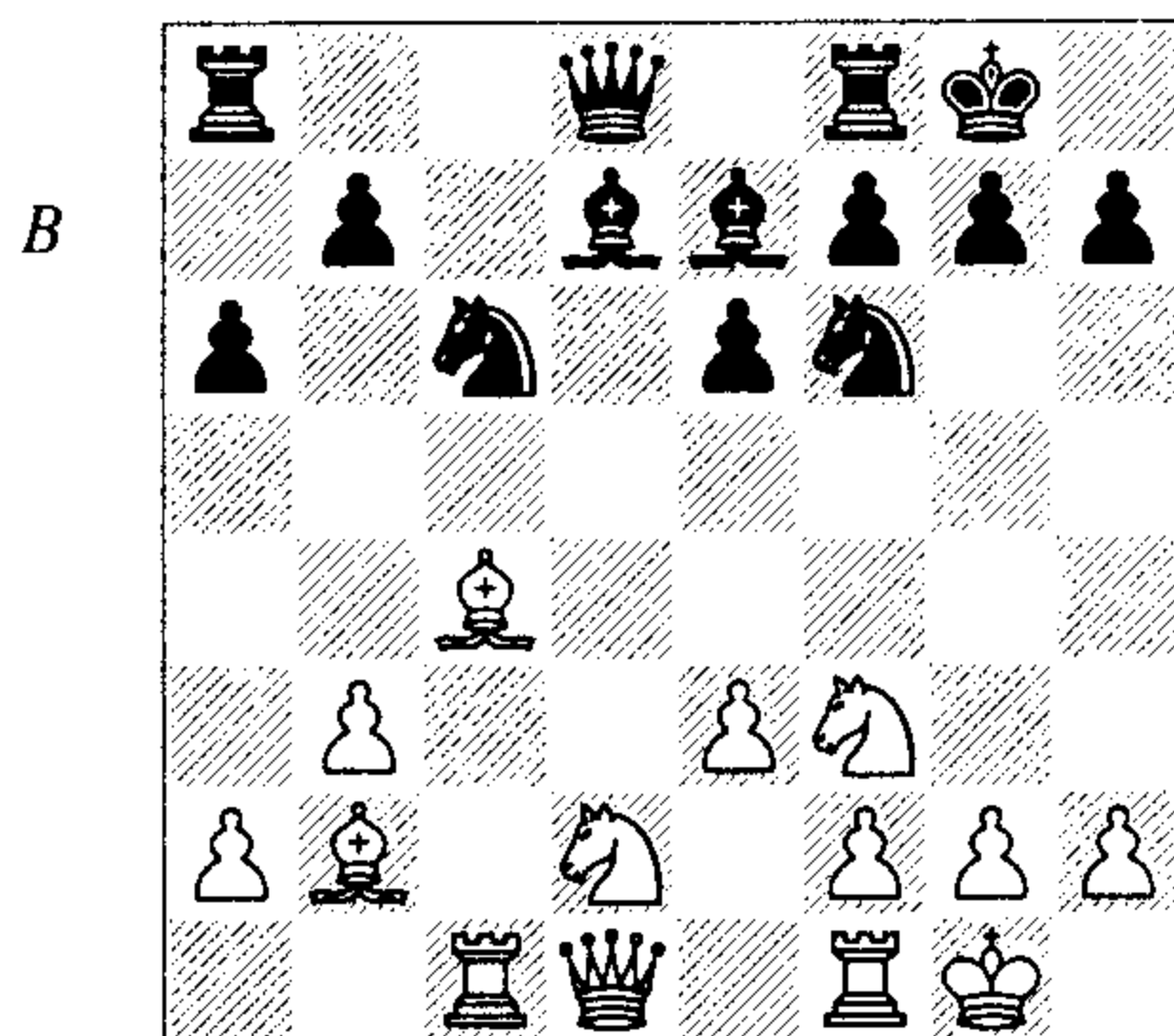
The following game started with 7 ♗bd2 in the Classical Variation followed by the immediate exchange of pawns on d4. The black and white pawn formations are basically symmetrical with each other except that a6 and b7 do not quite mirror a2 and b3. Although the resulting formation often signifies quiet play, both players will do well to have positive plans in mind and Black will always have to pay some attention to the bishop on b2, which is now directed at his king.

In general, there is not a lot in these positions. However, the unsuspecting player of the black pieces can quickly get into a tangle.

12...♖c8 13 ♖e2

The white queen can take part in the proceedings on e2, where it is both active and yet hidden from attack.

13...♗a5



Miles - Lin Ta
Beijing 1983

The black queen can hide on b8, but then c4-b6 and e4-c5 remain annoying possibilities. That having been said, I still prefer a plan with $\dots\text{b8}$.

14 d3 b4

$14\dots\text{xa2}$ 15c4 puts the queen in terrible trouble.

15 c4 h5

There is a disjointed feel to the black position with the queen on h5.

16 b1 bd5 17fd1 (D)

All the pieces are ready for the next phase of the game.

17... fd8 18f1

So that after the future advance e3-e4 , $\dots\text{f4}$ does not attack the queen. Also, White would prefer not to exchange queens so now the f3-knight can move in safety.

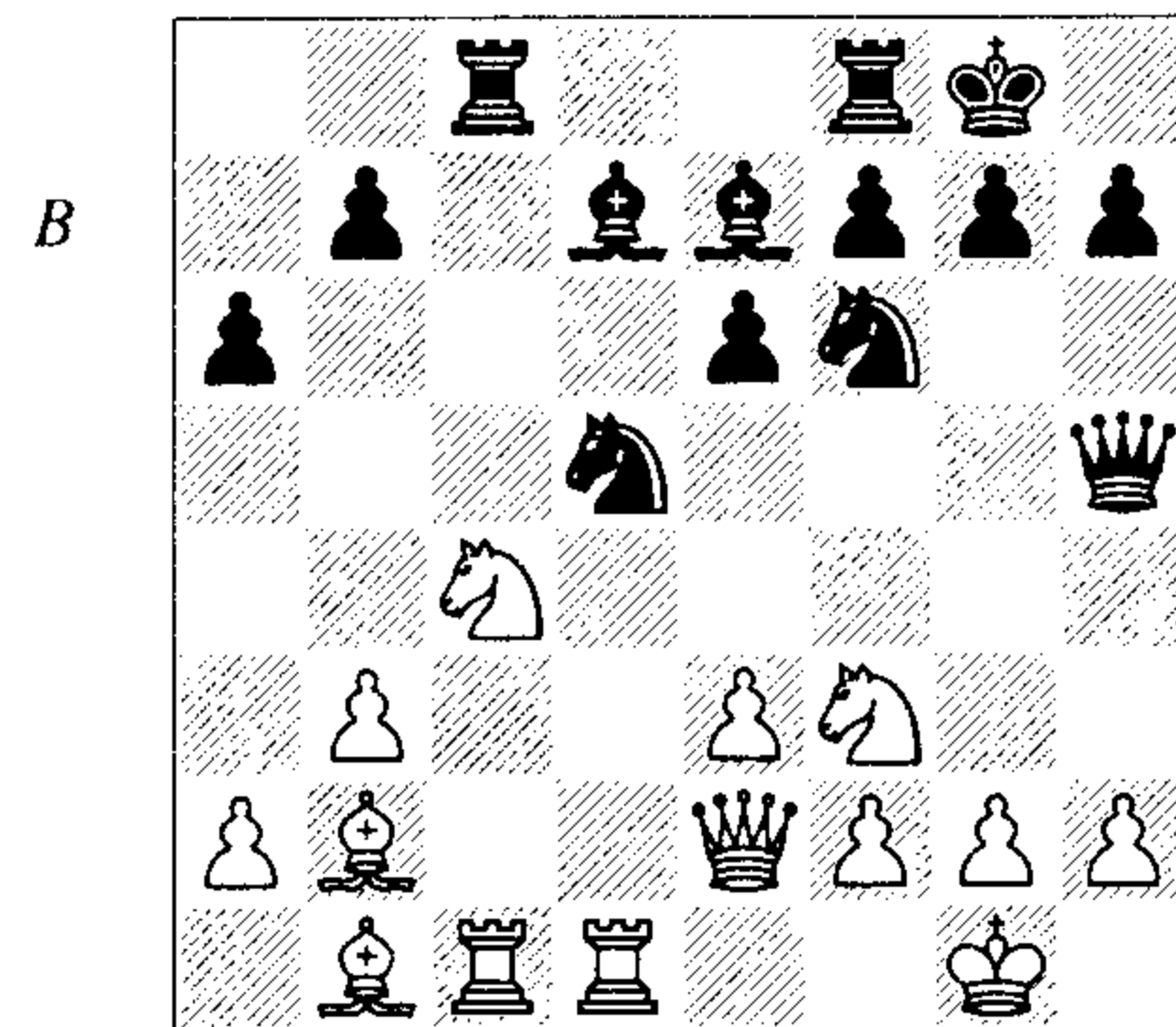
18... b5 19a4 e8

$19\dots\text{c6}$ comes into consideration.

20 d4 d7

h4 was threatened.

21 g4



Instead of quiet positional manoeuvrings, the game has developed along somewhat unexpected lines.

21... h6 22g2 f6 23dd1

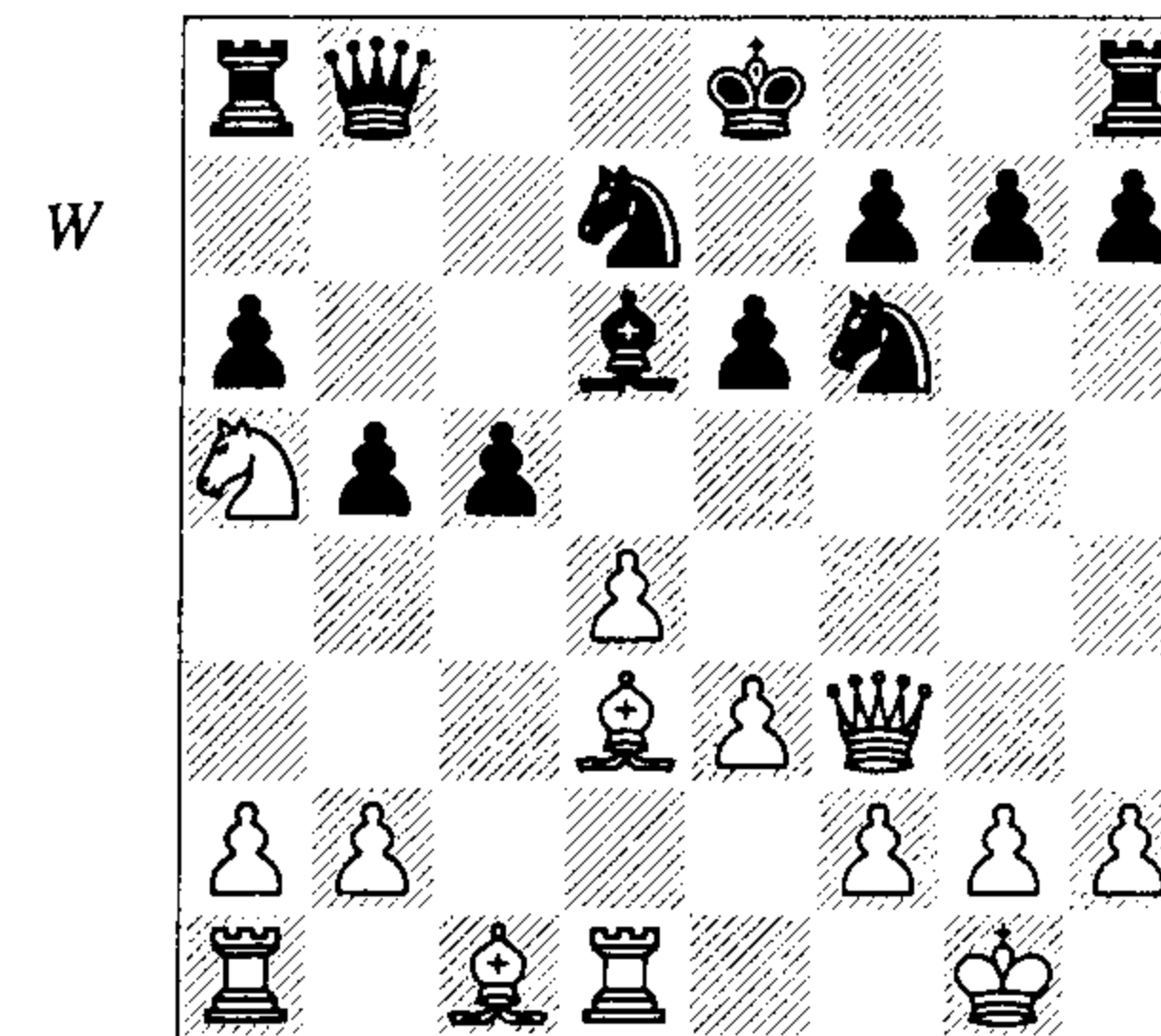
The position is full of interest. The white position looks the more threatening but for the moment everything is defended and the black queen is in no immediate danger of being trapped.

White has extra central pawns

This example is included in this chapter because White delays e3-e4 . Indeed he only advances his central pawns after Black has committed his queenside pawns and given White an extra central pawn on a permanent basis. This theme is not uncommon in the QGA. In the following position, Black has played $\dots\text{b5}$, before castling, and as sure as night follows day, White plays...

14 a4 c4

In a general sense, we gave a warning against this move in Chapter 1. It is too simplistic to say that Black should



Kharlov - Nenashev
Vladivostok 1994

have avoided this move here. Indeed, he had some trouble holding on to his queenside pawns and it appears as though a more serious mistake by Black was made before this move. The move $\dots\text{b5}$ appears to have been ill-advised, since if he had kept this pawn on b6, then White would not have had a5 , obliging Black to exchange his light-squared bishop. The result now is that Black has given White an extra central pawn on a permanent basis, as there is no way of exchanging the c4- and d4-pawns! We will see the relevance of this as events unfold.

15 c6

The white knight continues its merry dance into the heart of the black position.

15... c8 16c2 b4

Black's failure to castle would also result in an attack on his king after $16\dots\text{d5}$ 17e4! xc6 18exd5 exd5 19e1+ .

17 b3 a5
 $17\dots\text{c3}$ 18a5 gives White a nice advantage.

18 bxc4 a6 19d5 e5

Black gets rid of the troublesome knight from his position.

20 xe5 xe5 21b1 exd5

$21\dots\text{xd5}$ loses to 22e4 .

22 f5 c6 23cxd5 xa4

Black has kept material equality but White has maintained his central pawn advantage.

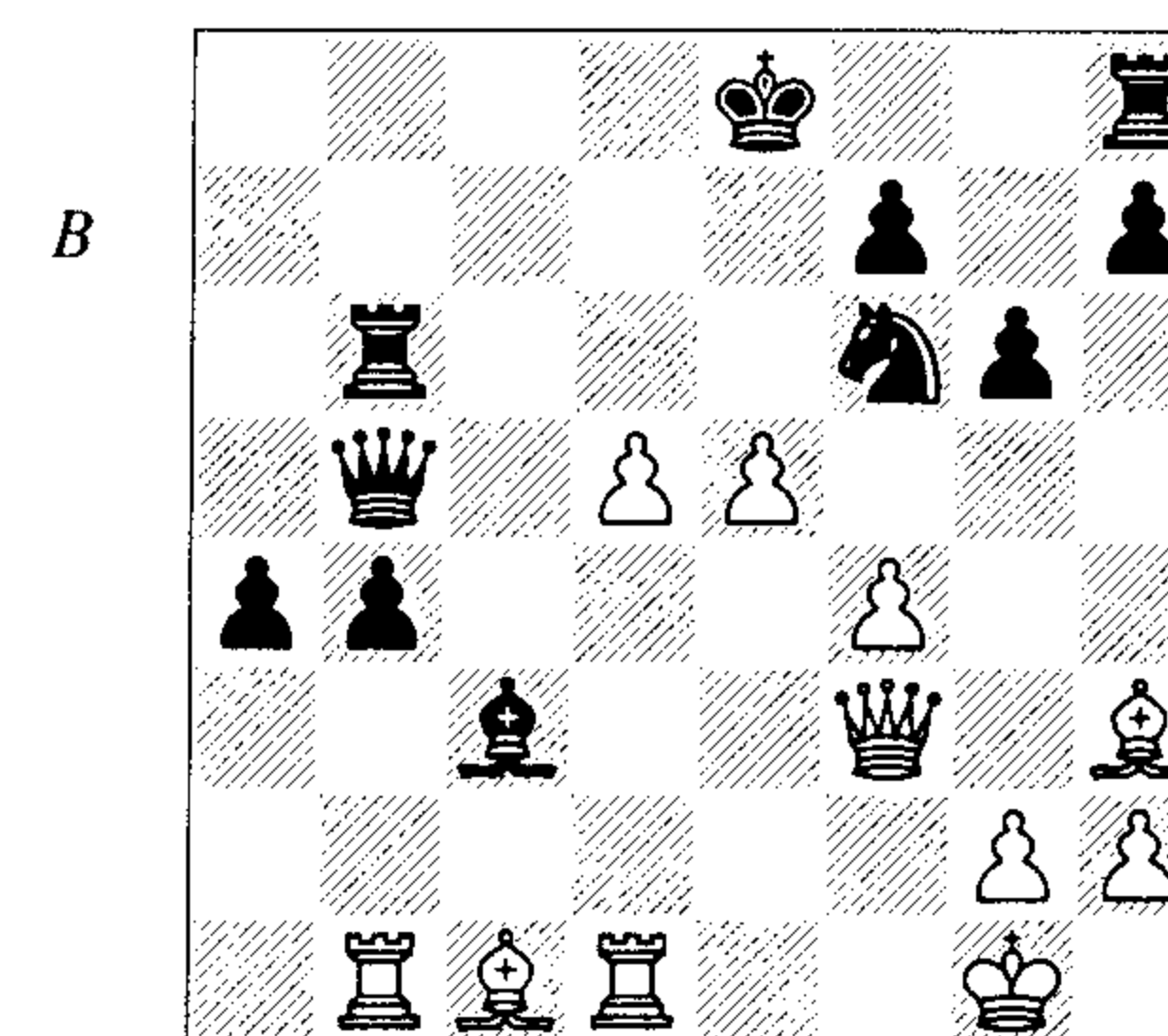
24 e2

Only now in the whole of this chapter does White prepare a big central advance. It is due to the fact that he has a large central pawn majority.

24... b6 25f4 c3 26e4 b5 27f3 g6 28h3 a4

Or $28\dots\text{0-0}$ 29e5 e8 30d6 and White is well ahead in the race.

29 e5 (D)



29... d7 30d3

A nice tactical point; Black needs to defend d7 with the queen but now the queen must move.

30...♖a6 31 ♔xd7+ ♕xd7 32 e6+ fxe6 33 dxe6+ ♖c8 34 ♜xc3+ bxc3 35 ♜xc3+ ♖b7 36 ♜g7+ ♖c6 37 ♜d7+ ♖c5 38 ♔e3+ 1-0

A crushing victory.

The Theory of the Queenside Fianchetto

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♔xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6

Now:

A: 7 ♔d3 68
B: 7 b3 70
C: 7 ♘bd2 71

These are moves which have recently come into practice. None of the moves immediately lead to sharp positions or threaten to reward either player with an unassailable position after one slip by the opponent. However, the reader is advised not to disregard them or treat them with contempt because it is all too easy to misplay these positions, perhaps due to lack of familiarity, and end up, particularly as Black, in some difficulty.

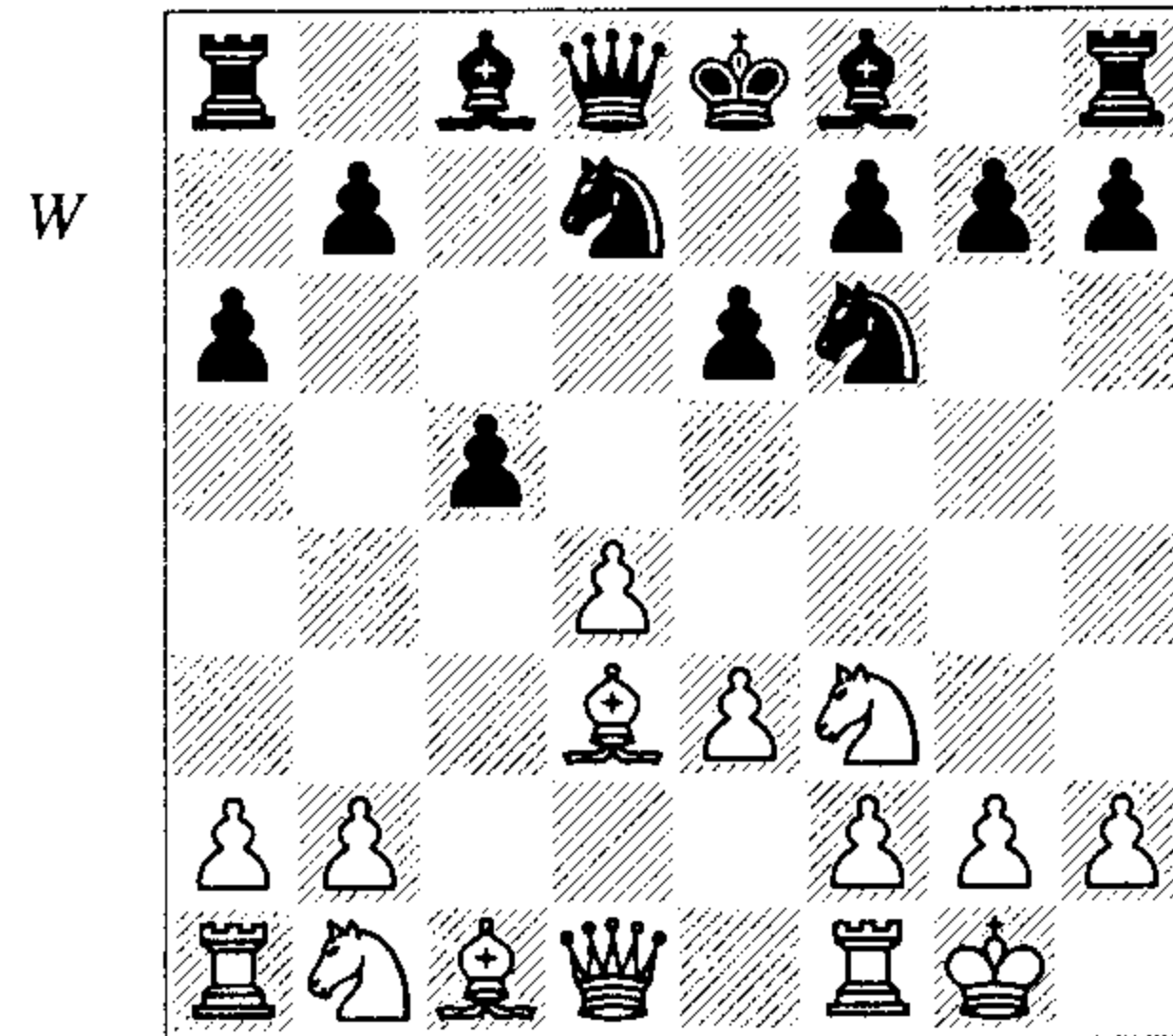
A)

7 ♔d3

This move is part of a 'wait and see' strategy which is also examined in Chapter 8.

7...♘bd7 (D)

In Chapter 8, we examine 7...cxd4 8 exd4, but in this chapter we steer clear of Isolated Queen's Pawn positions.



8 ♜e2

With the black knight already unable to go to c6 and then b4, White may be happy to surrender the b4-square and try to take advantage of the situation with a2-a4. Although it is nice to make use of the b4-square as Black, it is not necessarily the end of the world if this is not possible. Indeed, practice has shown that White is losing valuable developing time with a2-a4 and this is also relevant to the position (see Chapter 6). Thus after 8 a4 b6 9 ♘c3 ♔b7 10 ♜e2 ♔d6 11 ♜d1 ♜b8 12 h3 0-0 13 ♔d2 the reader will notice similarities between this position and ones found in Chapter 6. Most notably, the bishop placed on d3 here instead of c4 means that the advance d4-d5 is less likely, Nogueiras-Arencibia, Ampuriabrava 1997.

8...b6

The set-up with ...b6 is more appropriate here than ...b5. The move ...b5 creates weaknesses and with the bishop having already vacated the c4-square, there is no tempo to be gained

by advancing the black b-pawn two squares.

9 ♜d1

With the wrong build-up, White can end up worse with the b7-bishop cutting across the board. 9 ♘c3 ♔b7 10 ♜d1 ♜b8! (10...♔e7 11 dxc5 ♔xc5 just loses a tempo) 11 e4 cxd4 12 ♘xd4 ♔d6 13 h3 0-0 14 ♔c2 ♜c8 15 ♔e3 b5 (15...♘e5 with the idea of ...♘c4 is better) 16 a3 ♘f8 17 ♘b3 (the knight is on its way again) 17...♘g6 18 ♘a5 is another instructive punishment of a premature ...b5, Tisdall-L.B.Hansen, Reykjavik Z play-off 1995.

9...♔b7 10 dxc5

White gives in, as he cannot think of any more useful waiting moves for his intended set-up. Normally, the idea is to leave the capture on c5 until Black develops the bishop from f8 and then take. In that way, in effect, White can have a free move.

10...♔xc5 11 a3

Now it is clear why White captured on move 10. He intends the set-up with pawns on a3 and b4 with knight on d2 and bishop on b2. If he had played 10 ♘bd2, then 10...cxd4 would not have been to his advantage.

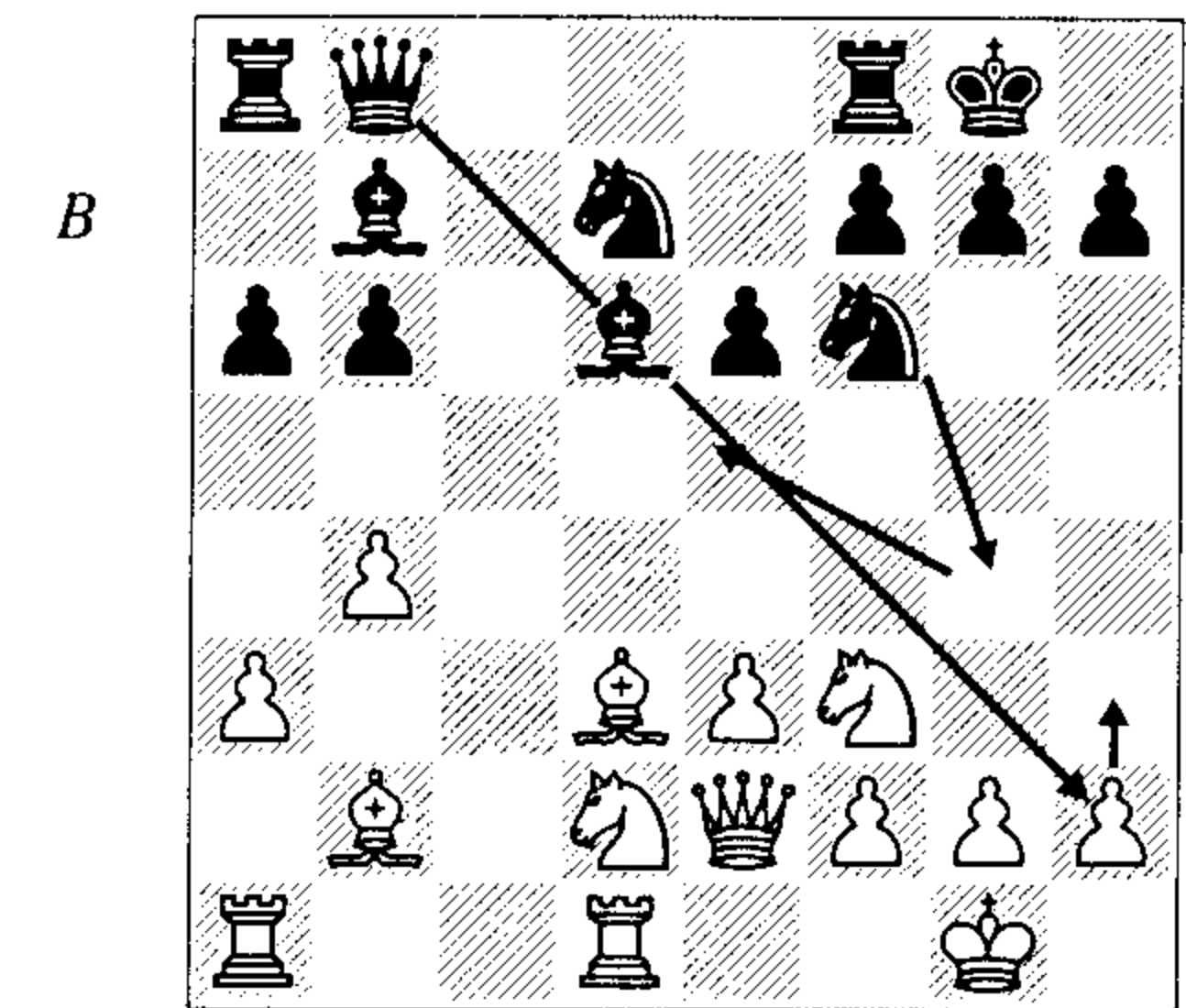
11...♜b8

Anticipating problems on the c-file, but this creates new problems for the rook on a8.

12 ♘bd2 0-0 13 b4 ♔d6 14 ♔b2 (D)

This is a typical set-up with pawns on a3 and b4, and the bishop on b2. Black's bishops are both participating,

but he still has to resolve the problem of the a8-rook.



14...♜c8

It is not normally recommended to box in the major pieces like this. Admittedly, 14...♘e5 is problematic after 15 ♘xe5 ♔xe5 16 ♔xe5 ♜xe5 17 ♘c4 ♜c7 18 ♜ac1 b5 (18...♜fc8 19 ♜c2 with control of the c-file and therefore an advantage to White) 19 ♘d6 ♜b6 20 ♜c5 ♜fd8 (no good is 20...♘d7 21 ♘xb7 ♜xb7 22 ♔xh7+ which wins a pawn) 21 ♘xb7 ♜xb7 22 ♜dc1 but instead 14...♘g4 15 h3 ♘ge5 16 ♔e4 is approximately even.

15 ♜ac1 ♜xc1 16 ♜xc1 a5

Black tries a different course of action; if instead 16...♘e5 then White can lie in wait with 17 ♔b1, with the idea, if Black obliges, of 17...♘xf3+ 18 ♘xf3 ♔xf3 19 ♜xf3 ♔xh2+ 20 ♖h1 ♔d6 (the bishop must retreat) 21 ♔xf6 gxf6 22 ♜xf6 winning.

17 b5

Black had intended the development of the rook with 17 bxa5 ♜xa5

18 $\text{♞c4!?$ ♙xf3 19 ♚xf3 ♙xh2+ 20 ♜f1 ♞g5 , which is not at all necessary from White's point of view.

17... ♙xf3

If the reader is looking for a sweeping statement then try this one: I am reluctant in the QGA (except in positions found in Chapter 8) to swap this bishop off for a white knight. Here, 17... ♚f8 and ... ♞c8 is better.

18 ♞xf3 ♚f8 19 ♞a1!

19 a4 allows 19... ♙a3 and a favourable queenside penetration by Black.

19...e5

Trying to blunt the b2-bishop. The decision whether to play ...e6-e5 is a common debating point throughout this book. Here Black would have done better to avoid this move.

20 ♞g5!

With a view to possible captures on f7 or h7, or just to manoeuvre via e4.

20... ♞c5

Better was 20...h6 21 ♞e4 with a slight advantage to White. The text-move leaves f7 vulnerable.

21 ♙c4 ♞a7 22 f4

All part of the plan. White now has a large advantage.

22... exf4 (D)

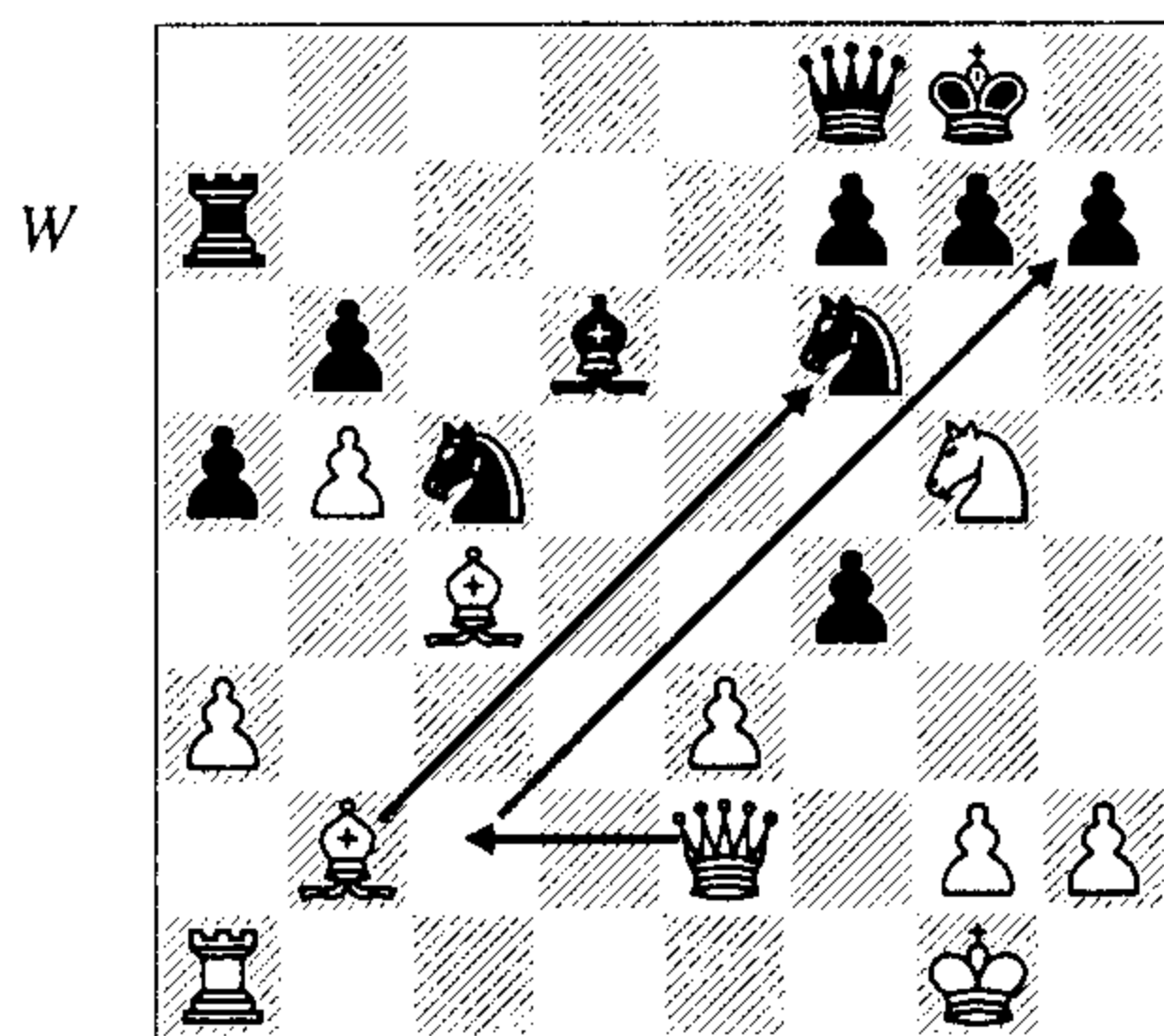
White is also well on his way after 22...e4 23 ♞d1 .

23 ♚c2

Simple attacking chess. White threatens ♙xf6 and ♚xh7\# .

23... ♞cd7

Not the best defence. 23... ♚e7 24 ♙xf7+ ♜f8 25 ♞e1 ♙e5 (neutralizing one bishop, but...) 26 ♙c4! ♙xb2 27



♚xb2 fxe3 28 ♚d4 h6 29 ♞f3 ♞d7 30 ♚f4 and ♞e5 to follow is still pleasant for White. The text-move leaves Black in even more serious trouble.

24 ♞xf7 ♙c5 25 ♜h1 f3 26 ♞f1

White brings another piece into the attack.

26... ♙xe3

White also wins after 26... fxg2+ 27 ♚xg2 ♚a8 28 ♚xa8+ ♞xa8 29 ♞e5+ ♜h8 30 ♞xd7 ♞xd7 31 ♞f7 ♞f6 32 ♞xf6 .

27 ♞xf3 ♚c5

It is hopeless.

28 ♞g5+ ♜h8 29 ♞e6

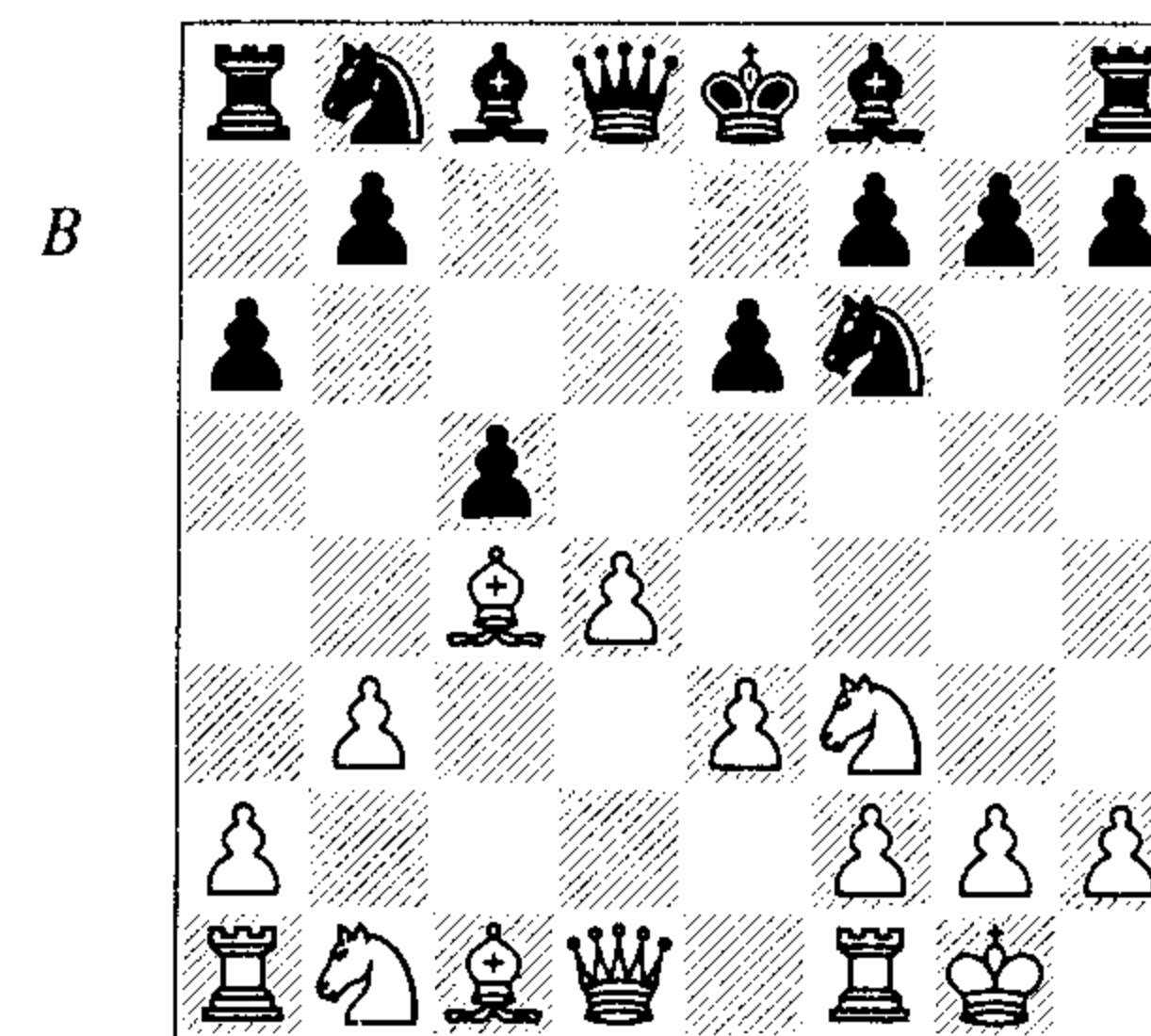
Black cannot defend the bishop, L.B.Hansen-P.Nikolić, Wijk aan Zee 1995.

B)

7 b3 (D)

7... cxd4

The capture and the moves following in the text outline another approach to the 7... ♞bd7 system of the last section. Before proceeding, let us first look at 7...b5. I believe that Black

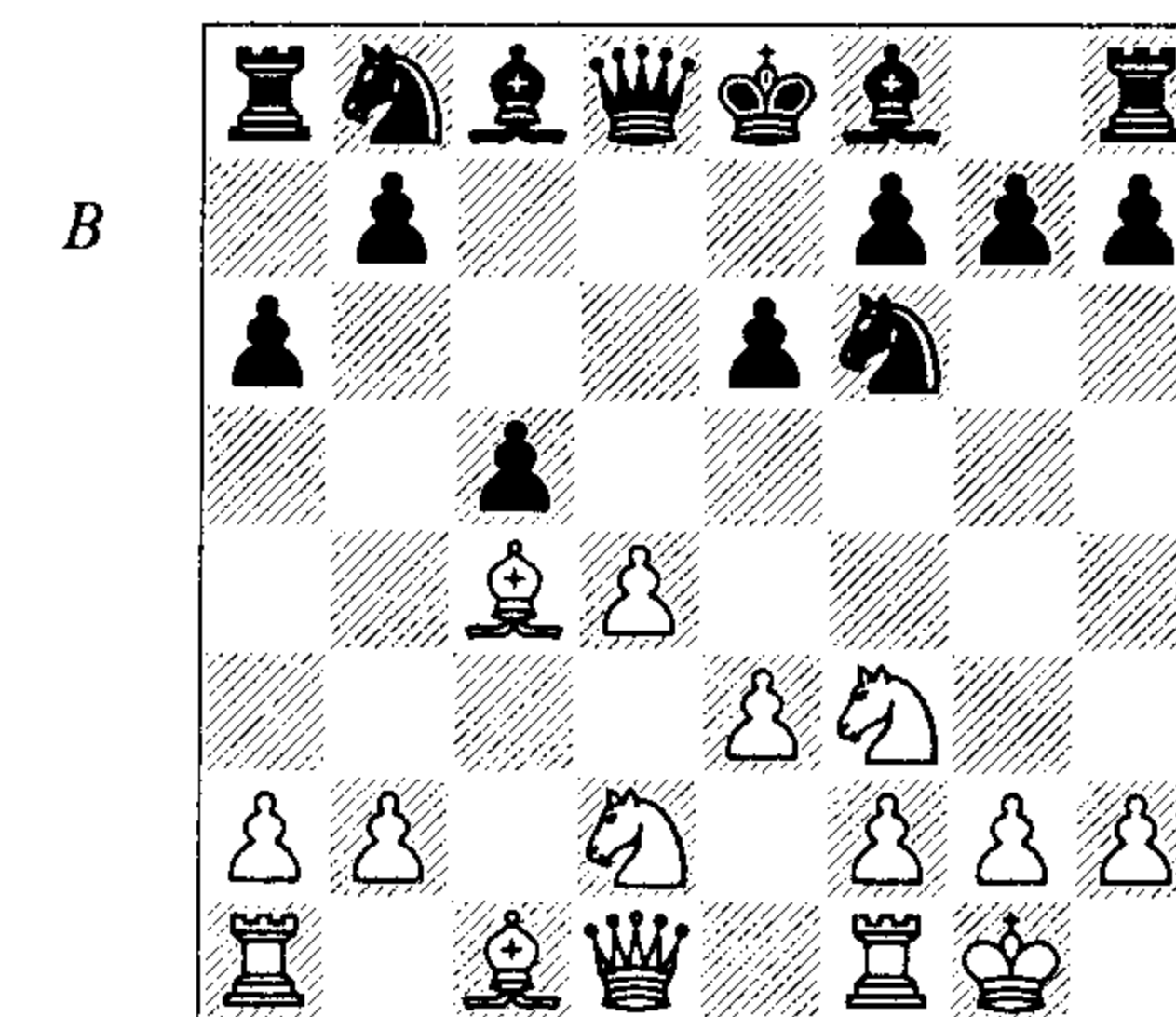


should be really cautious before playing this but it is popular. Before ...b5, I prefer to complete development in much the way Gulko does (see Line C). 8 ♙e2 ♙b7 9 a4 (this is why I do not like it: Black concedes some squares now, whatever course of action he decides on) 9... bxa4 (9...b4 10 ♙b2 gives White a positional advantage) 10 bxa4 ♞bd7 11 ♞bd2 ♞d5 12 ♙b2 cxd4 13 ♞xd4 ♙b4 (Black is right to go here and not fall for the variation 13... ♙e7 14 ♞xe6 fxe6 15 ♙xg7 – queenside fianchetto systems seem pretty quiet, but the black player would do well to remember that White often has a hidden agenda) 14 ♞c1 ♞c8 (this is the problem; it is small, but always White is one move ahead and here Black has to confront the possible ♞c6 so he prevents this and elects not to castle just yet) 15 ♞xc8 ♚xc8 16 ♞e4 0-0 17 ♚b1 ♚a8 18 ♞g5 g6 19 ♚e4 and we see White's pieces surging towards the enemy king, Miles-Davidović, Sydney 1991. In addition the a1-h8 diagonal has been weakened.

8 ♞xd4 ♙d6 9 ♙b2 0-0 10 ♞d2
We have transposed to Line C.

C)

7 ♞bd2 (D)



7... cxd4 8 ♞xd4 ♙d6

Black's treatment, with the exchange on d4 and ... ♙d6 , is just as effective here as against 7 b3.

9 b3

Also possible is 9 ♞4f3 0-0 10 b3 b5 11 ♙e2 ♙b7 12 ♙b2 ♞bd7 13 a4 bxa4 14 ♞c4 ♙e7 15 bxa4 (D.Gurevich-Gulko, USA Ch (Modesto) 1995) and after 15... ♙d5 , White cannot expect to obtain an advantage according to Gurevich.

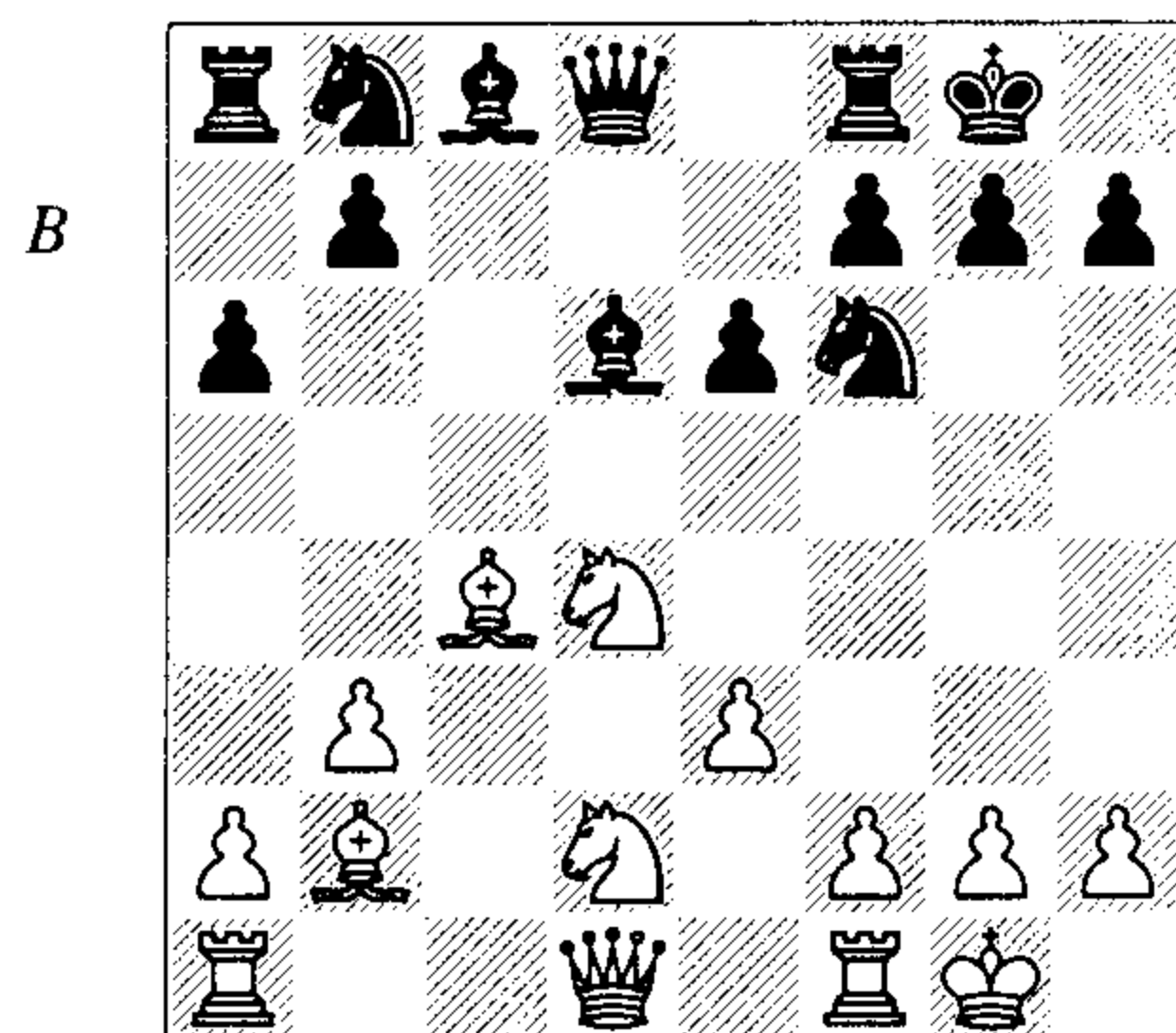
9...0-0 10 ♙b2 (D)

Now there are two main options:

C1: 10...e5 72

C2: 10... ♙c7 72

It is always a debatable point whether to play ...e5 and ... ♙e6/f5/g4 or ...b5 followed by fianchettoing the bishop. More often than not, the latter



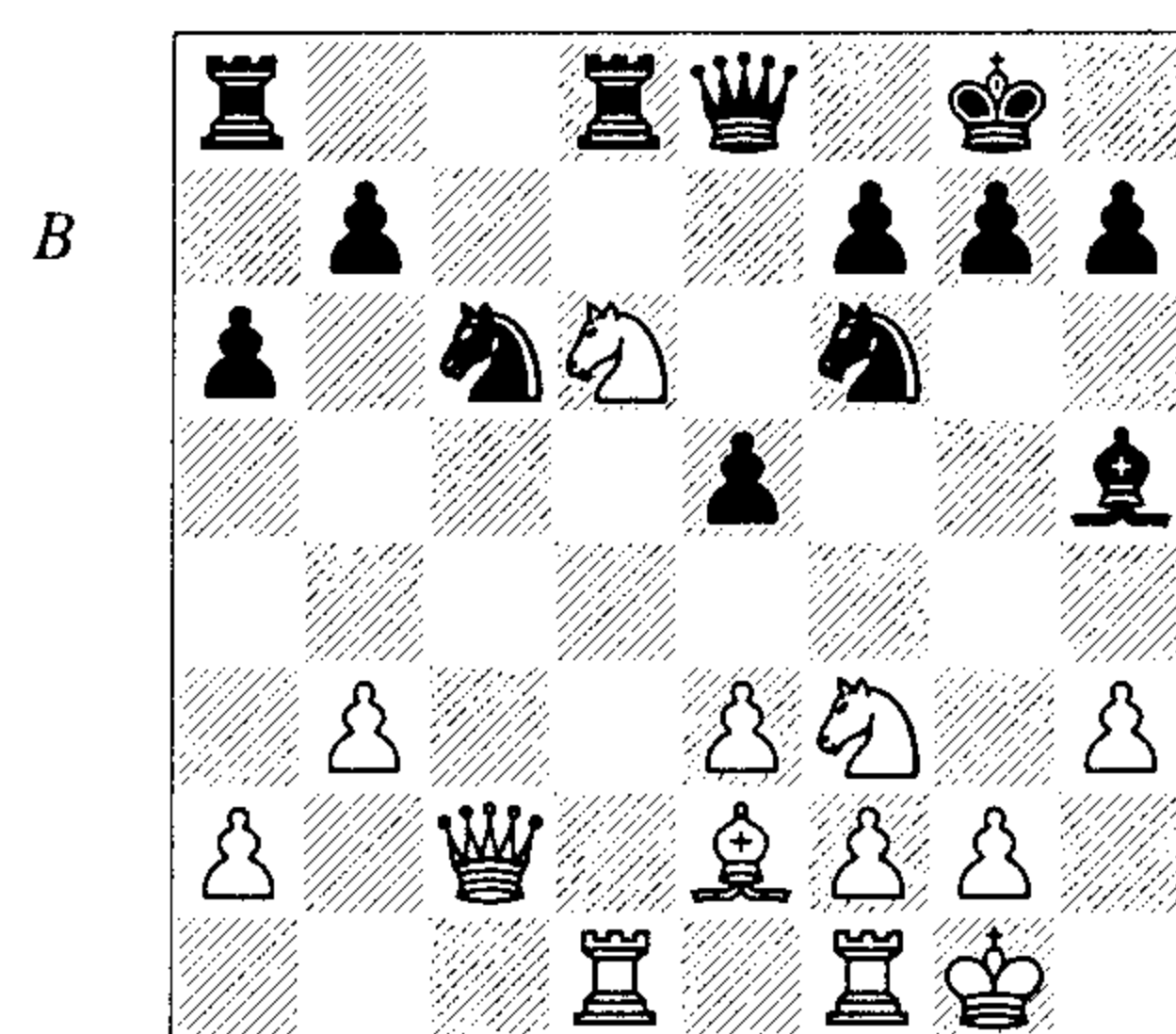
14...Qc6 15 Rxd1 Qg4 16 Qa3
Qe8 17 h3

Forcing the bishop to a slightly inferior square.

17...Qh5 18 Qd6

This is about all White can get from this position – a piece on d6. Nevertheless, it is significant and it does give White the better game.

18...Qxd6 19 Qxd6 (D)



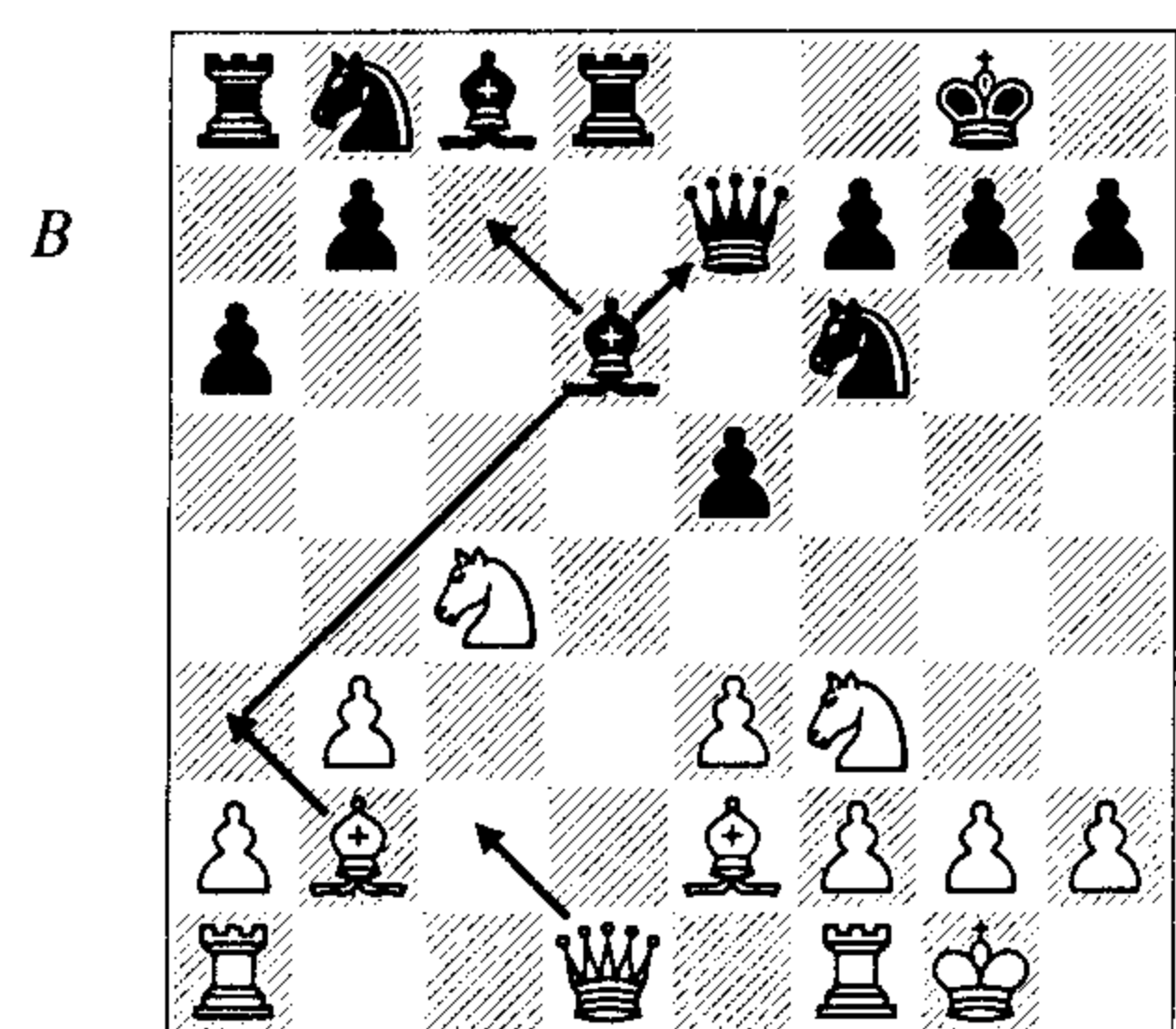
is to be preferred with the right preparation and since Black has castled here, I can see nothing wrong with 10...b5 and ...Qb7.

C1)

10...e5 11 Qf3 Qe7 12 Qe2 Rd8

Black had decided on this plan on move 10.

13 Qc4 (D)



13...Qc7 14 Qc2

Positioning of the queens is important. White's is safe, while Black's can get hit by Qa3.

19...Qe7 20 Qf5 Qf8 21 Qg3 Qg6
22 Qb2

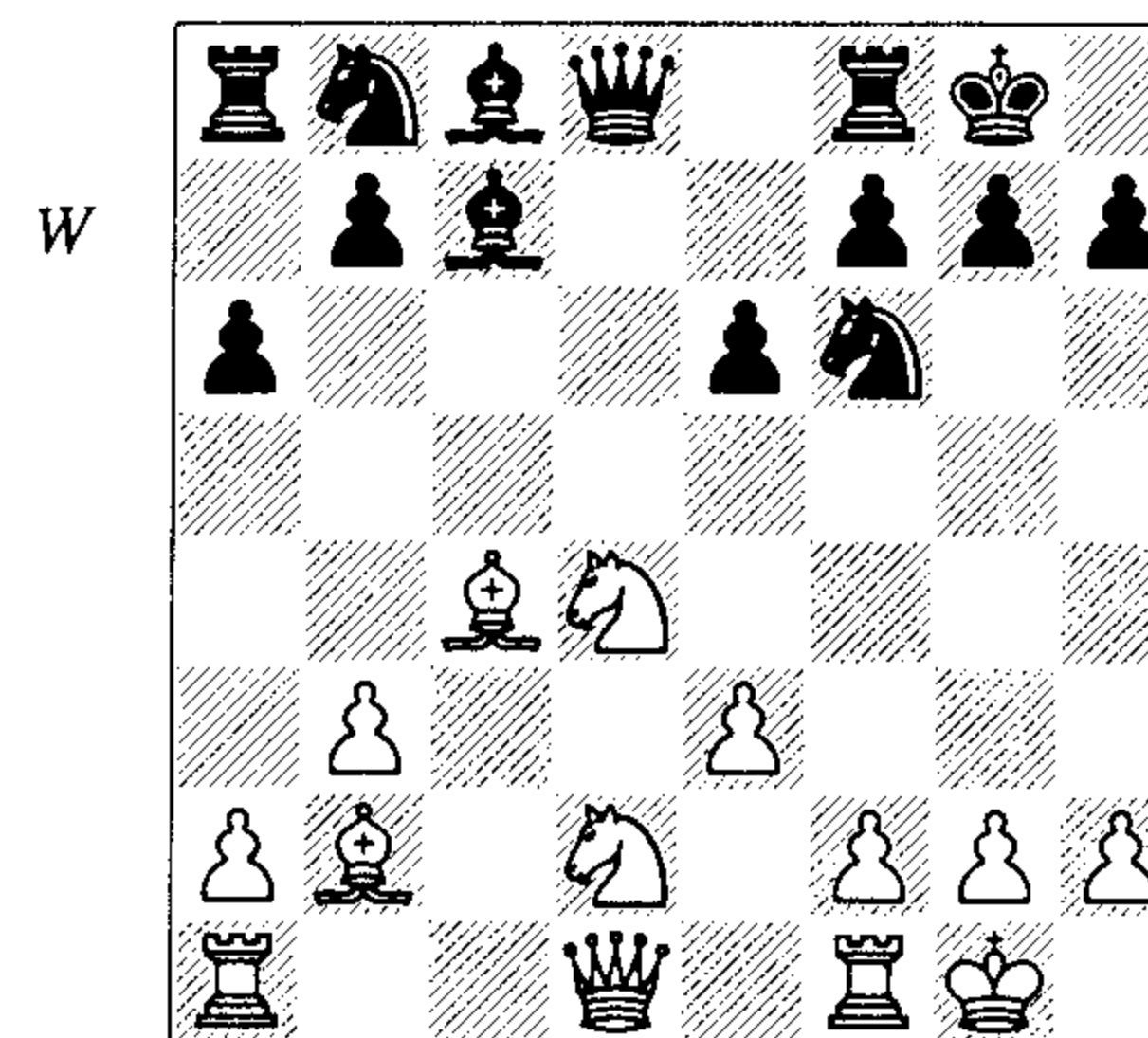
The e-pawn must now be defended.

22...Qe7 23 Qh4

White has won bishop for knight; the advantage is small but permanent. Normally, this would not be enough to give serious winning chances even though Black's defence could well be torturous. In Miles-de la Villa, London 1994, it was exactly that and the English grandmaster eventually ground out a win.

C2)

10...Qc7 (D)



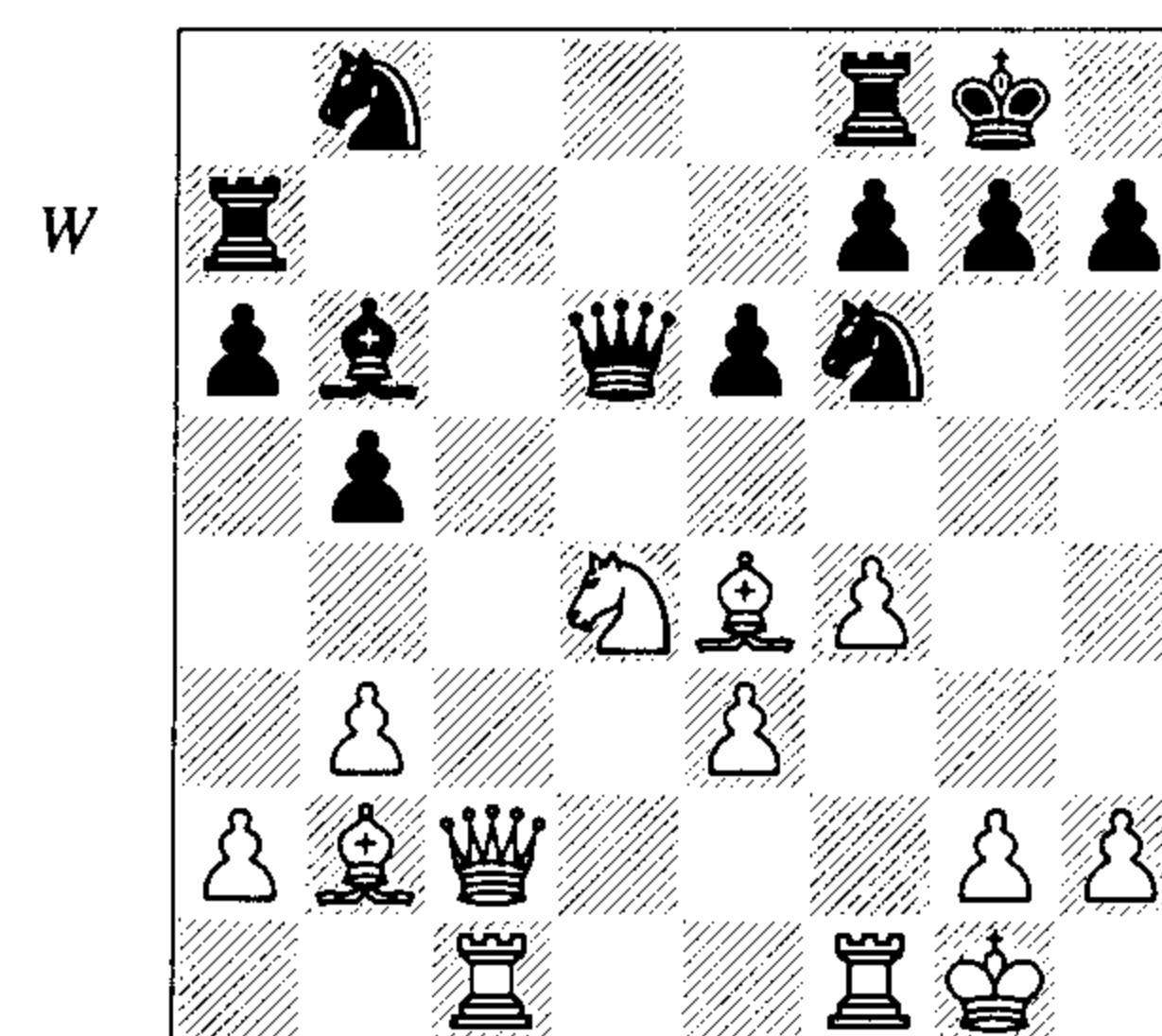
11 Rxc1 Qd6

This approach seems like an improvement over Line C1. Black has no worries about the d6-square here.

12 f4 b5 13 Qd3 Qb7

Or 13...e5 14 Qe4.

14 Qc2 Qb6 15 Qe4 Qxe4 16
Qxe4 Ra7 (D)

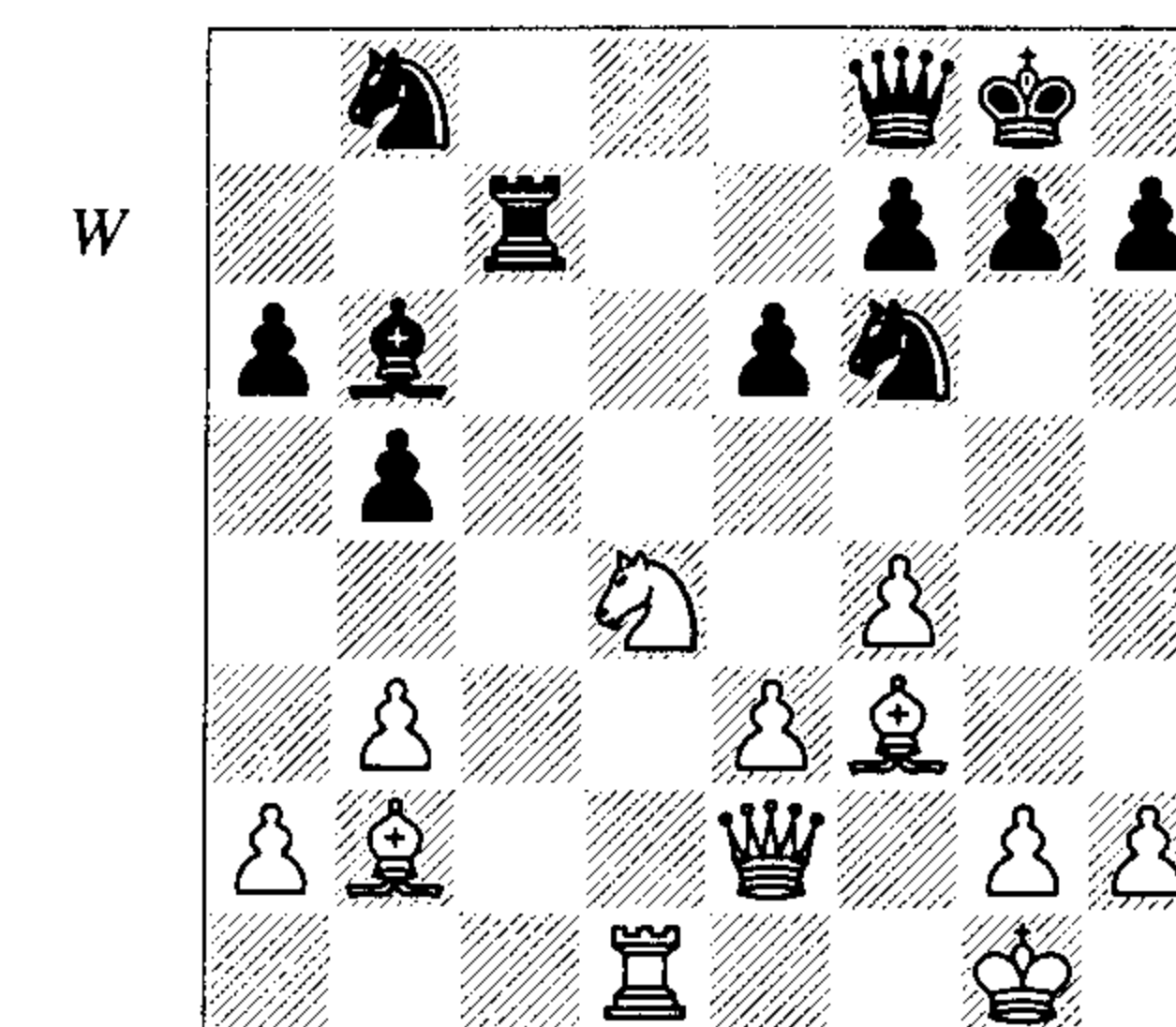


Black has given up his light-squared bishop but he has judged everything well.

17 Qf3 Rxc7

Black has successfully solved the problem of the a8-rook.

18 Qe2 Rfc8 19 Rxc7 Rxc7 20
Rd1 Qf8 (D)



Black has no immediate problems, but in the long term White may be able to make the bishop-pair count.

21 Qh1 Qc8 22 h3 Qfd7

22...Qa5 looks good. I cannot see why Black delayed this move.

23 Qe4 g6 24 Qf3 Qa5 25 Qe5
Qc3

Finally, Black neutralizes the potential weakness on the dark squares.

26 Qxc3

26 Qc6 is no good due to 26...Rxc6
27 Qxc6 Qxc6 28 Rxc1 b4.

26...Rxc3 27 Qd2 Rxc7

1/2-1/2 Miles-Ivanchuk, Moscow 1990. After struggling for a while, Black can now look forward to developing his last piece in comfort.

That concludes this chapter. Not a lot of fireworks but the moves 7 Qd3, 7 b3 and 7 Qbd2 have received some attention recently. Miles is one of several GMs who has had numerous

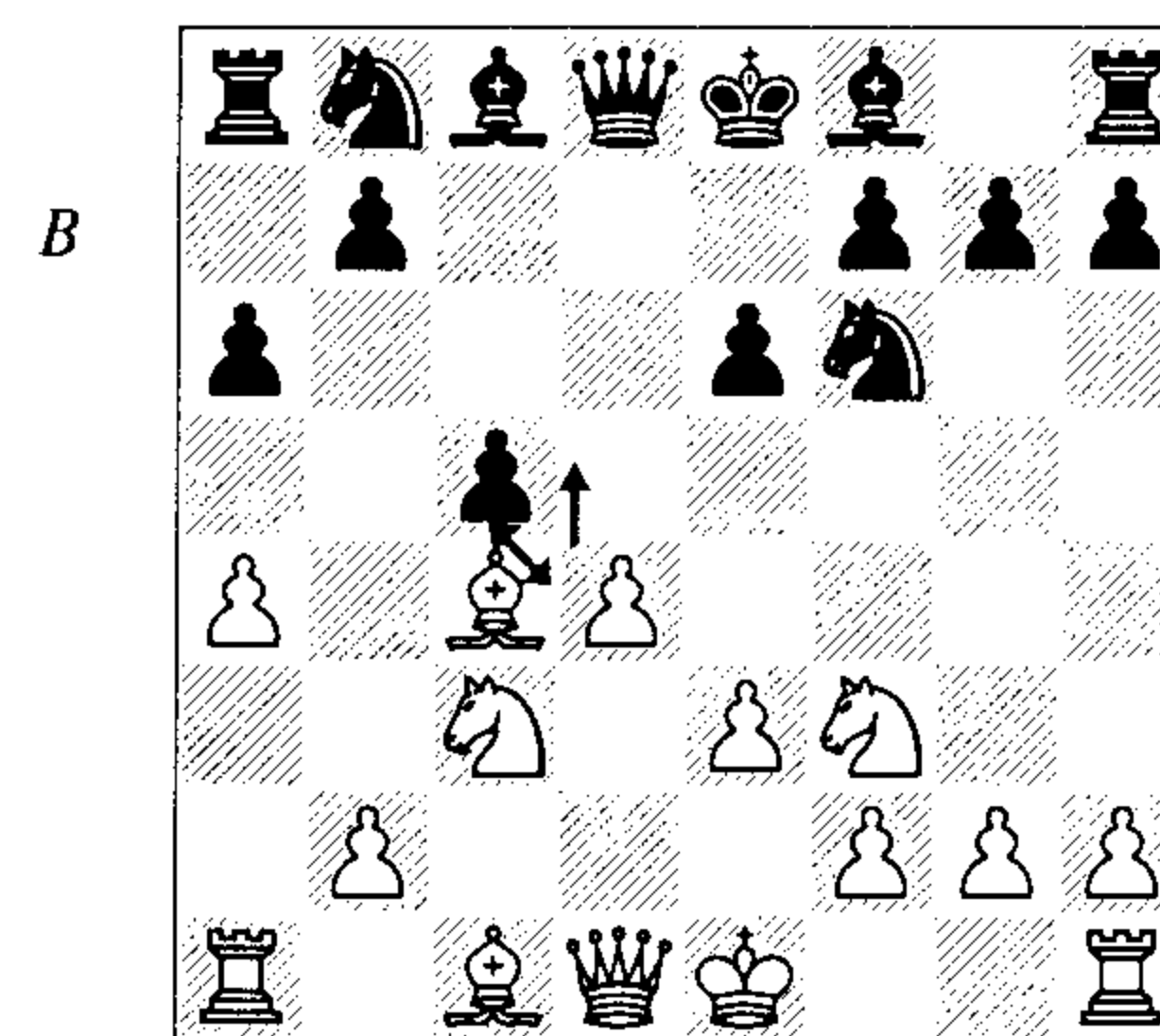
experiments with these systems. White is happy to avoid home preparation and rely on positional understanding in many cases. In general, the positions are evenly balanced but it is not true to say they are dull. In many of the games, tactical skirmishes occur when the game is well under way, courtesy

of the bishop on b2, when both players have had time to prepare all their forces for the ensuing battle. In other instances, a small slip, most commonly by Black, is all that is needed to keep White happy, as he will then nibble away on some small advantage, patience very much being a virtue.

6 Classical Variation with a4

In this chapter we will look at positions from the Classical Variation where White has played a4 to prevent ...b5 and the normal queenside expansion by Black. Although by no means the only possibility, the normal sequence is:

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 a4 (D)



Since a4 is a pawn move which does not speed up development, it is unusual for White to be able to develop quick attacks. Apart from the loss of time, the move a4 also weakens the b4-square and for this reason we shall concentrate on developing the queen's knight to c6 rather than d7.

Difficulties that Black encounters in this chapter mainly concern queenside development. The black queen can get harassed on the c- and d-files

and there is rarely enough time to change places with the rook and reach a position of queen on b8, bishop on b7 and rook on c8 or d8.

Once again, White may look at e4-e5 plans and Black will always try to block this advance. However, the time-out a4 gives White's plan less chance of succeeding.

In this chapter we will not examine the exchange on d4, which leaves White with an isolated d-pawn; that comes in Chapter 8. Here we look at two main ways in which the tension can be resolved: either White advances d4-d5, or he exchanges on c5, leaving the pawn structure vaguely symmetrical.

We will consider a number of thematic examples before looking at the theory.

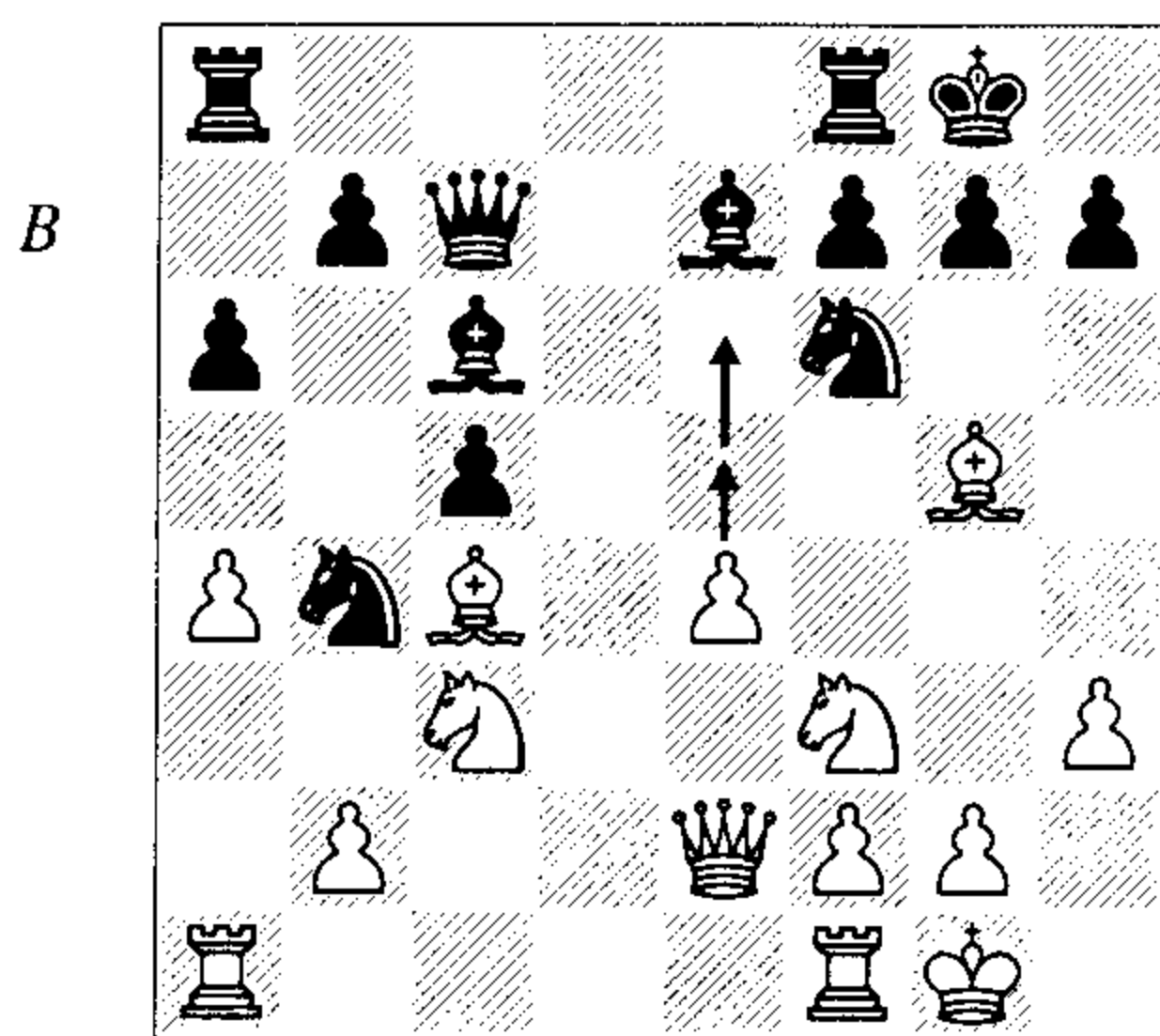
White plays d4-d5

After the advance d4-d5 by White, Black should capture on d5. Often, there will be further exchanges on d5 but basically, three possibilities remain. Either White will eventually recapture with:

- 1) another minor piece on d5; or
- 2) a pawn on d5, which will turn out to be either weak or strong

We shall look at these in turn.

White recaptures with a minor piece on d5



Wegner – Zo, Varga
Budapest 1987

Here White has played, with the black bishop on e7 (rather than d6), 12 ♙xd5 (rather than 12 ♜xd5) – see note 'b4' to White's 10th move in the theory section. This position was reached after the bishop was then chased away from d5. We now have a typical QGA situation, where White possesses a central pawn and Black does not.

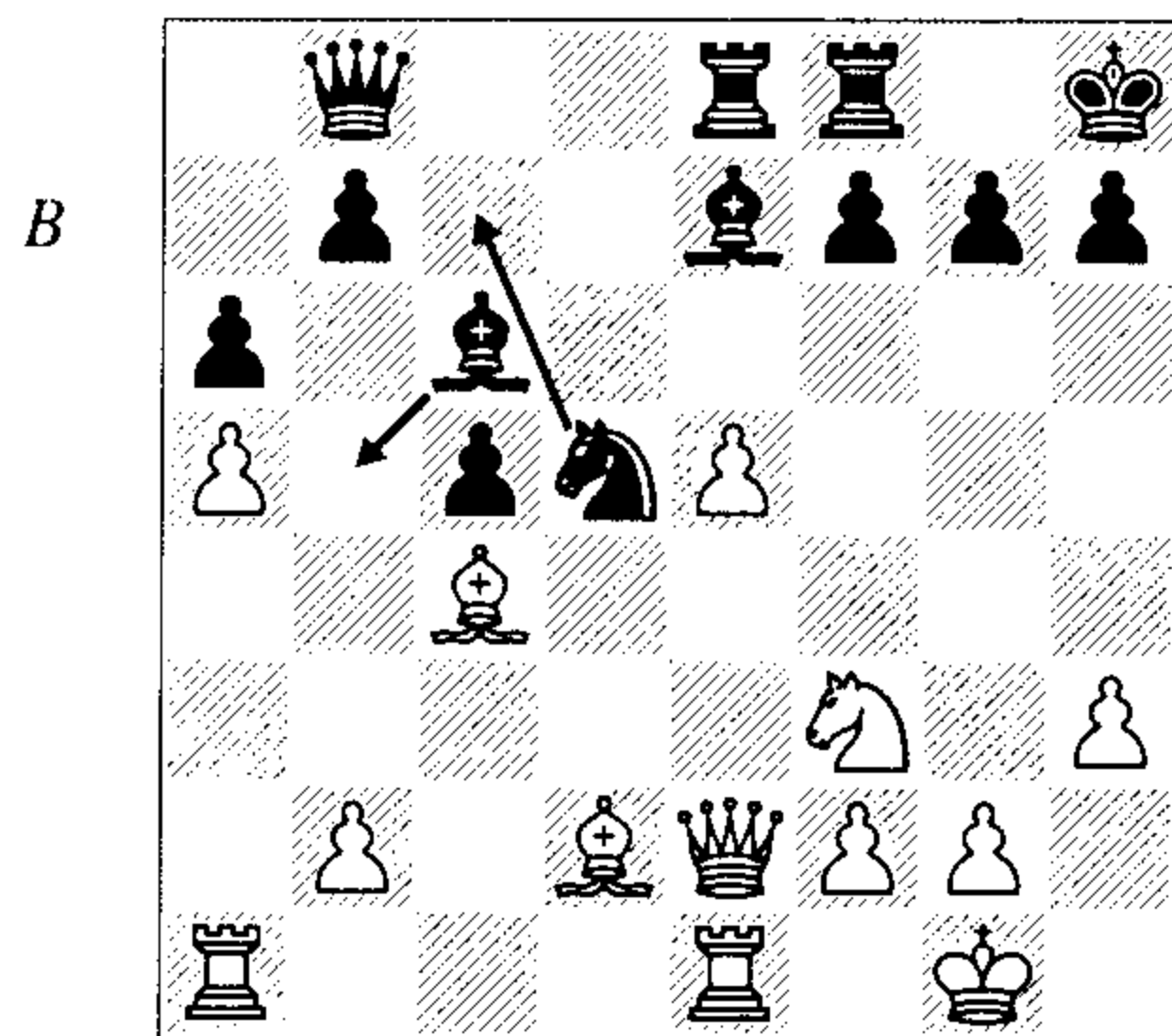
15... ♚h8

It is difficult to explain this move, except that the king has moved off the a2-g8 diagonal and out of the line of the bishop. Moving a rook to a central file is more sensible.

16 ♜fe1 ♞ae8 17 e5 ♞fd5 18 ♞xd5 ♞xd5 19 ♙d2 ♞b8

Optimistically hoping to achieve the ...b5 advance.

20 a5 (D)



Note the difference here and with positions where the a5-pawn is not a strength (see the next example).

20... ♙d8

Black continues to play passively. 20... ♞c7 and ... ♙b5 was a way to limit the damage.

21 ♞d3 ♞b4

I really do not like this idea. The exchange on b4 favours White. Black has volunteered to have doubled pawns.

22 ♙xb4 cxb4 23 ♙d5 ♙xd5 24 ♞xd5 h6 25 ♞ac1 b6

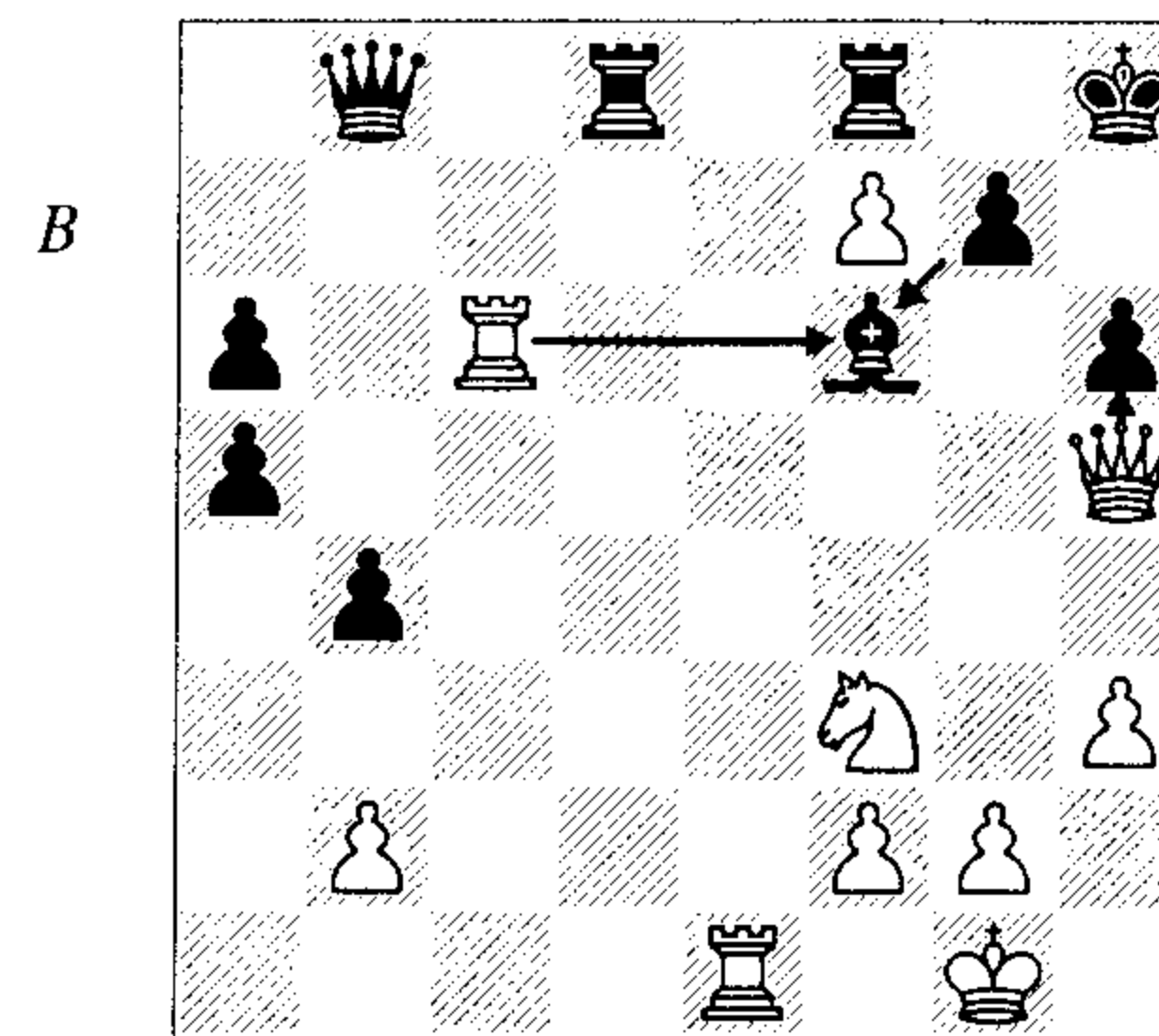
The position is advantageous to White. He controls the only two open files on the board and the queen and knight combination is better than the queen and bishop combination.

26 e6 ♙f6

Played in order to prevent the entry of the knight to e5 but the text-move gives White a passed pawn on the seventh.

27 exf7 ♞d8 28 ♞h5 bxa5 29 ♞c6 (D)

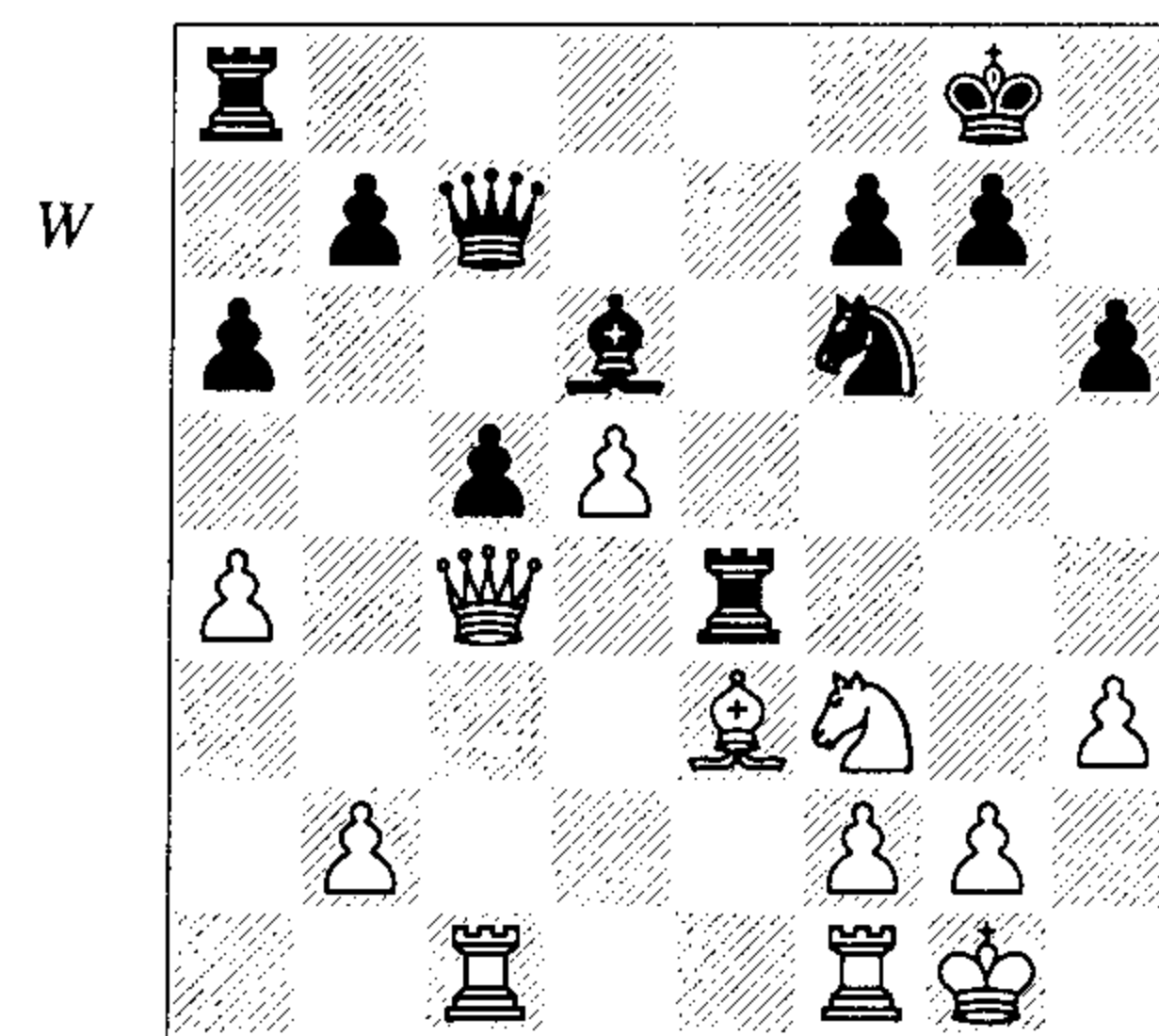
This is pretty overwhelming. The final few moves demonstrate the power



of knight vs bishop with what is now such a strong passed pawn.

29... ♞d6 30 ♞xd6 ♞xd6 31 ♞e8 ♚h7 32 ♞xf8 ♞xf8 33 ♞f5+ ♚h8 34 ♞e6 ♚h7 35 ♞e8 ♙e7 36 ♞e5 1-0
 ♞d7 follows immediately.

Weak passed d-pawn



Hulak – Radulov
Surakarta/Denpasar 1982

Here, two pairs of minor pieces have been exchanged but White has a passed d-pawn.

19 ♞c2

It makes sense for White to keep the pressure on the c5-pawn. If Black plays ...b6 at some point then a4-a5 is possible in order to shatter the defence of c5.

19... ♞d7 20 b3 ♞ee8

Black threatens the d5-pawn.

21 ♞fd1 ♞ac8 22 a5

Black had ...b5 in mind.

22... ♞b5 23 ♞a2 ♞ed8

No need for any startling combinations here. Having sidelined the white queen, Black begins to round up the d5-pawn.

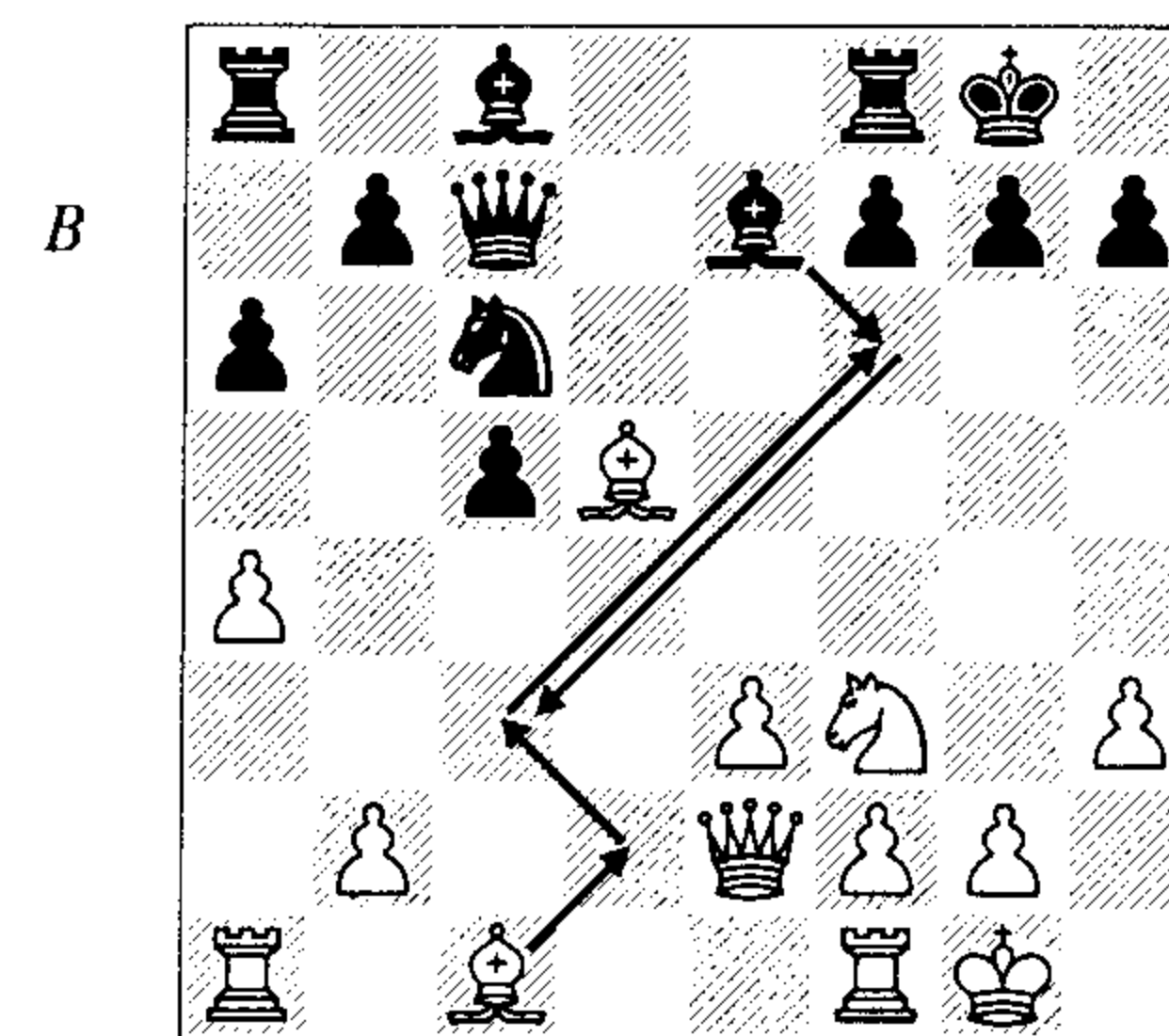
24 ♞c2 ♙e7 25 ♞cd2 ♞e4 26 ♞c2 ♙f6

All the time Black improves the placing of his pieces.

27 ♞dc1 ♞xd5

The d-pawn falls and Black has a large advantage.

Strong passed d-pawn



Browne – Zaltsman
New York 1983

The problem piece, from Black's point of view, is the bishop on d5. It needs to be challenged.

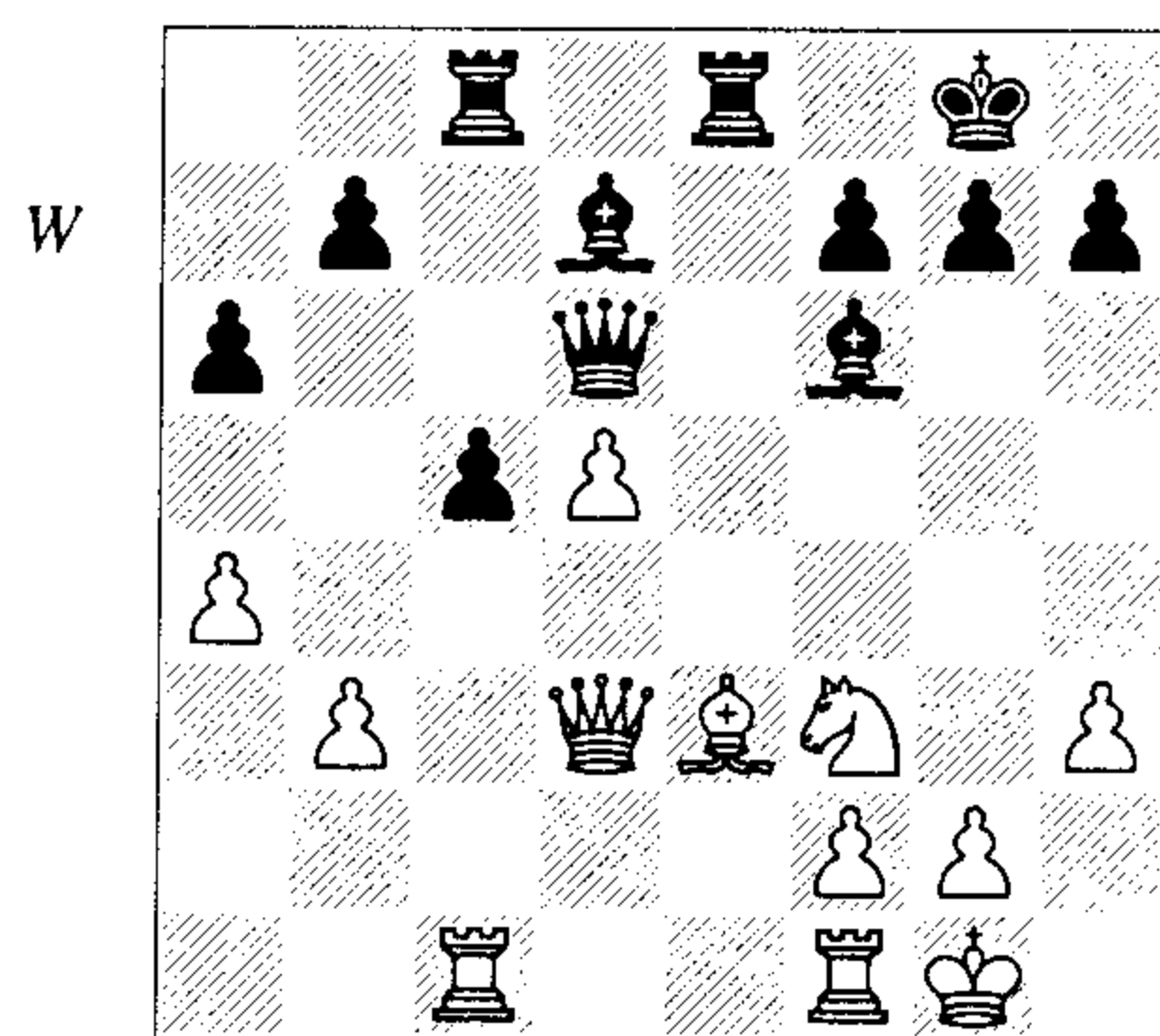
13...♙f6

But this does not do it. 13...♘b4 was better. My guess is that 14 ♙c4 would then have been played because after 14 e4 ♘xd5 15 exd5 ♙f5, Black is ready to place a rook on d8 and the d-pawn is going nowhere. Black's dark-squared bishop only needs to occupy the long diagonal if White's queen's bishop is threatening to occupy that same diagonal.

14 e4 ♖e8 15 ♙e3 ♘b4 16 ♖ac1 ♘xd5 17 exd5

17 ♖xc5 ♘f4 18 ♚d2 ♘xh3+ 19 gxh3 ♚d8 is not what the doctor ordered. Now White has a passed pawn.

17...♙d7 18 b3 ♖ac8 19 ♚d3 ♚d6 (D)



20 ♖fd1

White, with all his forces poised for action, is now ready for the next stage of the game.

20...b5 21 a5 g6

This move causes more problems than it solves. 21...h6 was better.

22 ♚d2

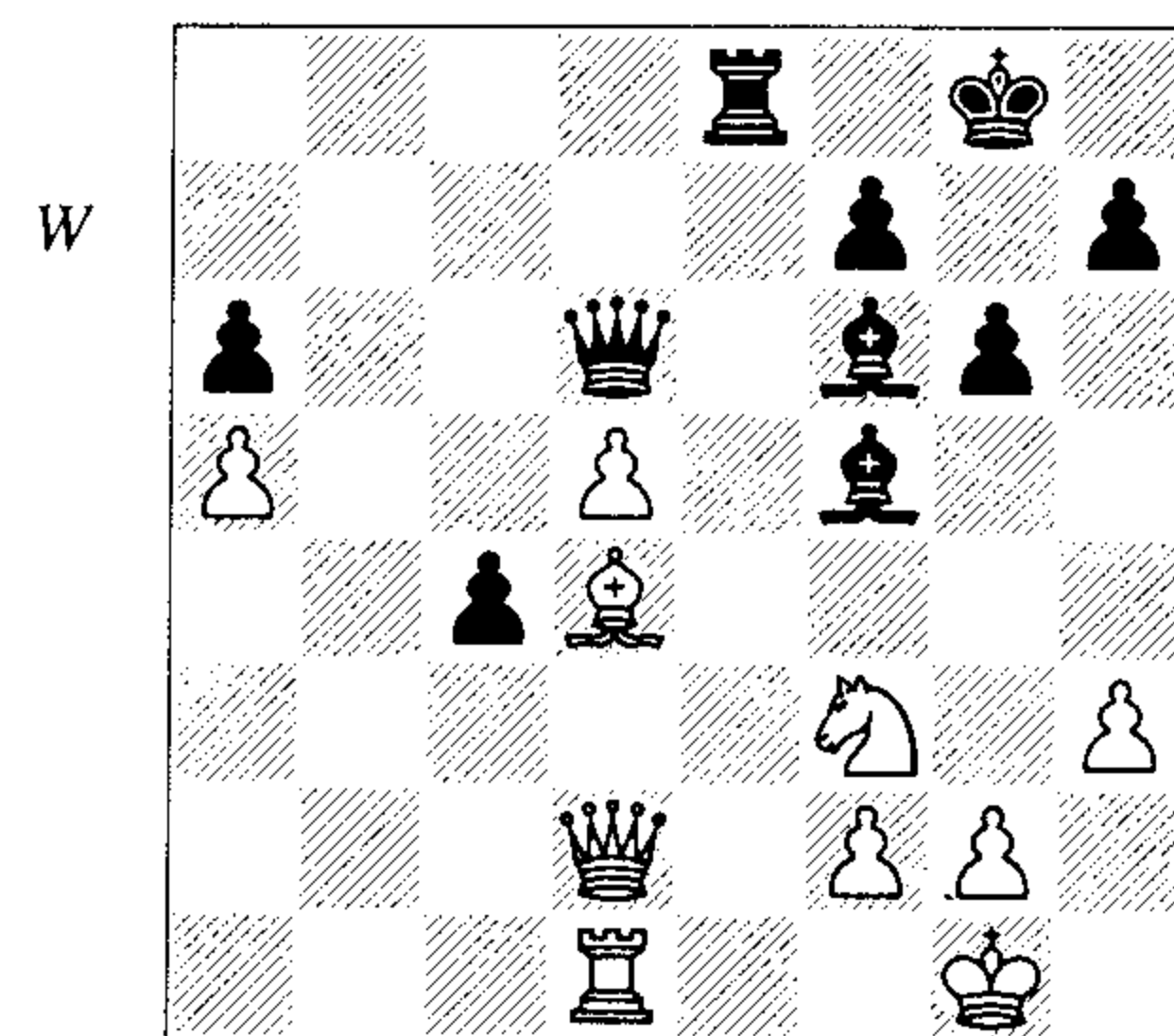
White has the advantage and is now trying to remove the blockade from his passed pawn with ♙f4.

22...c4 23 bxc4 ♖xc4 24 ♖xc4 bxc4 25 ♙d4

Better now than 25 ♙f4.

25...♙f5 (D)

Not a good move, but Black was beginning to go under.



26 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 27 ♚f4

Everything has gone wrong for Black. Now the c4-pawn is *en prise*, g4 is a threat and White's passed pawn is ready to advance. Note that the pawn cannot now be blocked on either d6 or d7, and the bishop is useless against White's knight.

27...c3 28 g4

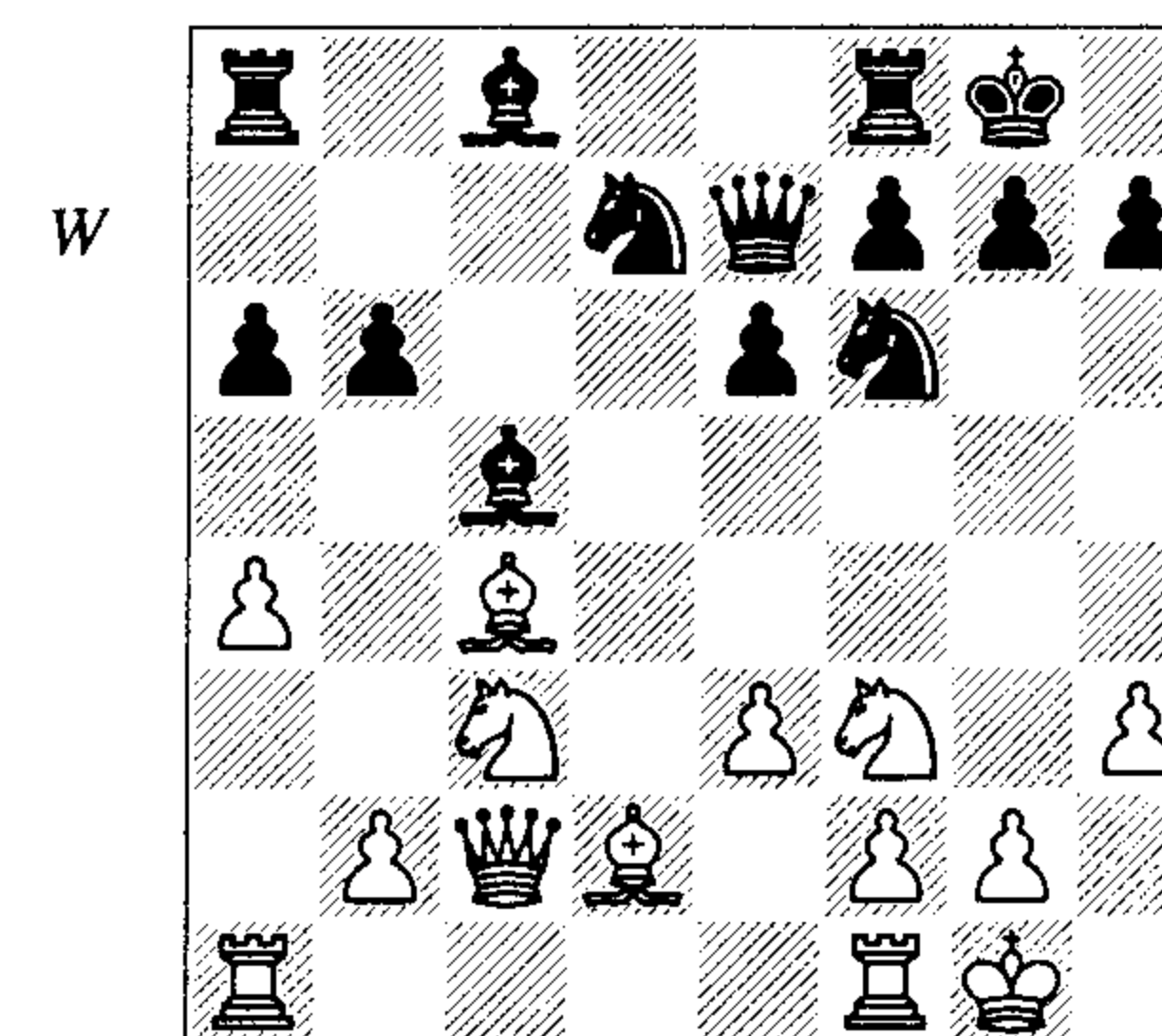
White now wins a piece.

The reader will have noted the role that knights can play in supporting their passed pawns in these examples.

They can hop around and attack squares of both colours and aid the advance of the pawn whereas sometimes the bishop is helpless in defence.

Symmetrical structures

The pawn structure in the following diagram is vaguely symmetrical, a situation that often arises after the exchange on c5.



Fridman – Korneev

Ubeda 1997

Black's queenside expansion has been prevented by White's a4. However, Black has chosen d7 for the knight rather than c6. Black is slightly behind in development and has still to move the c8-bishop. He has developed the queen to e7 so it will not come under pressure from white rooks on the c- and d-files.

14 e4

Typically, White plays for e4-e5.

14...♙d6

White appears to have prepared well. The bishop is forced to move off its apparently good square. Black cannot play the common ...♘g4 because h3 has been played, while ...e5 runs into ♙g5 and ♘d5. Of course, if the queen had moved to, and stayed on, c7 then e4-e5 would not be a problem, but instead there would be the potential problem of having the queen on an open file.

15 ♖ae1

With hindsight we can say that White should not have sandwiched his rook in on f1. After 15 ♖ad1, 15...♙b7 16 ♙g5 is more problematic for Black, but Black has 15...♘e5 16 ♘xe5 ♙xe5, preparing ...♙b7 and ...♖ac8 to hassle White's queen.

15...♘e5 16 ♘xe5 ♙xe5

A nice mechanism to prevent e4-e5, but also Black's bishop is active and Black continues to put pressure on e4.

17 ♙e3

Consistent play: Black has deserted the b6-pawn, so White attacks it. White also prevents ...♙d4+ after the future f2-f4 advance.

17...♙b7 (D)

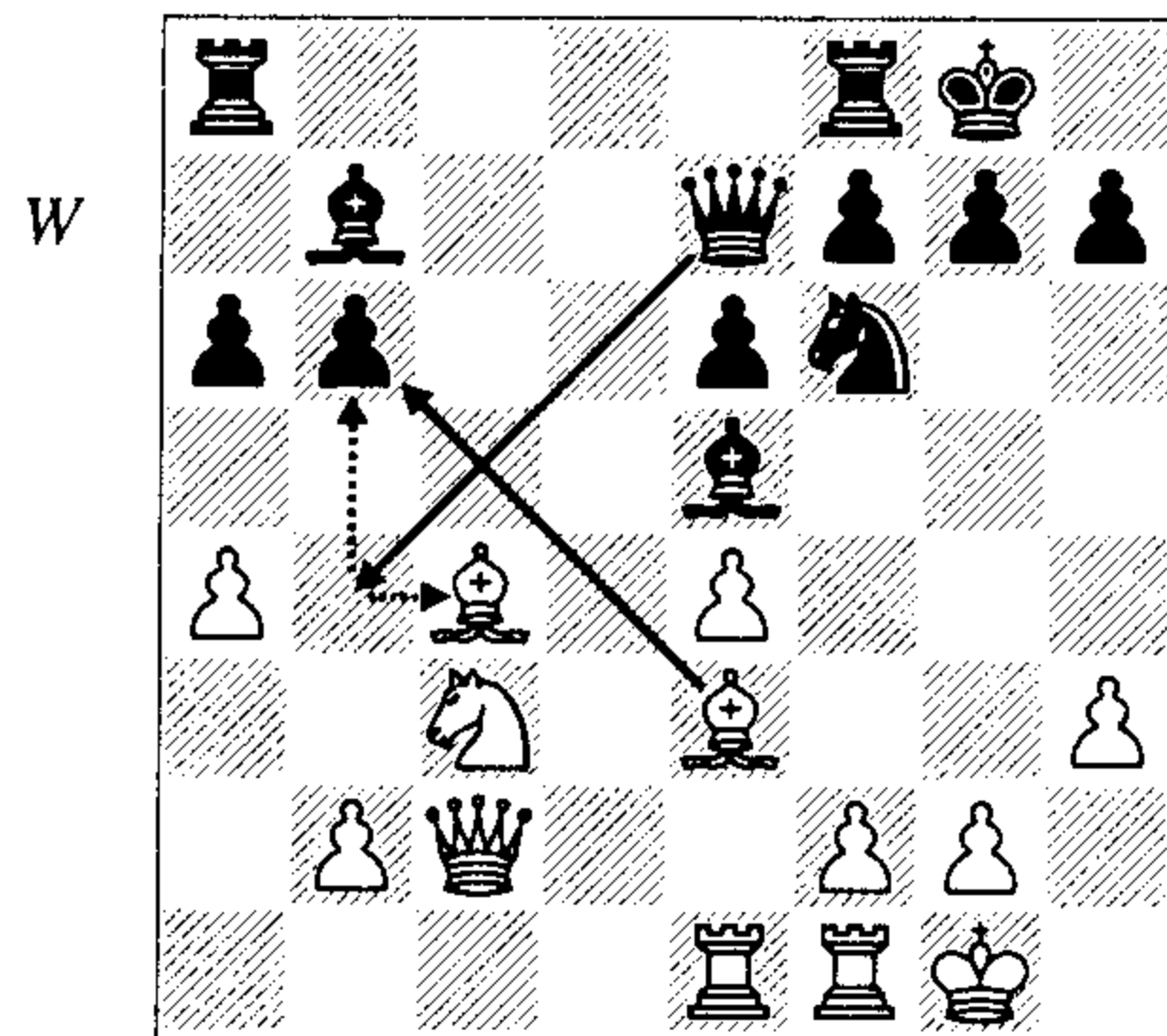
Black continues to play actively with his minor pieces.

18 ♙d3

Black is comfortably placed after 18 ♙xb6 ♚b4 19 ♚b3 ♚xb3 20 ♙xb3 ♙xc3 21 bxc3 ♘xe4.

18...♙c7 19 f4

The plan associated with the central pawn advance no longer works. White should have tried 19 ♚e2, attempting



to keep the a8-rook tied down to the defence of a6.

19...e5 20 f5 ♖fd8

Black has prevented White's plan and stands well.

The Theory of the Classical Variation with 7 a4

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 e3 e6 5 ♙xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 a4 ♘c6

To make full use of the b4-square, we shall always try, after a2-a4, to develop the knight to c6.

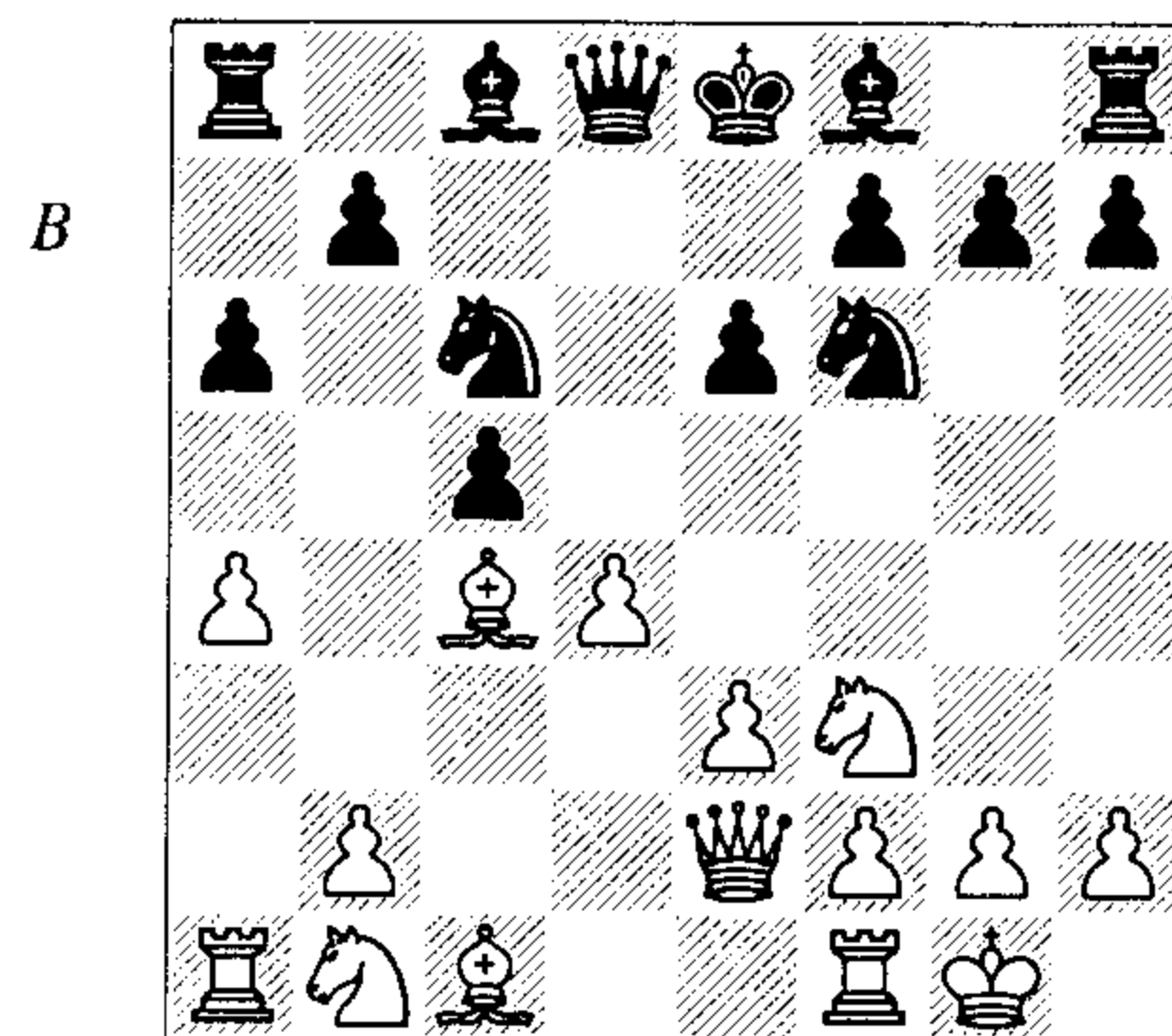
8 ♖e2 (D)

8...♗c7

After 8...cxd4 9 ♖d1, Black can reach positions discussed in Chapter 8 by 9...♙e7 10 exd4; instead he can avoid IQP positions by 9...d3:

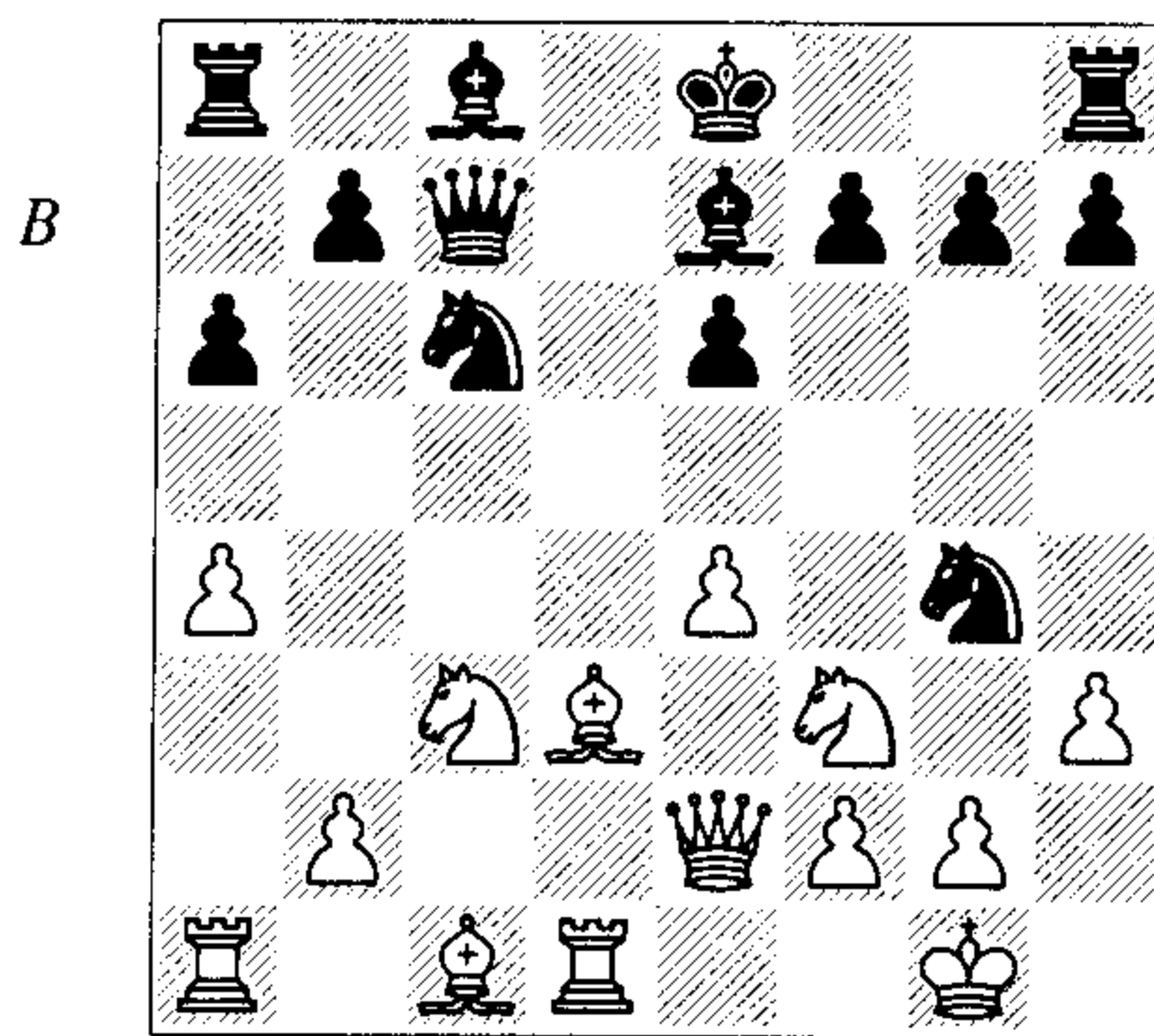
a) 10 ♙xd3 ♗c7 11 ♘c3 and now:

a1) 11...♙c5 (this is the most popular, but my feeling is that the bishop on c5 can sometimes be a target) 12 ♙d2 ♘b4 13 ♘e4 ♘xd3 14 ♘xf6+



gxf6 15 ♗xd3 b6 16 ♖ac1 (the bishop is just exposed on c5; it has not been able to threaten anything as White has kept his pawn on e3) 16...♗b7 17 ♙b4 leaves Black regretting her decision to weaken her king position, Novikov-Skripchenko, Cappelle la Grande 1996. White won shortly.

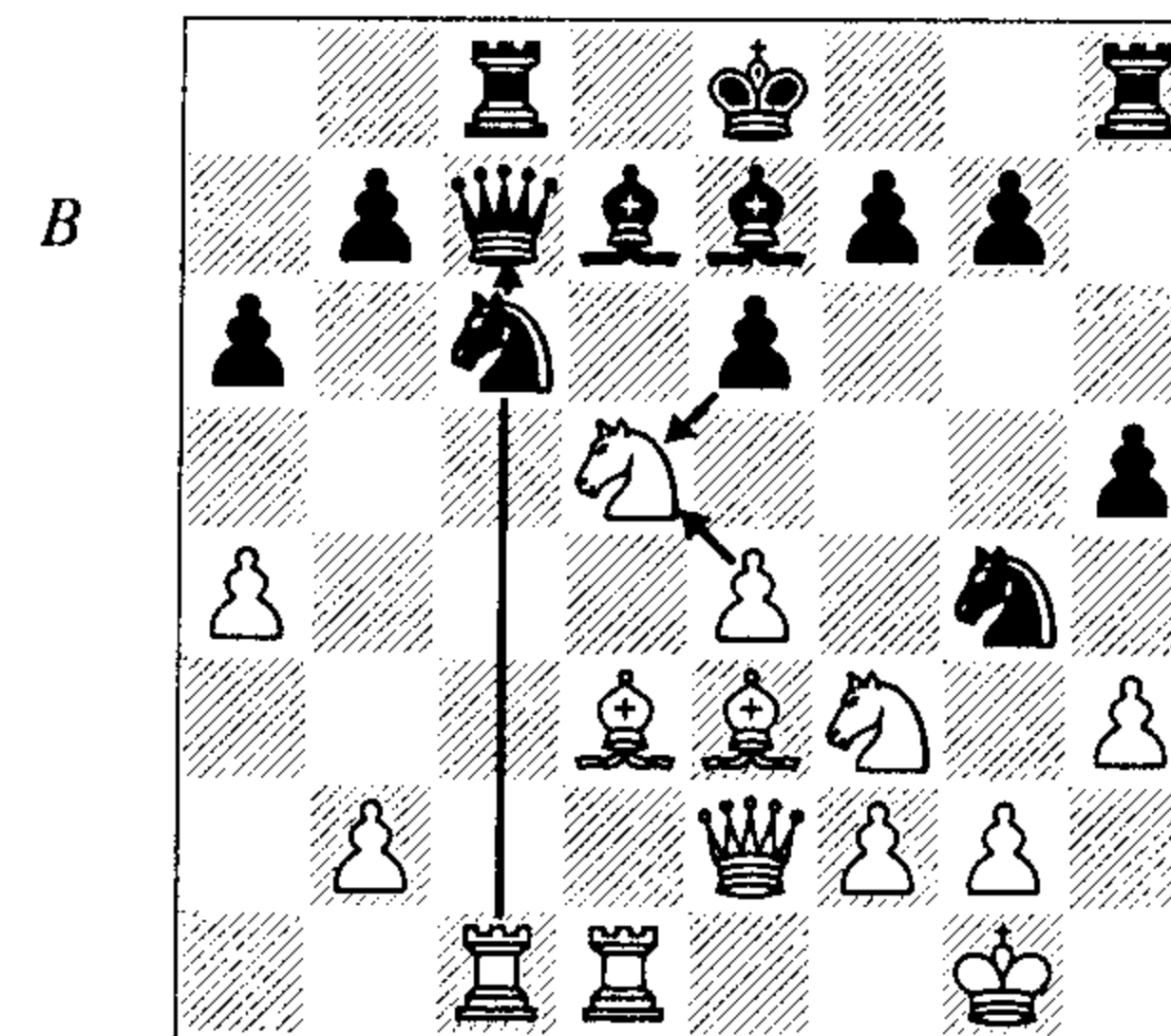
a2) 11...♙e7 12 e4 (no doubt 12 ♙d2 is also hard to meet in view of the awkward pin on the c6-knight, especially after 12...b6 13 ♖ac1, but at least the bishop on e7 is at a safe distance) 12...♘g4 13 h3 (D) and now:



a21) The immediate reaction here is to think that Black can win by 13...♘d4, but 14 ♙b5+ ♘xb5 15 axb5 ♘e5 16 ♙f4 is to White's advantage.

a22) The routine 13...♘ge5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 ♙f4 is advantageous to White, especially after 15...♙d6 16 ♙b5+ ♙e7, Marshall-Grünfeld, Warsaw 1935.

a23) 13...h5 14 ♙e3 (White is required to stop Black's ...♙c5) 14...♙d7 15 ♖ac1 ♖c8 (15...♗b8 does not inspire confidence; if instead Black exchanges on e3 then White can switch to the conventional plan of playing around the advance e4-e5) 16 ♘d5 (D).



This is a typical blow in such a situation. 16...exd5 17 exd5 ♙f8 (Black still has dreams down the h-file) 18 dxc6 ♙xc6 19 ♙e4 (the c6-bishop is still pinned, but this was not the best way of utilizing that fact; 19 ♙d2 and 19 ♙d4 threaten ♙f5) 19...♘xe3 20 ♗xe3 ♖h6 and we see that ...h5 had other uses! Black is still fighting and

things are not as bad as they were, Lesjak-Grosar, Sentjur 1996.

a3) The above problems led me to try 11...e5 in Blackburne-Buckley, Wales 1998, when after 12 ♘g5 ♙e7 Black was under no pressure. After 12 ♙c4 e4 13 ♘g5 ♙g4, an interesting tactical position arises, e.g. 14 ♙xf7+ ♗xf7 15 ♘xf7 ♙xe2 16 ♘xh8 ♙xd1 17 ♘d1 ♙b4 is good for Black. Alternatively, 12 ♙d2 ♙b4 throws up an interesting twist with threats of ...e4 in some positions winning a piece! Delaying the development of the bishop proves beneficial after 12 ♘e4 ♙e7. Most probably White will pre-empt ...♙g4 with 12 h3, when there is a lot of unexplored territory after 12...♙e6, for example 13 e4 ♙c5 or 13 ♘g5 ♙b3 14 ♙c2 ♘a5 (14...♙xc2 15 ♗xc2 ♘b4) 15 ♙xb3 (15 ♘b5 ♗xc2 does not work for White) 15...♘xb3 16 ♖b1 ♙b4. In any event, Black has developed his light-squared bishop and has some pressure on the queenside squares whilst also having an eye on the a4-pawn after ...♗a5.

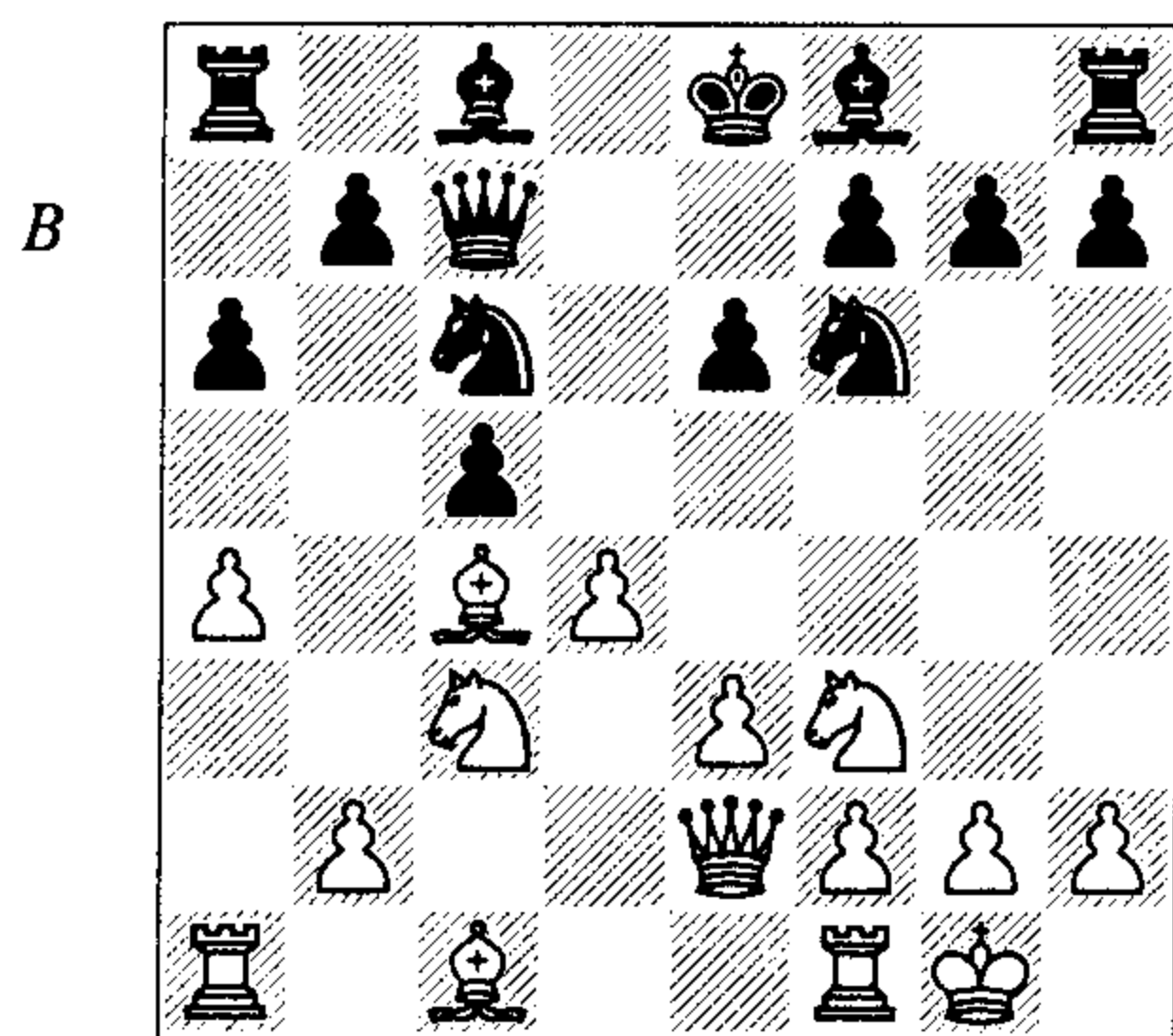
b) 10 ♖xd3 (in Chapter 4 we saw a similar position with the bishop on b3 and so White had to capture with the rook on d3; here, though, it exposes the rook and c4-bishop for an inconvenient knight fork; moreover in Chapter 4, White had also not played a2-a4) 10...♗c7 and now:

b1) 11 e4 ♘g4 12 h3 h5 (the routine move is 12...♘ge5 but Borge repeats an idea that we have already seen) 13 ♘bd2 ♙c5 14 hxg4 hxg4 15

e5 gxf3 16 ♖xf3 ♘b4 17 ♜c3 ♙d7 18 ♙e3 ♙xe3 19 ♚xe3 ♙c6 gives Black a fine position, Van der Sterren-Borge, Reykjavik 1996. The future attack on e5 from the knight and perhaps the rook from h5 gives White rather than Black more to think about here. Mating threats down the h-file also give White more to worry about in this position.

b2) 11 ♘c3 ♙d6 12 h3 0-0 13 e4 ♘e5 14 ♘xe5 ♙xe5 shows a typical, and fully acceptable method of stopping White's pawn advances, Espig-Keres, Tallinn 1975.

9 ♘c3 (D)



9...♙d6

If, in the future, White does not capture on c5, then the bishop is marginally better placed on d6 in order to support ...e6-e5 and also to have a long-distance attack on h2. In many cases, as we have touched on already, the bishop will be surprisingly effective on e5. Alternatively, 9...♙e7 10 dxc5 ♙xc5 (10...♘e4 11 ♘d4 is good for White) is just the same as 9...♙d6.

10 ♜d1

Or:

a) 10 dxc5 ♙xc5 (similar to note 'a' to Black's 8th move above) and now:

a1) 11 ♙d2 0-0 12 ♜fd1 ♙d7 13 ♙e1 (the innocuous manoeuvre by the bishop has made way for the rooks to operate, but really White could have done with the extra tension in this position by leaving the pawns on d4 and c5) 13...♜fd8 14 ♜ac1 ♙e8 15 ♙d3 ♘b4 16 ♙b1 ♜xd1 17 ♚xd1 ♜d8 is clearly fine for Black, Nikolac-Kapić, Zagreb 1997.

a2) 11 e4 ♘g4 12 g3 (White would rather not have to play this move but ...♘d4 was a big threat) and now:

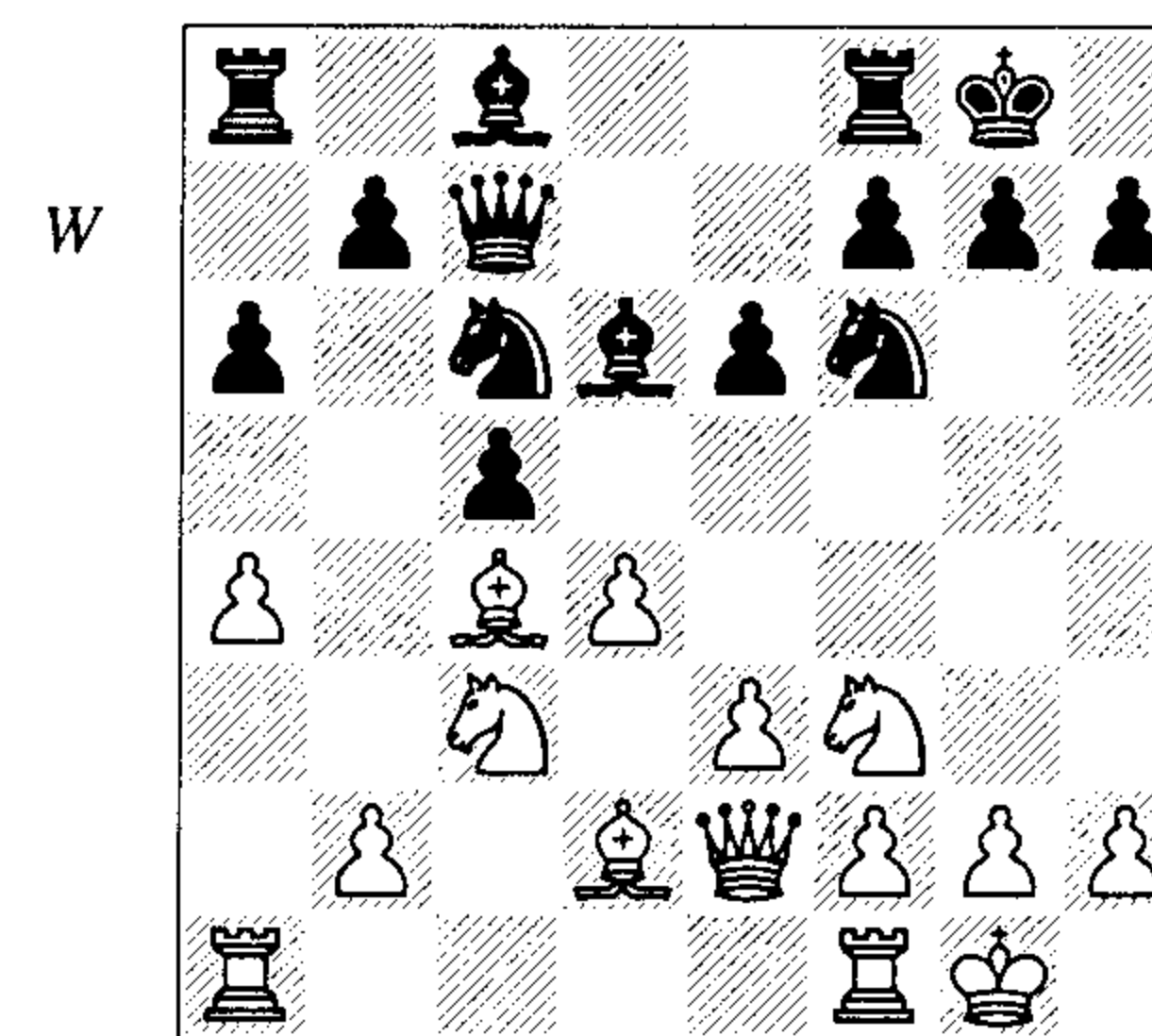
a21) 12...0-0 13 ♙f4 e5 14 ♘d5 ♚d6 15 ♙d2 (a very popular line over the years, but White has not scored well) 15...♘f6 (15...♙h8 has also been played with the idea of shoving the f-pawn down the board) 16 ♙c3 ♙g4 (a more straightforward approach) 17 ♚d3 ♜ad8 is fine for Black, as, for example, in Fedorchuk-Donchenko, Moscow 1995.

a22) 12...♘ge5 13 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 14 ♙a2 0-0 15 ♙e3 (15 ♙f4 is an awkward pin; I would prefer to avoid this and play line 'a21') 15...♜d8 16 ♜fd1 ♙d7 17 ♜ac1 ♙xe3 18 ♚xe3 ♚a5 (Black enjoys some queenside pressure) 19 ♘d5 (flashy, but not a problem for Black; 19 ♙b3 is better) 19...♙xa4 20 ♜c5 ♙b5 21 ♘e7+ ♙h8 22 ♜a1 (White is lost because the knight is trapped on e7, but this allows

a back-rank idea) 22...♚xa2 (here it is!) 23 ♚c1 (23 ♜xa2? ♜d1+ 24 ♙g2 ♙f1+ 25 ♙g1 ♙h3+ mates) 23...♚b3 24 ♜xe5 ♜d7 25 ♘c8 ♙c6 0-1 Vunder-Aniukhin, St Petersburg 1997.

Alternatively, the tension can be maintained a little longer with...

b) 10 ♙d2 0-0 (D) and now:



b1) 11 ♜fd1 transposes to the note to White's 11th move below.

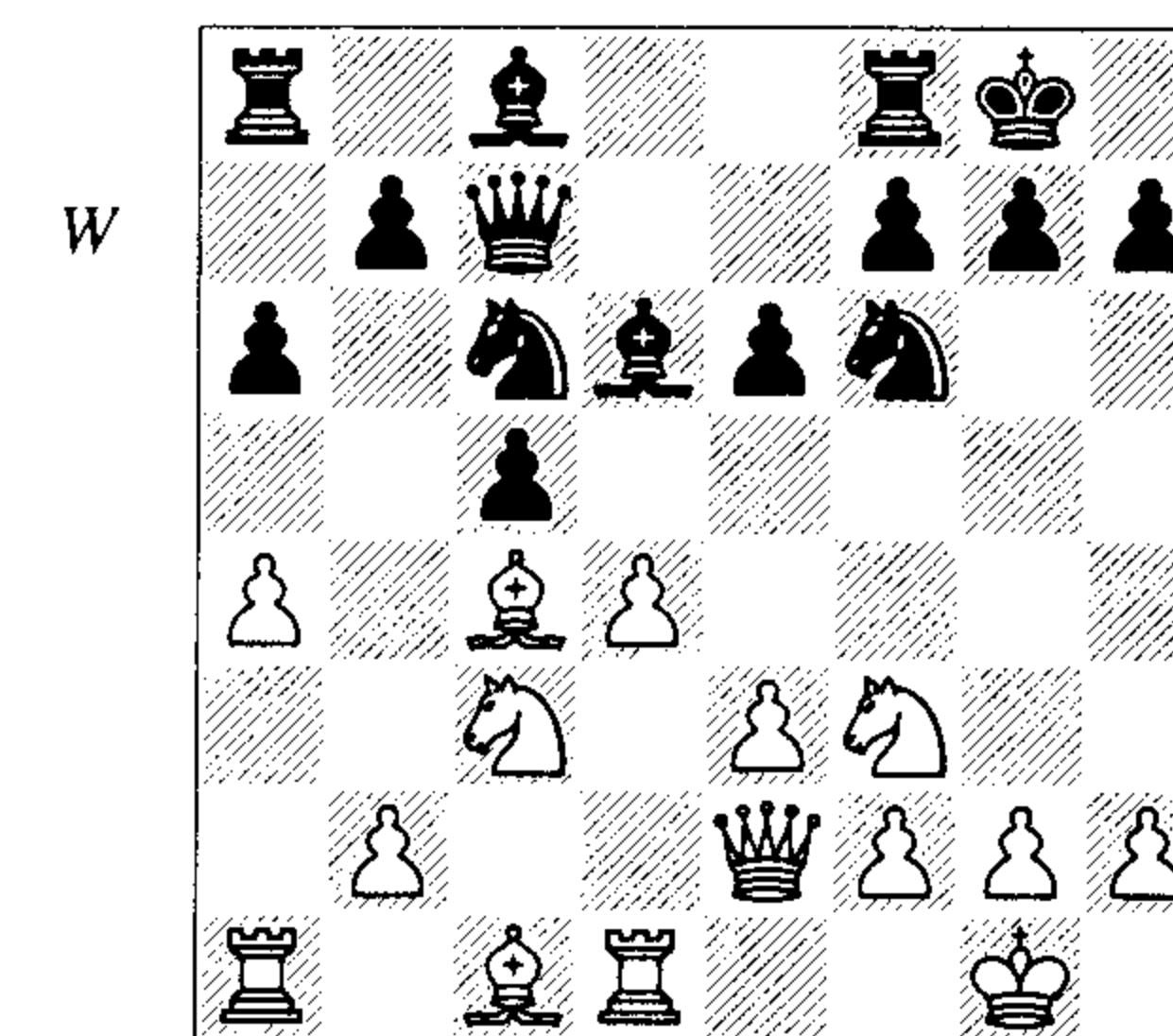
b2) 11 ♜fc1 b6 (11...e5 is best) 12 ♙d3 ♙b7 13 ♘e4 ♘e4 14 ♙xe4 ♜fc8 (this results in split pawns; 14...♚d7 is better) 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 ♙c3 is good for White, Petkevich-Aniukhin, St Petersburg 1997.

b3) 11 h3 b6 12 d5 exd5 13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 ♙xd5 ♙b7 15 ♙c3 ♘d4 16 ♘d4 ♙xd5 17 ♘f5 ♙h2+ 18 ♙h1 ♙e5 gives Black a slight but secure advantage, Novikov-Dunnington, Capelle la Grande 1996.

b4) 11 d5 exd5 12 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 13 ♙xd5 ♘e5 14 ♘xe5 ♙xe5 15 f4 (Miles is a believer in this pawn sacrifice) 15...♙xb2 16 ♜ab1 ♜d8 (16...♙f6 17

a5 ♜d8 looks like a better bet for Black; then 18 ♚c4 ♙e6 is an annoying possibility – he is still a pawn up, but more importantly the bishop on f6 keeps the white bishop from taking up a formidable post on c3) 17 ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 18 ♜xb2 b5 19 e4 is surprisingly good for White, Miles-Ye Rongguang, Beijing 1991.

10...0-0 (D)



11 h3

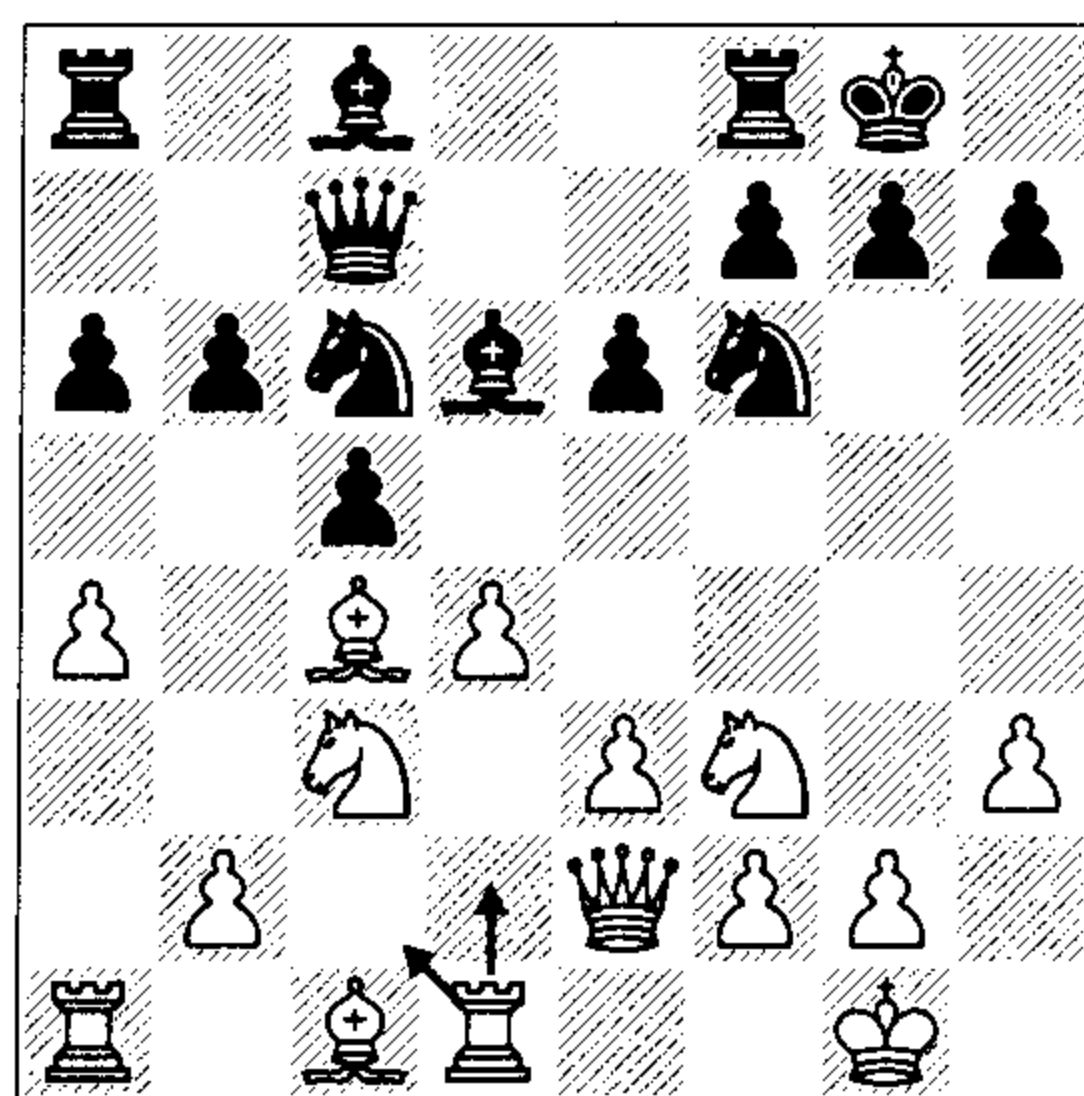
Alternatively, 11 ♙d2 b6 (I suspect that Black should go in for exchanges in the centre: perhaps on d4, but certainly on e5 by playing ...e6-e5, and using the tempo at the end because White must defend the h-pawn from the queen and bishop attack) 12 d5 exd5 13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 ♙xd5 ♙b7 15 ♙c3 (the bishop is on a good diagonal and it is slightly annoying for Black) and now:

a) 15...♘d4 could be suggested by analogy to Novikov-Dunnington, in note 'b3' to White's 10th move, where this idea led to equality in a similar

position, but there White had played h2-h3 and not ♖fd1; the difference is that the d1-rook crucially covers the d5- and d6-squares, which can be exploited after 16 ♘xd4 ♙xd5 (16...cxd4 17 ♙xb7) 17 ♘f5.

b) 15...♖ae8 16 ♗c4 (White has some pressure but this is not the best way of increasing it – it simply encourages too many exchanges; 16 ♖ac1 is better) 16...♗e5 17 ♘xe5 ♙xe5 18 ♙xb7 ♗xb7 19 ♖d5 and although White controls the only open file and has the threat a4-a5 in hand, the position is quickly becoming simplified, and this severely reduces his winning chances, Grabarczyk-Jaracz, Sopot 1997.

11...b6 (D)



12 dxc5

This leads to a vaguely symmetrical pawn structure. The main alternative is 12 d5 exd5 13 ♙xd5 ♙b7 14 e4 ♖ae8 and now:

a) 15 ♙e3 ♙f4 16 ♖ac1 (16 a5 immediately is possible though the rook

move pressurizing c5 comes with more recommendation; 16 ♖d2 is also interesting) 16...h6 (16...♖e7 has also been seen) 17 ♙xf4 (17 ♗d2 is better but White has his eye on winning a pawn) 17...♗xf4 18 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 19 ♗xa6 ♘xe4 20 ♗xb6 ♖e6 and Black is building up a vicious attack, Dzhandzhgava-Sadler, Erevan OL 1996. Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn.

b) 15 ♙g5 ♘d4 (this sharp position has attracted some interest over the years; initially, it was thought that White was better, but now it appears as though Black is holding his own) 16 ♘xd4 ♘xd5 17 ♘xd5 ♙xd5 18 ♘f5 ♖fe4 19 ♗h5 (19 ♗d2 does not promise anything for White) 19...f6 20 ♙h6 ♖fe8 21 ♙xg7 ♙f7? (21...♙h2+ is best) 22 ♗h6 (missing 22 ♘h6+, etc.; at the end of this line, the d6-bishop is hanging) 22...♙h2+ 23 ♗h1 ♙g6 and White is struggling to defend all his pieces, Morović-Lautier, Las Palmas 1994.

12...♙xc5 13 e4 ♘h5

This is important. After the automatic 13...♙b7 14 e5 ♘d7 (14...♘h5 15 ♘e4) 15 ♙f4 White gets what he wants.

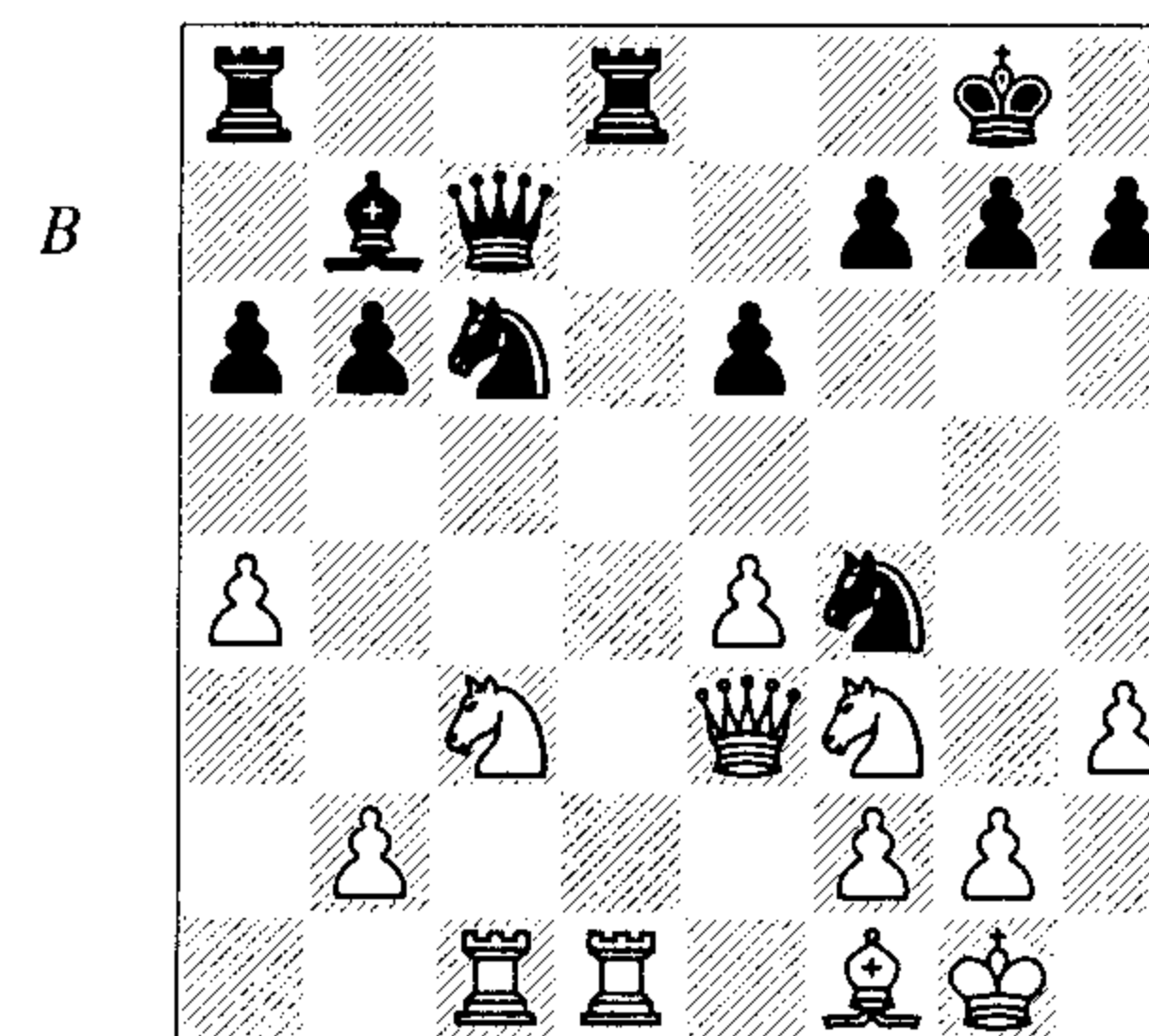
14 ♙e3 ♘f4 15 ♗d2! ♙xe3 16 ♗xe3 ♙b7 17 ♙f1

Again, sensible.

17...♖fd8 18 ♖ac1 (D)

18...♘g6

Exchanging two pairs of rooks on the d-file looks like a distinct possibility, but not a terribly exciting one. In



such a situation Black must look after his a- and b-pawns but the expected result is a draw.

19 ♘d2

Giving up control of d4 is not at all wise.

19...♖ab8 20 ♘c4 ♘d4

Following White's inaccuracies, Black now has the better of things, Juswanto-Sadler, Erevan OL 1996.

The theory of this chapter leaves the reader with a choice. Against 7 a4 Black can choose an early capture on d4 followed by ...d3 when I suggest meeting 10 ♙xd3 with 10...♗c7 11 ♘c3 e5. Alternatively, the set-up with ...♗c7, ...♙d6 and no capture on d4 can be used. In this case Black still has to decide whether to play ...b6 and ...♙b7 or ...e5. For White's part, he will look for a good moment to play d5 or dxc5. Whatever choices are made, an interesting struggle appears guaranteed, but there does not seem to be any cause for alarm on Black's part.

7 Queenless Middlegames

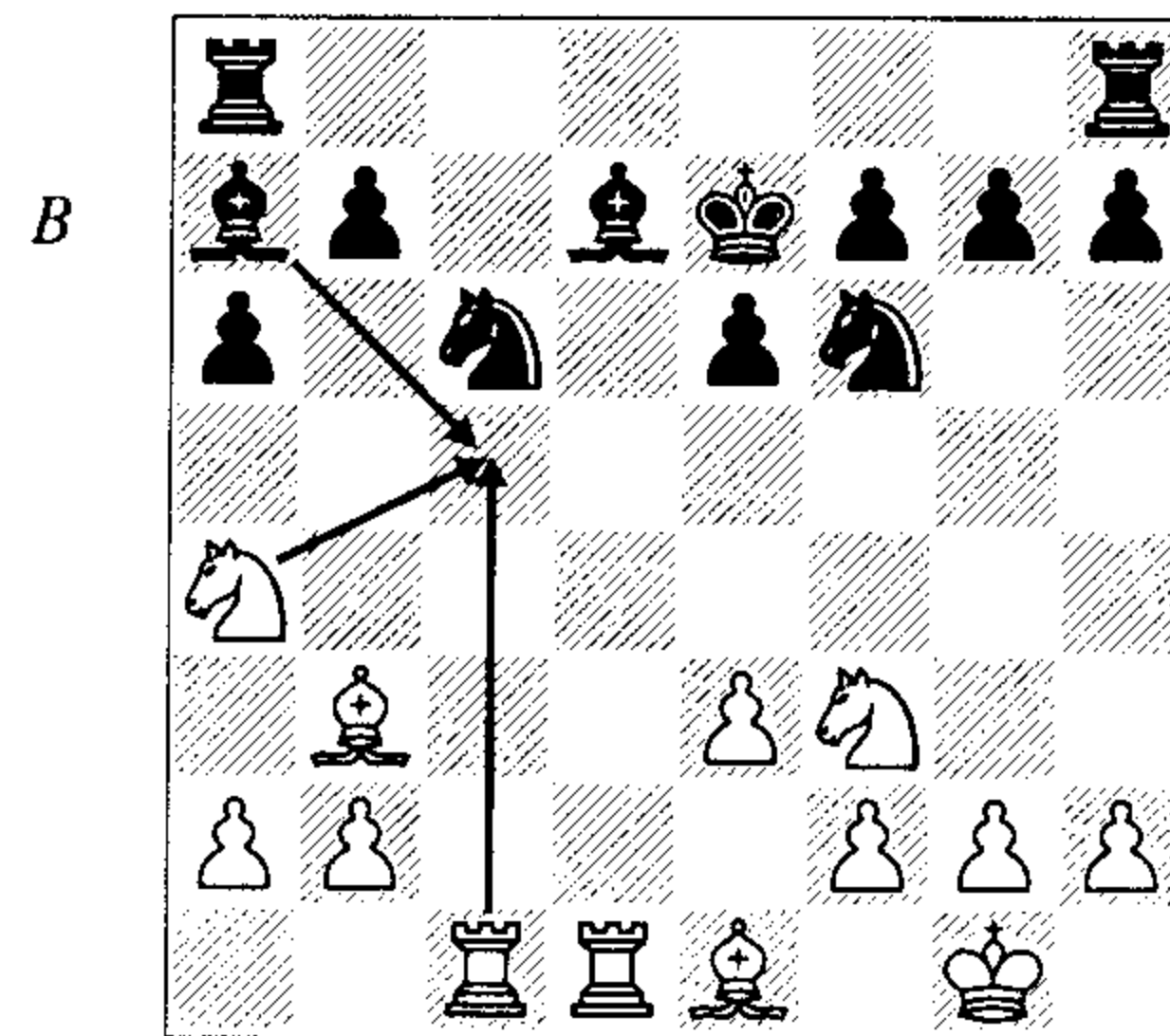
Whatever opening you play as Black, there is always a system or approach for White that seems to stifle winning chances. The QGA is no exception. In this chapter we look at some opening variations where there is an early exchange of queens. The good news is that often Black has nothing to fear in these positions and certainly no need to feel under pressure to make a draw. The bad news is that some of the positions are of a simple nature and in a 'must win' situation, Black may find it difficult to create winning chances. That said, it is always a mistake to equate an early exchange of queens with the opportunity to make a quick, easy draw.

This chapter is divided into three sections along thematic lines. The information gives an insight into how to play the positions without queens but an understanding and knowledge of general endings would also be of assistance.

Exposed Black King

We look at two examples where Black's king, even after the exchange of queens, is given a bit more than a scare. In the first position, initially it appears as though White has some

small advantage as he threatens to 'win' the bishop-pair by playing ♞c5 . Therefore, Black plays...



Karpov – Gulko

Spanish Cht (Oropesa del Mar) 1996

14...b6

It turns out that Black should have allowed 15 ♞c5 .

15 ♖xd7+!

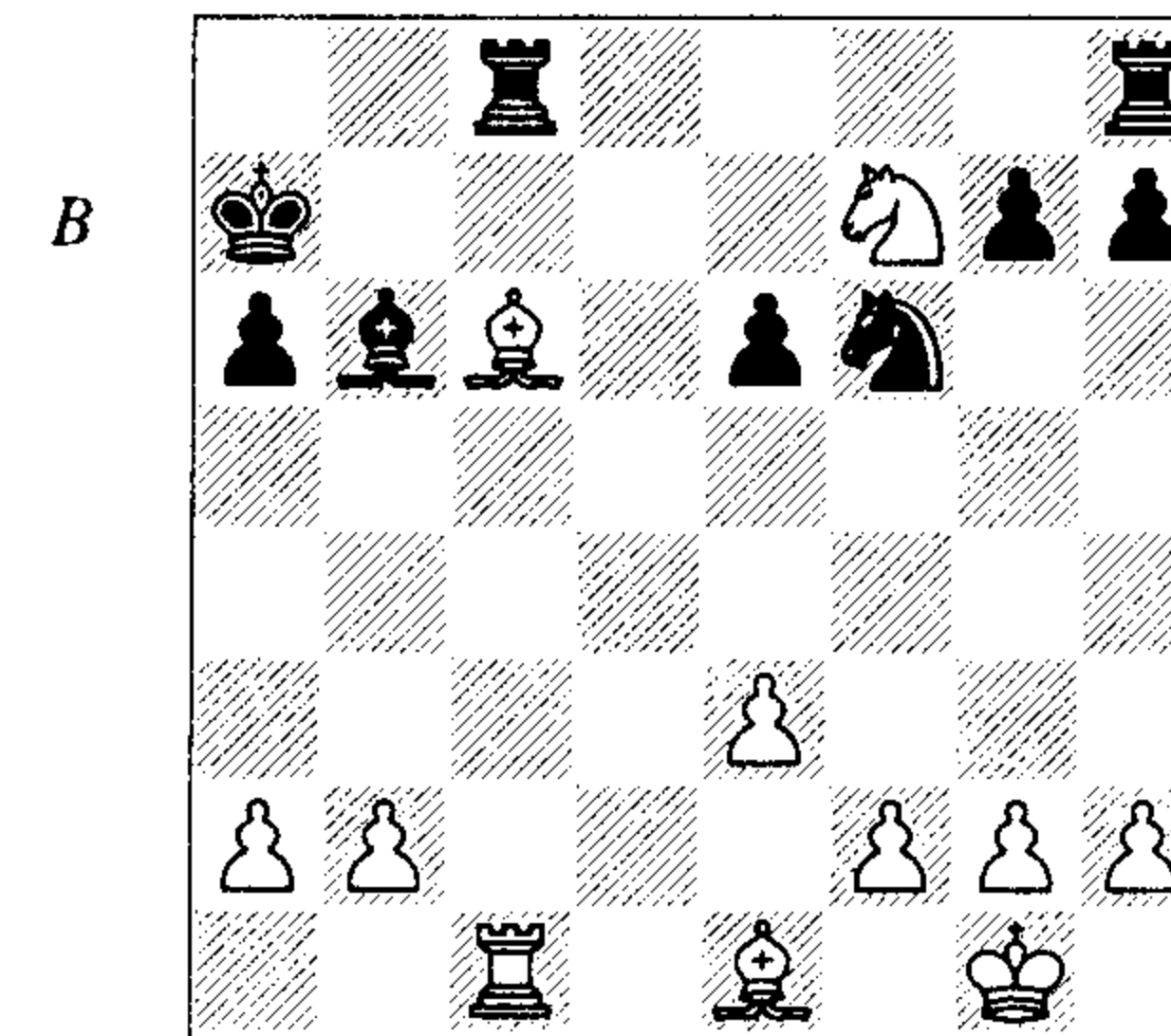
Who said positions without queens were boring and did not contain tactical possibilities? A common problem for Black is highlighted here. Leaving the king in the centre is always worth considering when there is an early exchange of queens. However, it must always be remembered that only the queens have been exchanged and that otherwise White has a full complement

of pieces with which to attack a centralized king.

15...♙xd7 16 ♞xb6+ ♖xb6 17 ♖a4 ♙c8

It is difficult to suggest improvements for Black.

18 ♞e5 ♙b8 19 ♞xc6+ ♙b7 20 ♞e5 ♖ac8 21 ♖c6+ ♙a7 22 ♞xf7 (D)



White has a bishop and two pawns for a rook, and a weak pawn to target – this constitutes a decisive advantage. Black now tried to mix the position up, but still came off worse with White's minor pieces proving far too powerful.

22...♞hf8 23 ♞e5 ♞d5 24 ♖d1 ♞fd8 25 ♖a4 ♞e7 26 ♞d7 ♞d5 27 ♙f1 ♖xe3 28 ♞xd5 exd5 29 fxe3 ♖c4 30 b4

White went on to win easily.

As we have just seen, even after the exchange of queens, there are plenty of pieces left that are quite capable of troubling the king. For further examples on this theme, please see Chapter 9, Line F2.

Symmetrical Positions

In this section the pawn structure can be broadly speaking said to be symmetrical.

White plays without a2-a4

This structure arises when White recaptures on c4 and then exchanges pawns on c5. For example:

Tregubov – Tkachev

Bastia rpd 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e6 4 ♖xc4 a6 5 ♞f3 c5 6 0-0 ♞f6 7 ♖b3 ♞c6 8 ♞c3 b5 9 dxc5

The early exchange on c5 is a reasonably common way of offering the trade of queens. Instead 9 ♞e2 ♞a5 takes us back into Chapter 4.

9...♞xd1

Instead, Black can make some other move and allow White to make the exchange on d8.

10 ♞xd1 ♖xc5 11 ♖d2

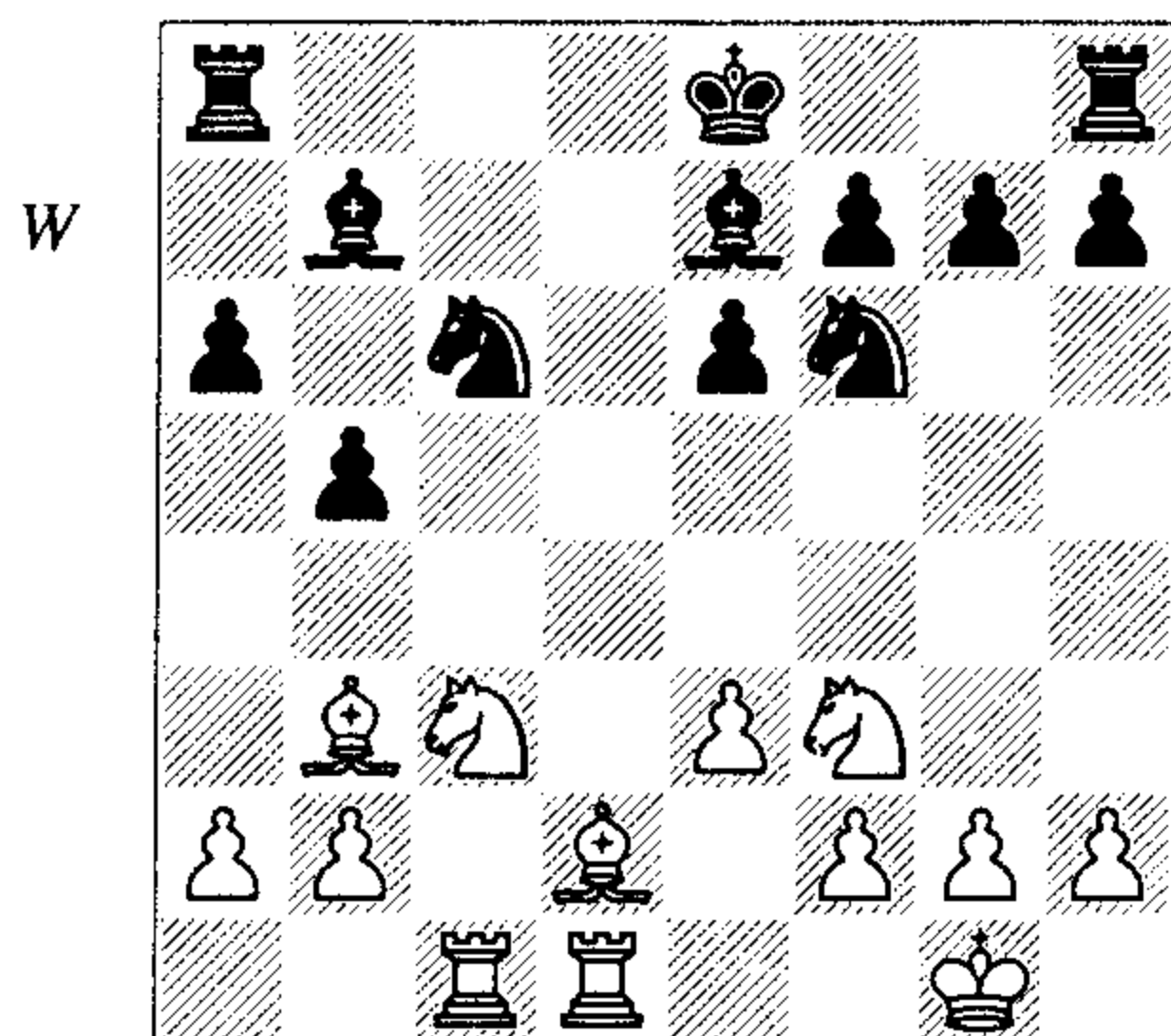
In some positions, ...b5 can be met by ♞b1-d2-b3-a5 . Here, that manoeuvre would be quite an upheaval for White.

11...♖b7 12 ♖ac1 ♖e7 (D)

I would prefer 12... ♖b6 as it defends against a later ♞c7 . It also enables Black to play ... ♙e7 .

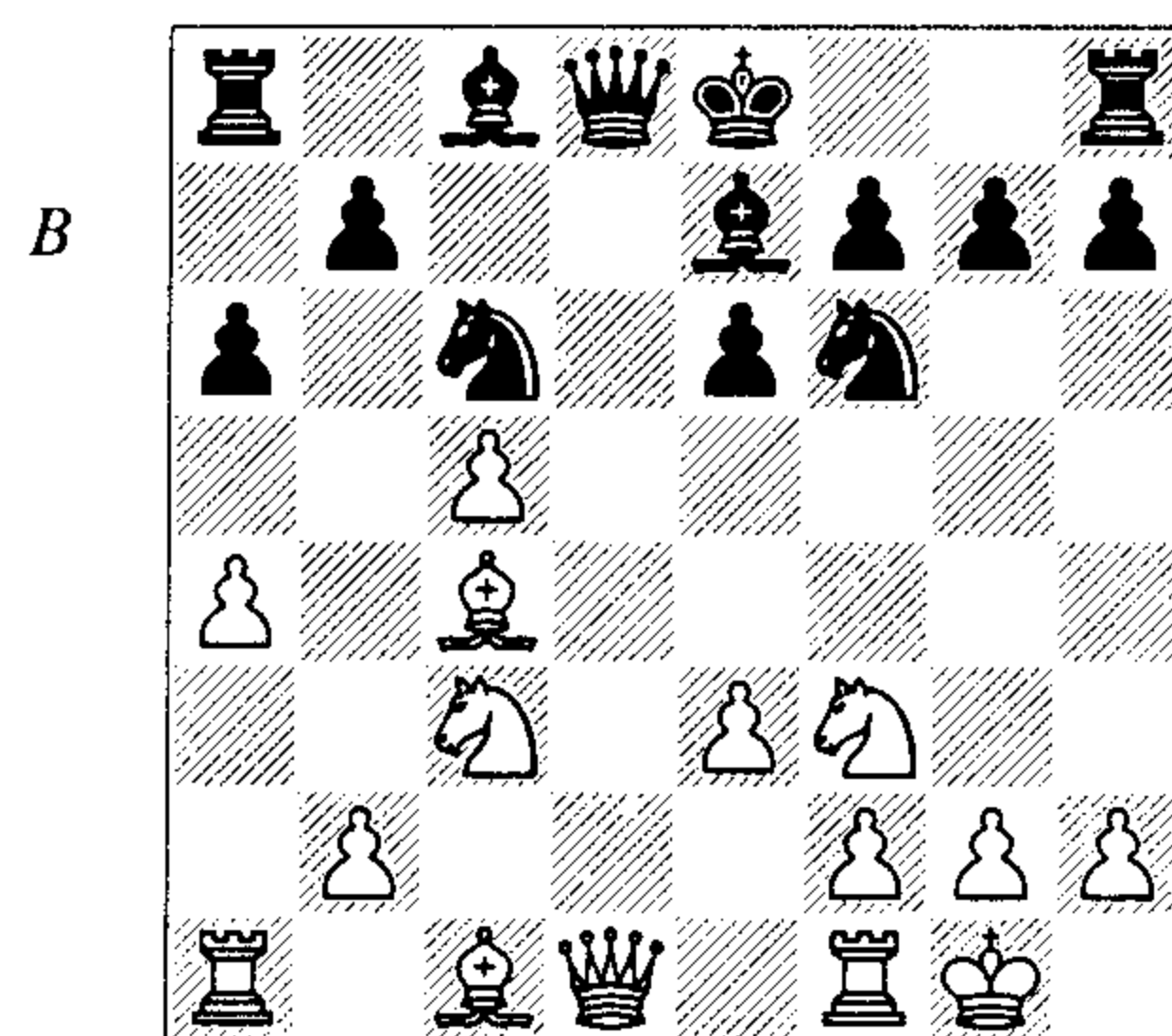
13 ♞e2 0-0

It is difficult to believe that White can gain an advantage in these sorts of positions after the queen exchange.



White plays a2-a4

The next position comes from the Classical Variation with the early capture 9 dxc5. White has already played a2-a4.

Bareev – Kasparov
Novgorod 1997

9... ♖xd1 10 ♜xd1 ♕xc5 11 h3 b6
12 e4 ♘a5 13 ♕d3

Or 13 ♕a2 ♕b7 14 ♜e1 ♕b4 15
♕d2 0-0 16 e5 ♘d7 17 ♘e4 ♕xd2 18
♘exd2 ♘c6 with an equal game.

13... ♘b3 14 ♜b1 ♘xc1

Black must take the bishop, otherwise ♕g5 will leave the knight stranded on b3. 14... ♕b7 15 ♕g5 ♕e7 16 ♕c2 ♘c5 17 e5 ♕xf3 18 gxf3 ♘h5 19 ♕e3 is not quite equal for Black.

15 ♜bxc1 (D)

15... ♕d7

I would prefer to resolve the dilemma of the black king with 15... ♖e7 16 e5 ♘d7. The intention is then to put the bishop on b7.

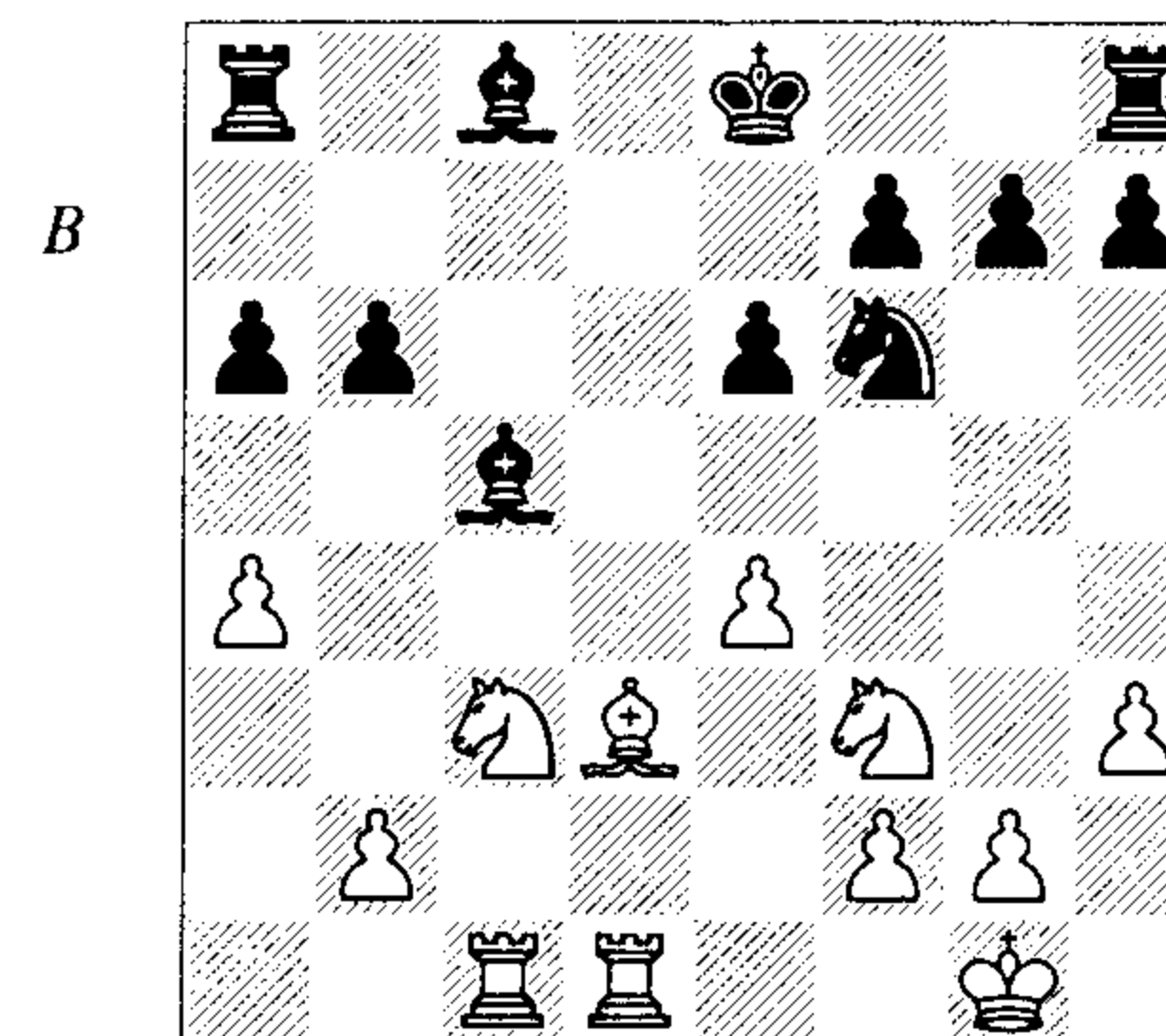
16 e5 ♘d5 17 ♕e4

16 ♜xc8+

More tactics!

16... ♜xc8 17 ♘xe6 fxe6 18 ♕xe6+
♖f8 19 ♕xc8 ♕xc8 20 f3

The resulting ending proved difficult for Black as he found it difficult to coordinate his minor pieces.



17 ♘d5 exd5 is only equal; White is trying for more.

17... ♘xc3 18 ♜xc3 ♜d8 19 a5 ♕b5

Not 19... ♖e7? 20 b4 ♕xb4 21 ♜c7
winning.

20 ♜xd8+ ♖xd8 21 ♘g5

White holds the initiative, although the two bishops offered enough counterplay for Black to be able to make a draw in the end.

Safe King on e7

The next position again has a reasonably symmetrical pawn structure in that both players have a-, b-, e-, f-, g- and h-pawns. White has again played a4.

8 ♖xd4

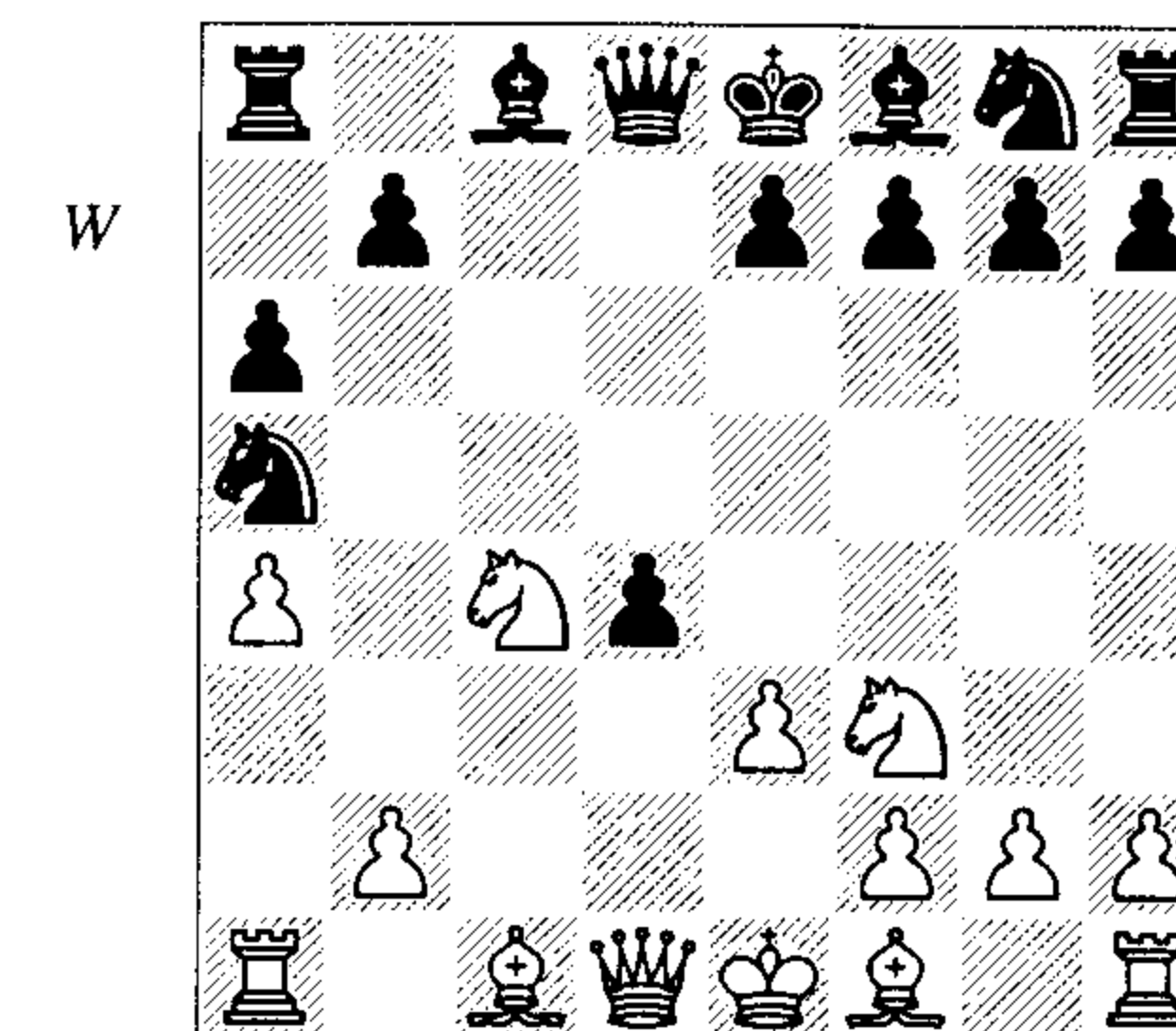
White's last move invites the exchange of queens.

8... ♖xd4

Black is happy to accept.

9 ♘d4 ♘xc4 10 ♕xc4 ♘f6 11 f3

White intends to hide his king on either e2 or f2. Black will try to develop his f8-bishop and then put his king on e7.

Hulse – Zaltsman
New York 1991

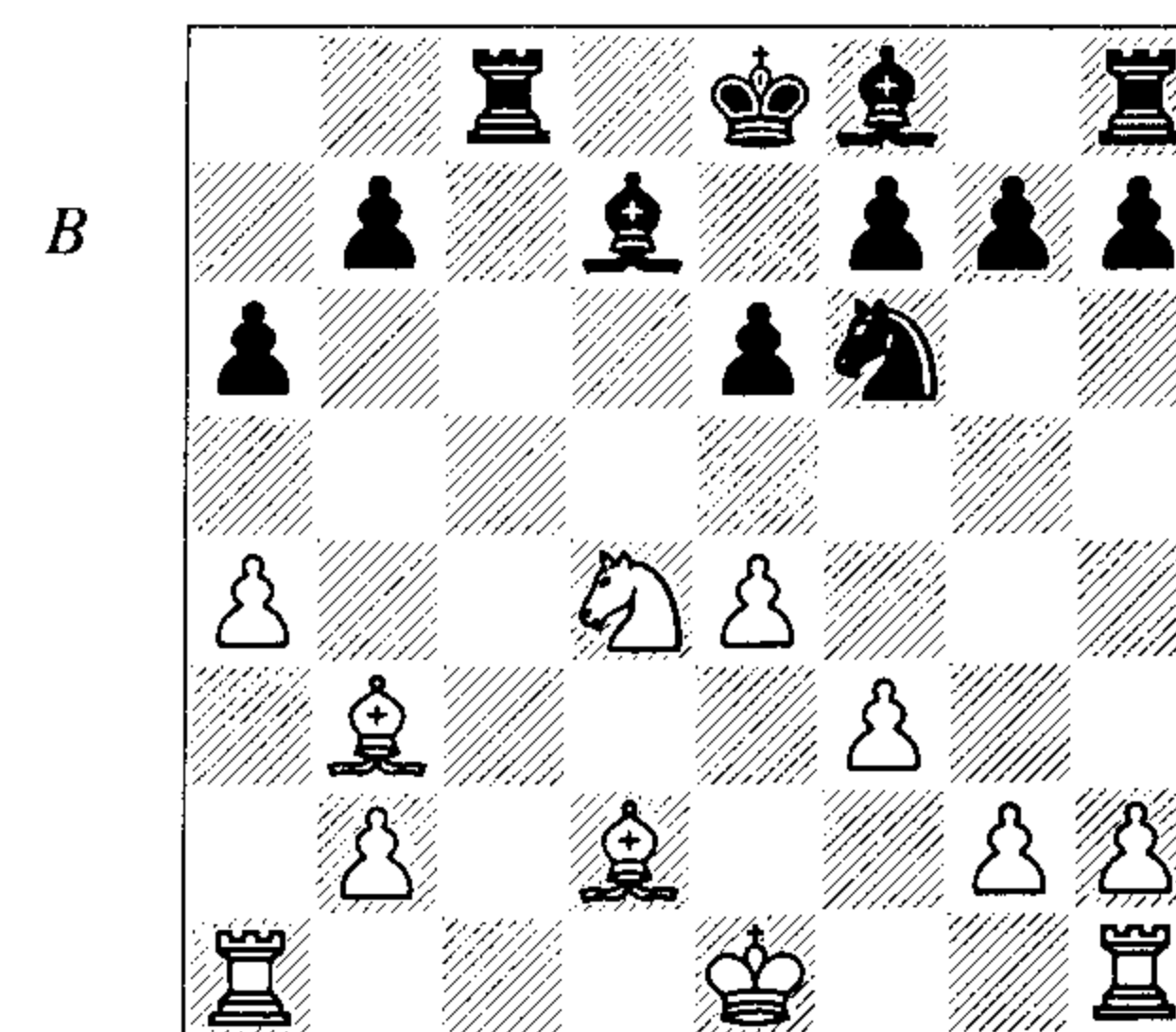
11... ♕d7 12 ♕d2 ♜c8

Both players continue to develop, but there is nothing special going on here.

13 ♕b3 e6

13...e5, as always, is tempting. However, it leaves White with a clear plan of occupying the d5-square.

14 e4 (D)



The f3-e4 pawn-chain is a typical feature in some of these queenless middlegames.

14...♙d6

14...♙c5 15 ♙e3 with the idea of ♜c1 could be awkward to deal with.

15 ♙c3 ♚e7 16 ♘c2 ♙c5

Black has reached a completely satisfactory position.

Asymmetrical Structures

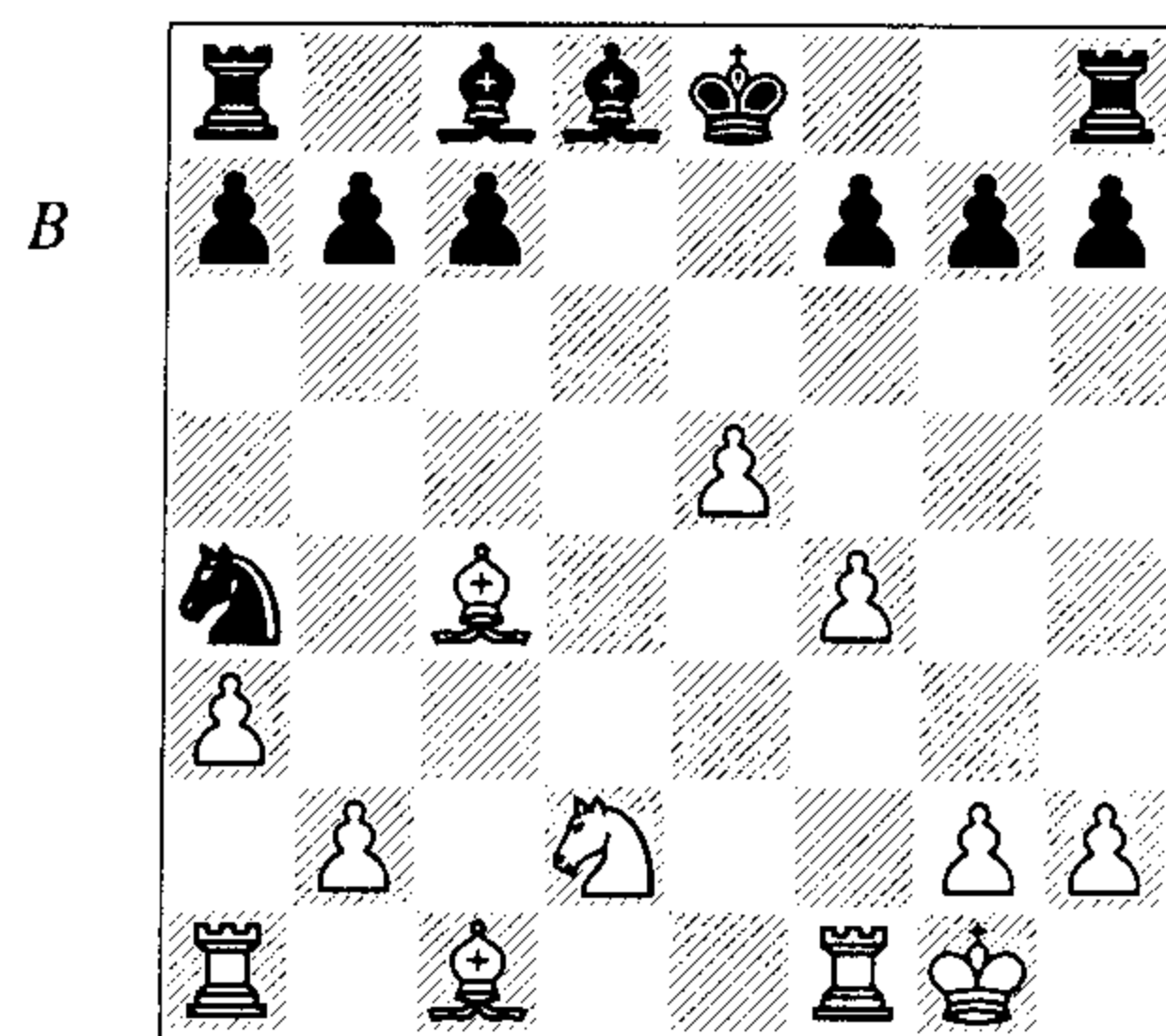
In this section we look at structures where White has a-, b-, e-, f-, g- and h-pawns and Black has a-, b-, c-, f-, g-, and h-pawns.

Early Exchange on d4

To see examples of this, please refer to Chapter 2, Lines A11 and A4.

Late Exchange on d8

We return to a position given in Chapter 2, where there is the issue of whether to play ...♙e6 as Black.



Vyzhmanavin – Rublevsky
USSR Ch (Moscow) 1991

15...♘b6 16 ♙a2

16 ♙d3 g6 17 ♙e4 ♜b8 (I would prefer 17...c6) and although in essence I think the result should be a draw, White holds a small advantage, Milov-Howell, Isle of Man 1994.

16...g6

A successful f4-f5 advance would prove crushing, but this move is not the best way to prevent it. Better is 16...♙e6 17 ♙xe6 fxe6 18 ♘e4 ♙e7 19 ♙e3 0-0-0 20 ♙c5 ♙xc5+ 21 ♘xc5 ♜he8 22 ♜ad1 ♜xd1 23 ♜xd1 ♘c4 (the potential weakness on e6 cannot be exploited; Black has some play of his own) 24 ♜d4 ♘xb2 25 ♘xb7 ♚xb7 26 ♜b4+ ♚c6 27 ♜xb2 ♜d8 28 ♜c2+ ♚b6 29 ♜b2+ ♚c6 1/2-1/2 Flear-Sadler, Isle of Man 1994.

17 ♘e4 ♙e7 18 ♙e3 ♙e6

With all of the pieces now developed, White can only claim the smallest of advantages.

19 ♙xe6 fxe6 20 ♜ac1 ♘d5 21 ♙c5 ♙xc5+ 22 ♘xc5 ♚e7 23 b4

23 ♘xb7 ♜ab8 is a typical method of defence and attack.

23...♜hb8 24 ♜f3 c6

24...a5 25 b5 and the black rooks look silly.

25 ♘b3

To stop ...a5.

25...♜f8

There is a lot of play left in the position and it is easy to go wrong. As it stands, Black's king is well placed and his three pawn islands are not proving to be a weakness. He also has counterplay on the f-file.

Bishop on the Kingside

For a good example of this situation, please refer to Chapter 9, Line A1.

It is sometimes difficult to remain up-beat as Black in this chapter. Initially, it can be deflating to have to play the black side of these positions. However, there are chances for both sides just as there are in any other

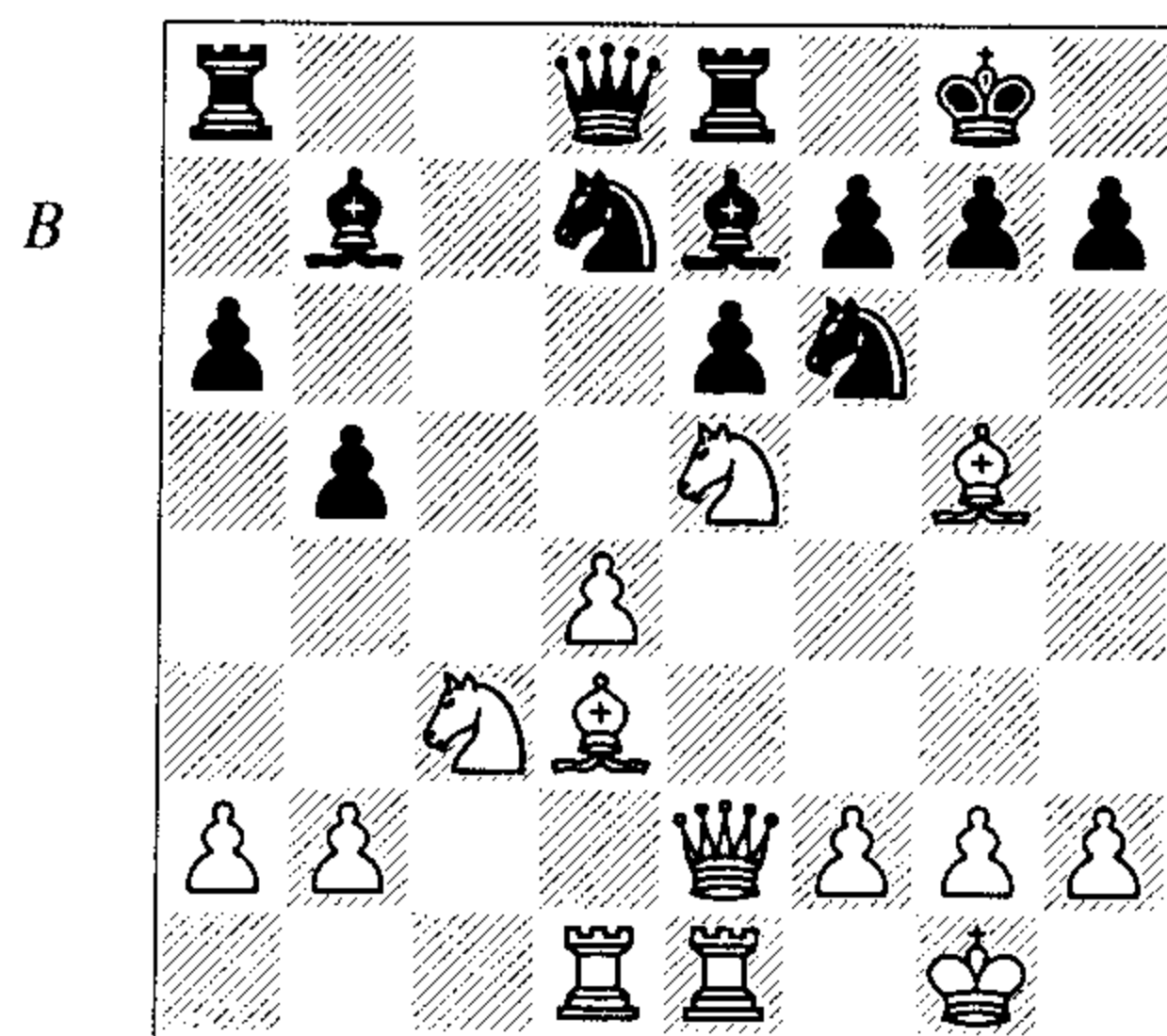
opening when White adopts a non-ambitious approach. Strong players and those who are familiar with these positions will profit the most. There is scope to outplay an opponent; it may just take a while. So, if nothing else, the time studying positions in this chapter is well spent and it will give us confidence when playing these positions and help us not to fear an opponent exchanging queens early on.

8 White's Isolated d-Pawn

In this chapter we shall study positions where White has an IQP (Isolated Queen's Pawn). This pawn structure influences play a great deal. To begin with, White will have three pawn islands (pawns on the a- and b-files, the d-file and the f- to h-files) while Black will have two islands (a- and b-files, and e- to h-files).

Typically, the d4-pawn will give White a spatial plus, with which he hopes to build up a kingside attack. The f3-knight will often jump into e5, which acts as a springboard for a future offensive on the black king. The c5-square may serve as a post for the other knight, especially if Black has played ...b5. Even a rook may find itself there, with a view to swinging across the fifth rank to the kingside. White's rooks will generally go to c1/d1/e1, with the queen tending to sit on e2 initially. White tends to avoid exchanges of minor pieces. In IQP positions the advance d4-d5, even as a sacrifice, is not uncommon and is used to open up lines for White and/or close lines that Black might otherwise use.

The following diagram shows a fairly typical early middlegame position. Black has been playing very much with a view to his long-term prospects. Given some exchanges, White's attack



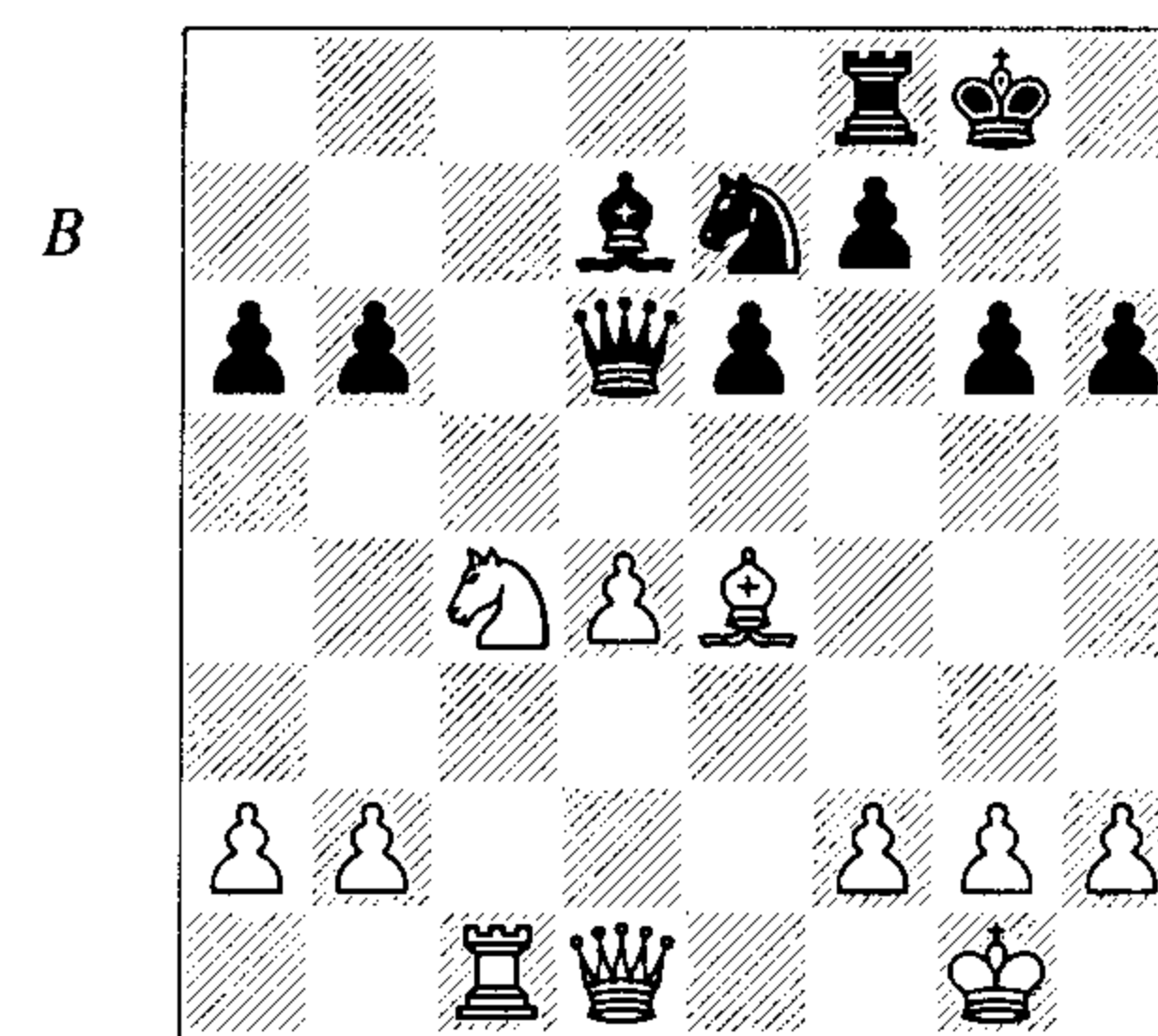
would become less fierce, whereupon Black could start to besiege the weak d4-pawn. Black will tend to blockade the d4-pawn first of all by placing a knight on d5. On this square, a knight can survey a number of possibilities without being kicked by any white pawns and therefore can serve to be a particular nuisance to White. As we shall see, the d5-square can be of great use to Black deep into the endgame.

During the course of some exchanges the pawn structure may change. Two common ones are the d4-pawn capturing on e5 and the b2-pawn capturing on c3.

For readers interested in other material with IQPs, then they could do worse than to study games from a large number of other openings with such a structure. There are a number to

choose from: variations of the c3 Sicilian, Semi-Tarrasch, Nimzo-Indian, Caro-Kann, ..., but for now, first by looking at some middlegame material and then while looking at the theory, we will stick to the QGA!

Minor pieces exchanged



Xu Yuanyuan – Zhang Weida
Beijing 1997

This is a typical situation in which White's kingside attack has not materialized. Now, with fewer pieces on the board, Black hopes he can take advantage of the weakness of White's isolated d-pawn.

23... ♖b8

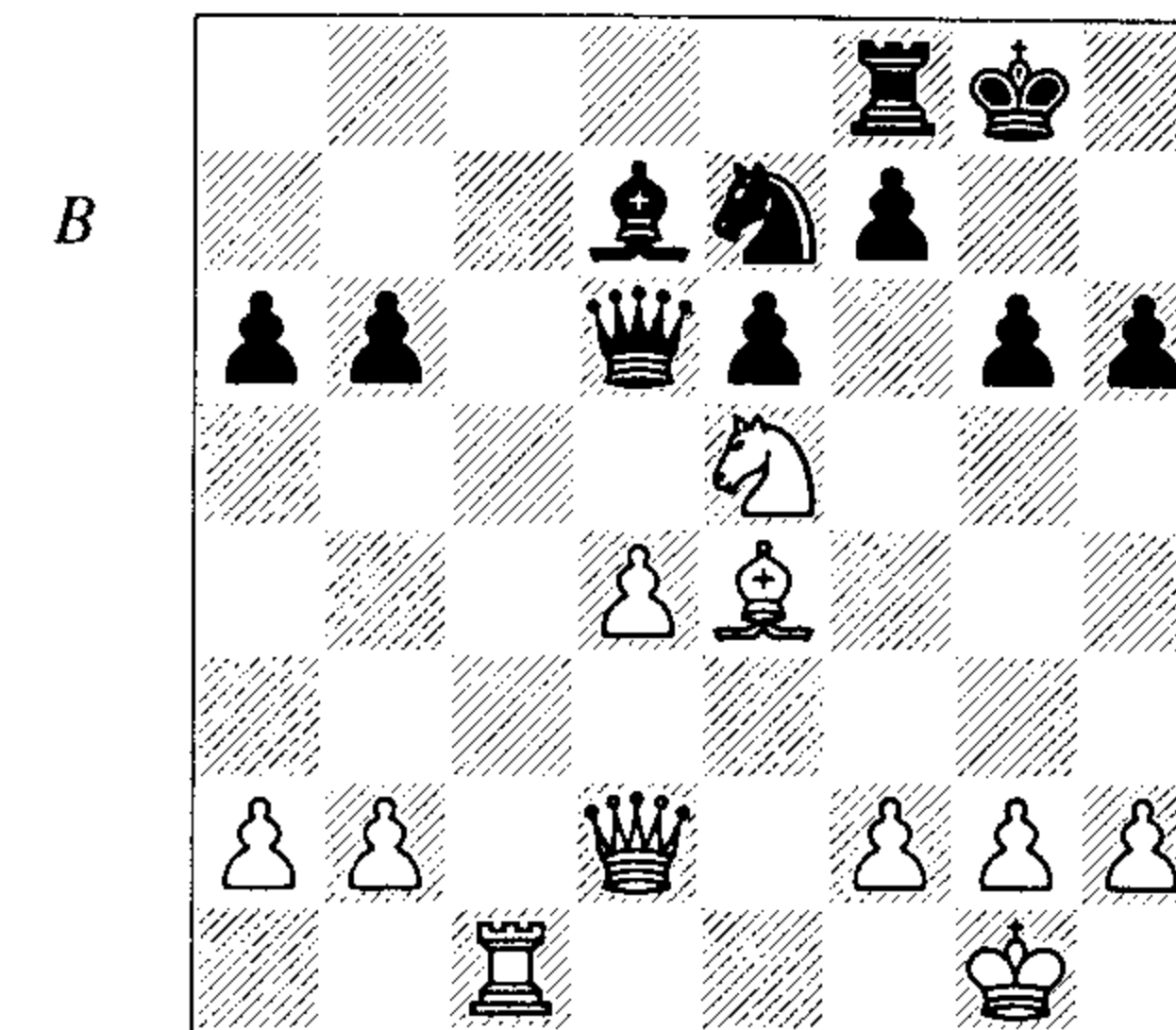
23... ♖f4 comes into consideration.

24 ♘e5 ♖d6 25 ♖d2 (D)

White could have offered a repetition with 25 ♘c4 but perhaps Black intended 25... ♖f4 26 ♘b7 ♘c8.

25... ♖c8

A logical move, but Black risks simplifying so much as to reduce his



winning chances. However, 25... ♖g7 26 ♘c4 may just lead to an immediate draw because ♖f4 is no longer possible.

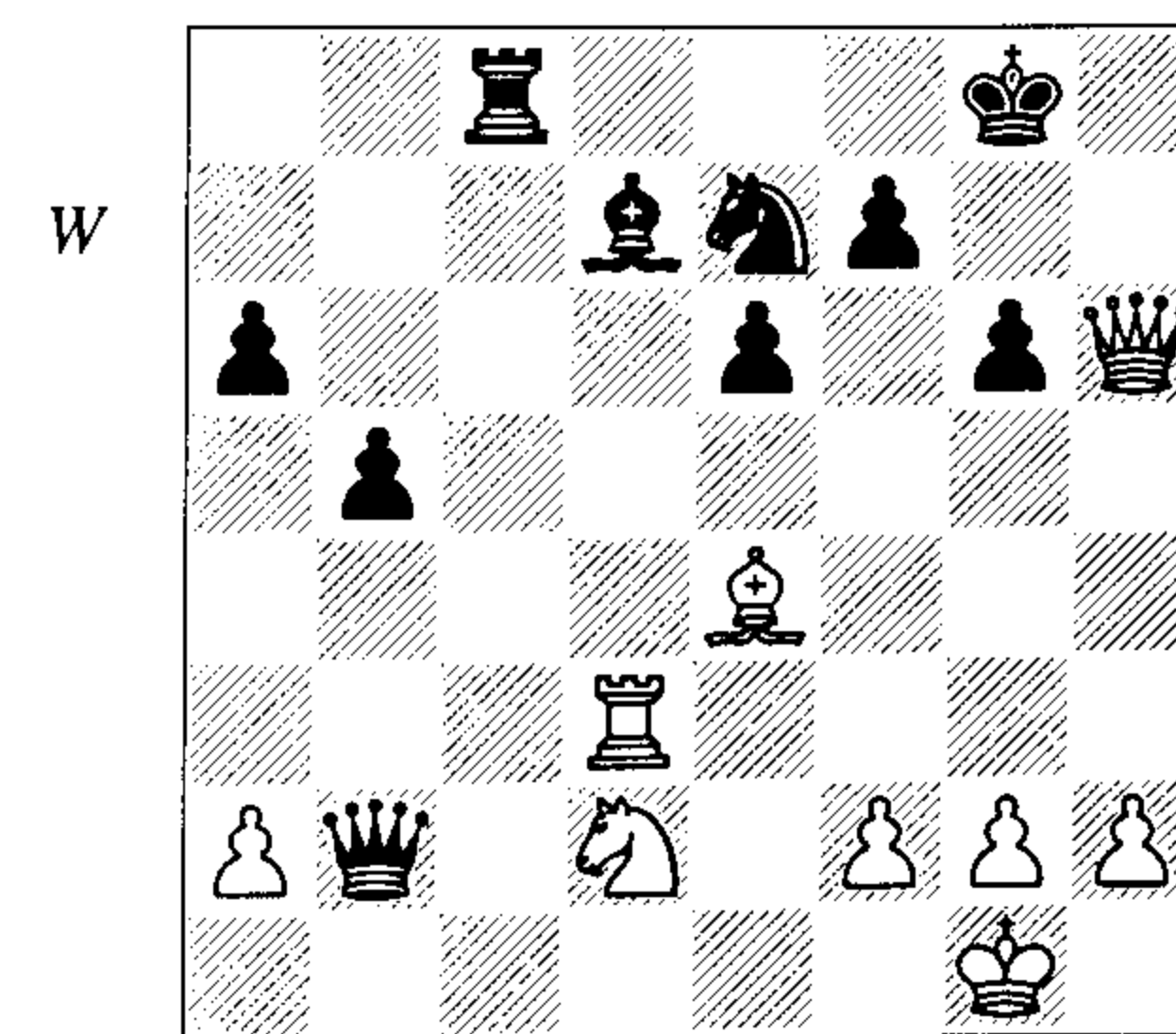
26 ♘c4 ♖c7 27 ♖xh6?

27 ♖c3 ♖g7 (27...b5 28 ♖xh6 and 29 ♖h3 wins) 28 ♖h3 h5 29 ♖c3 with a slight advantage to Black – but really a draw is the expected result.

27...b5 28 ♖c3 ♖a7 29 ♘d2 ♖xd4

The black queen occupies a good central square and now White's minor pieces, b2-pawn and back rank all look shaky.

30 ♖d3 ♖xb2 (D)



31 h4

31 ♖xd7? loses to 31...♗c1+ 32 ♘f1 ♗xh6.

31...♙e8

Black has an extra pawn and an attack against White's king. He just has to watch White's h-pawn.

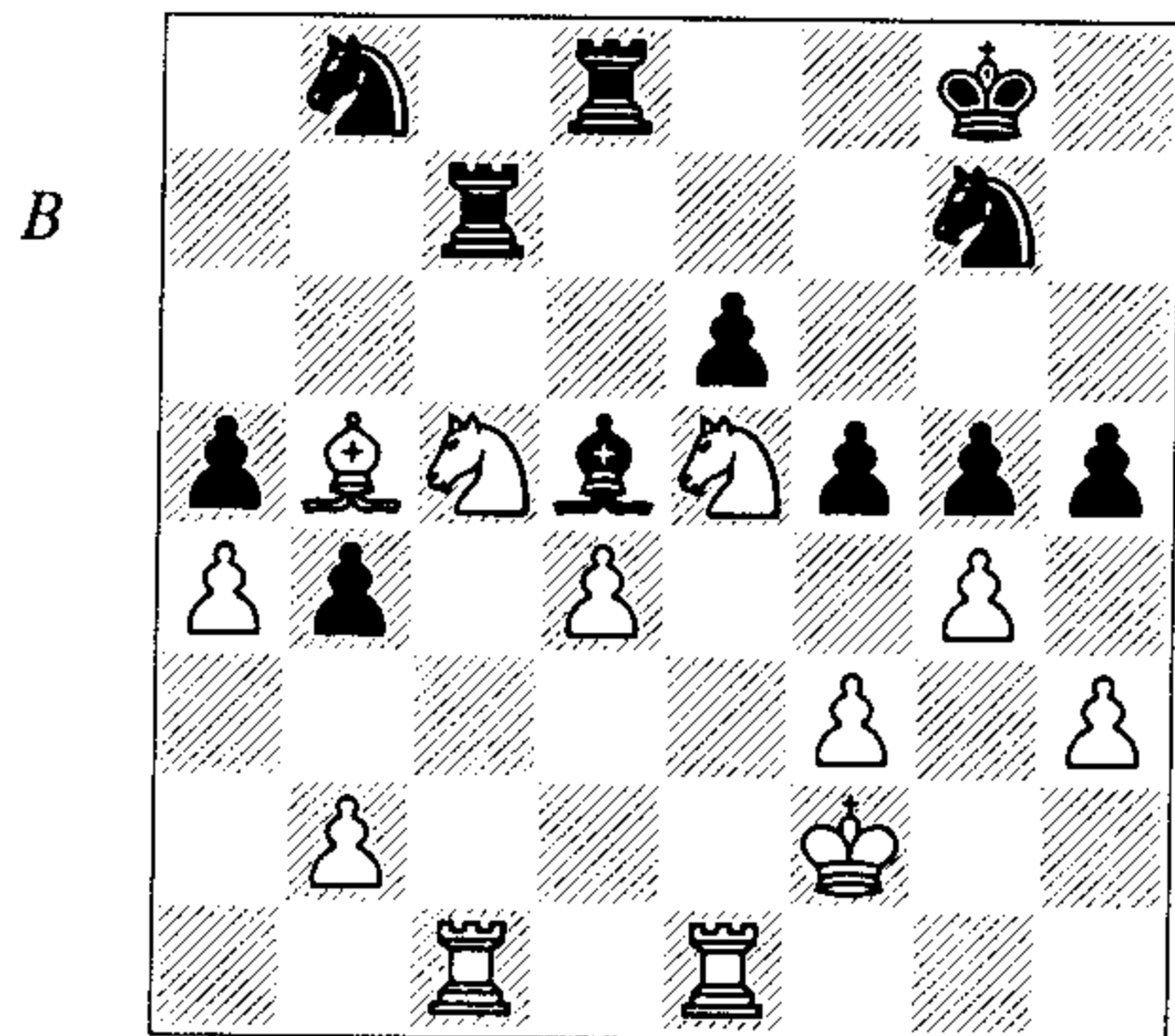
32 h5 ♖c1+ 33 ♔h2 ♗e5+ 34 ♖g3 ♗a1!

34...♗h8 35 ♗xh8+ ♔xh8 36 ♖a3 is certainly not good for Black.

35 ♘b1 ♖xb1 36 ♙xb1 ♗xb1 37 hxg6 ♘g6

With a completely winning position for Black.

Queenside outposts



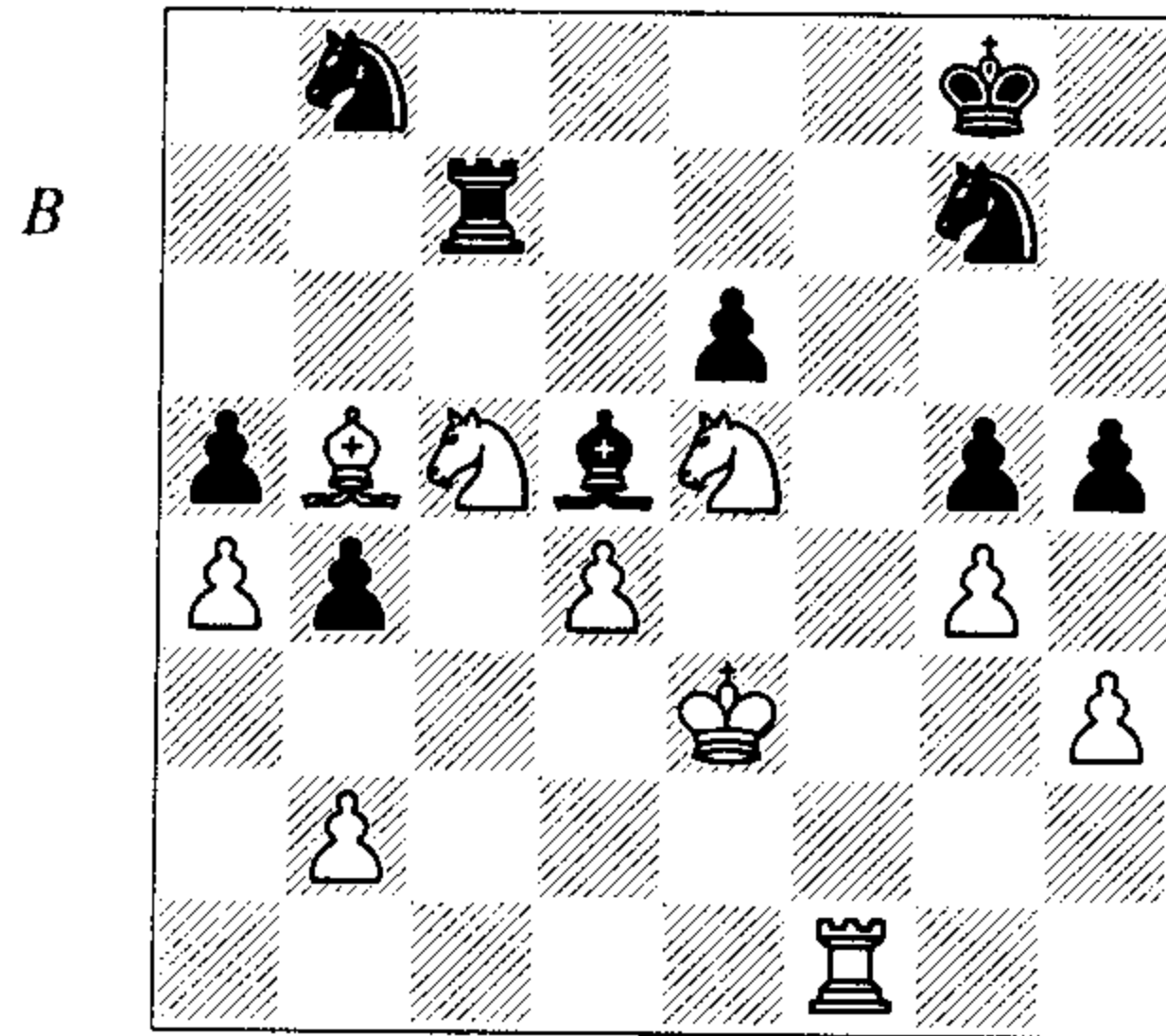
Karpov - Short
Linares 1995

Here it is White who has the late middlegame advantage. His d4-pawn provides firm support for his powerful knight on e5. Additionally, he also has his other minor pieces on effective outposts.

35...fxg4 36 fxg4 ♖f8+ 37 ♔e3 ♖f4 38 ♖f1

Black's occupation of the open file is only temporary.

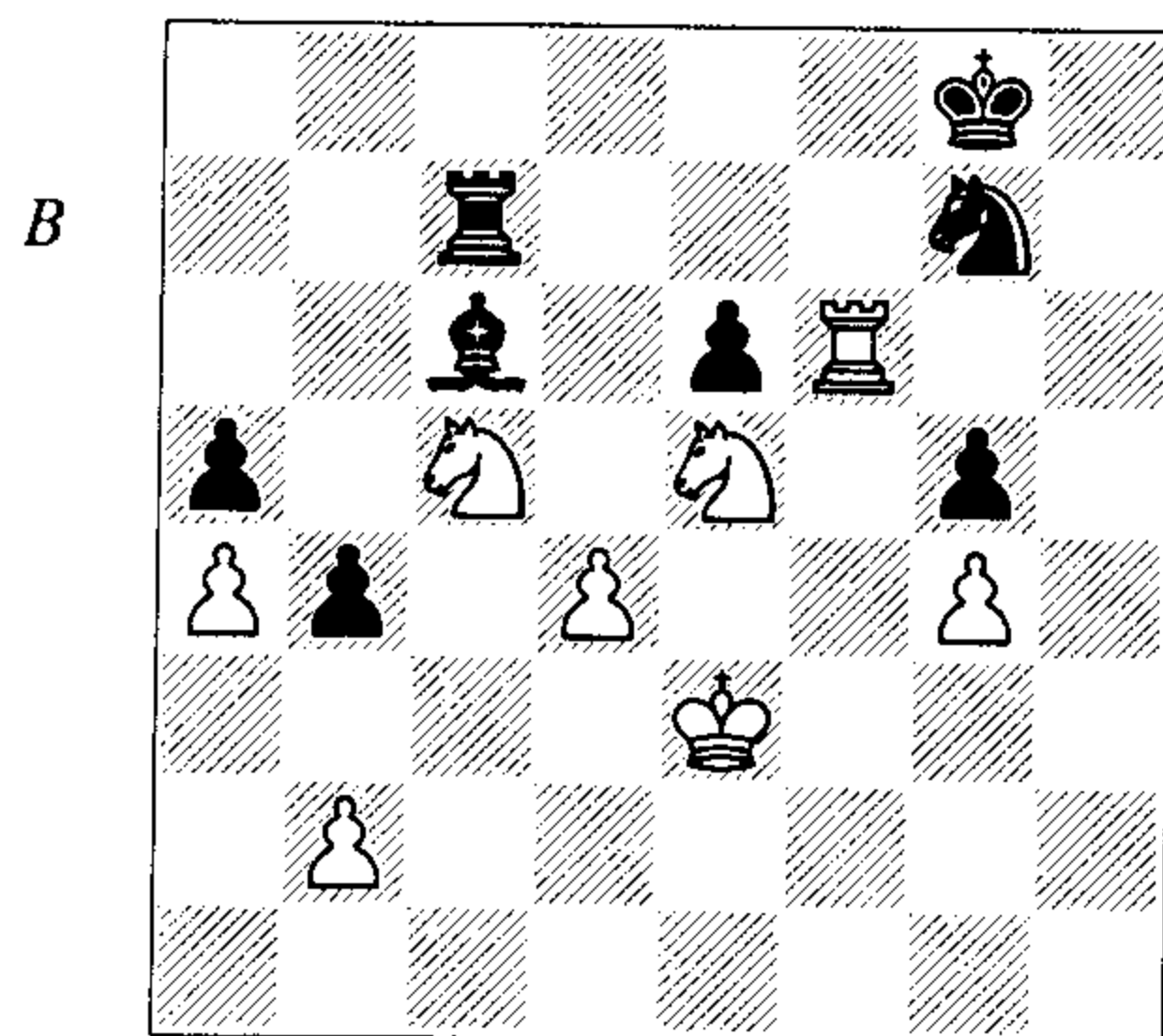
38...♖xf1 39 ♖xf1 (D)



39...♘c6 40 ♙xc6

There's no hesitation over exchanging the bishop for the knight in this position.

40...♙xc6 41 ♖f6 hxg4 42 hxg4 (D)

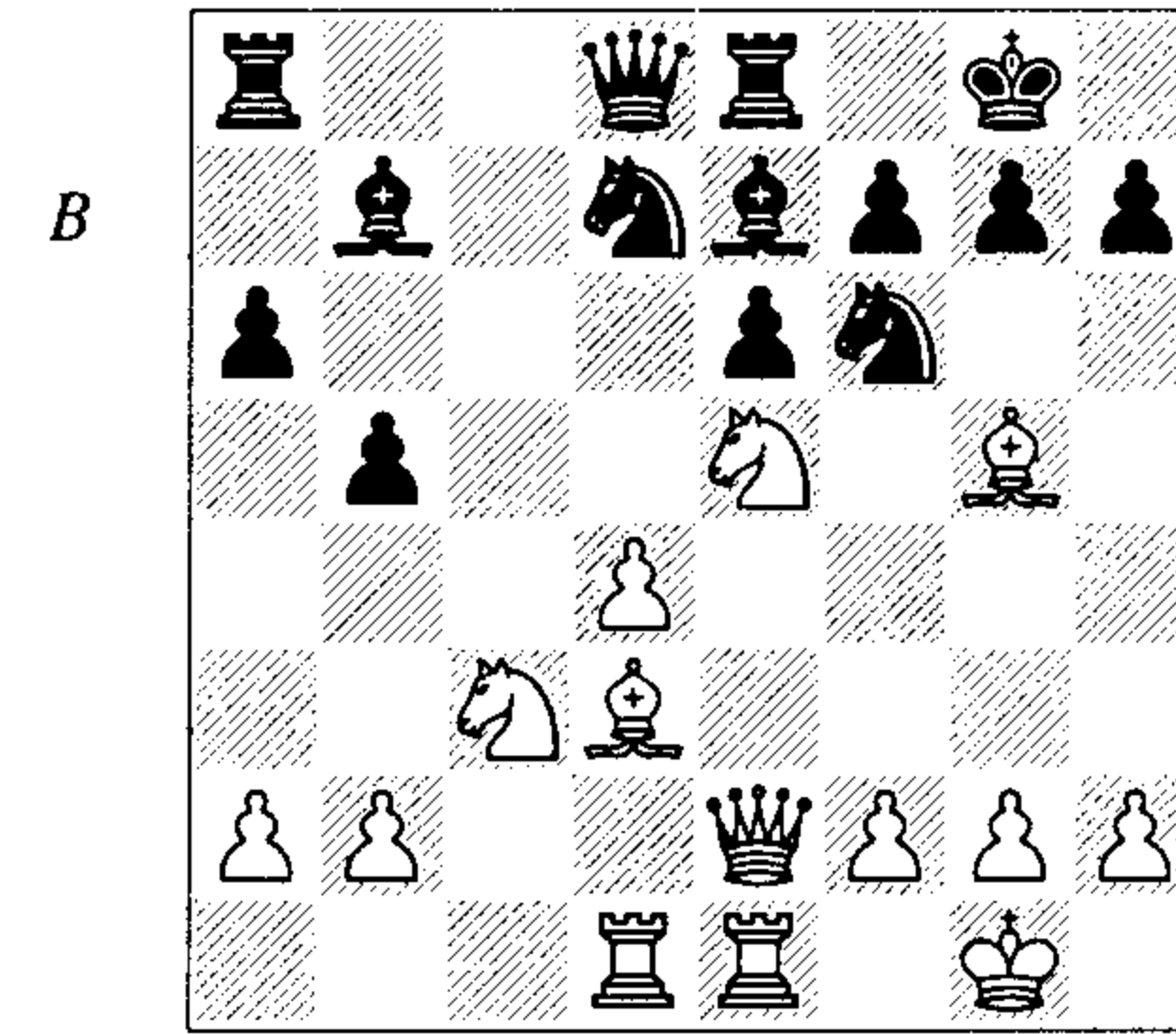


As a matter of fact, Black cannot stop ♖g6 winning a pawn.

42...♙d5 43 ♖g6

So the pawn goes and White won convincingly in the ending.

White's Kingside Attack



Pira - G. Flear

French Cht (Clermont-Ferrand) 1998

Here we have a tense middlegame position, where it is yet to be determined whether White's well-placed pieces will break through to the black king. White will start to sniff out possibilities for a sacrificial attack if he can successfully transfer a rook to g3. White may also be looking at ♘xf7 in the near future with the idea of ♗xe6+, an idea that can be augmented by transferring the bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal.

14...♘e5 15 dxex5 ♘d5

It looks like more exchanges will now take place, easing the defender's task. Black looks ready to deal with, for example 16 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 17 ♘e4 (with the idea of ♘d6), when 17...♘f4

is sufficient. Alternatively, 16 ♙c1 (with the idea of ♘e4-d6) meets with the reply 16...♗c7, whereupon Black is fine.

16 ♙xh7+ ♔xh7 17 ♗h5+ ♔g8 18 ♘e4 ♗a5

The pin on the d5-knight was awkward. However, after 18...♗c7 (with the idea of ...♗c2 to cover h7 when necessary) White would regret his sacrifice: 19 ♖d3 ♗xe5 20 ♖h3 f5 is winning for Black, or 19 ♘f6+ ♙xf6 20 ♙xf6 ♗c2 and again Black beats off the attack, keeping the extra piece.

19 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 20 ♘g5 ♖d7 21 ♗h7+ ♔f8 22 ♗h8+ ♔e7 23 ♗xg7 ♖f8 24 ♘xe6

This is best. White can do no better than to win an exchange and a pawn like this. Lines like 24 h4 ♗xa2 25 ♖d3 with the further threats of ♖f3 and ♘h7 will always meet with ...♖d7-d8 or ...♗xb2-b4 followed by ...♔e8 giving an exchange back.

24...♔xe6 25 ♗xf8 ♗xa2?

Black's position is surprisingly resilient after 25...♖e7.

26 ♗h6+ ♔e7 27 e6 1-0

27...fxe6 28 ♖xe6+ ♔d8 29 ♗h8+ ♔c7 30 ♗e5+ ♔c8 31 ♖e8+ ♖d8 32 ♖c1+ wins.

The Theory of the IQP

We will now continue this chapter by looking at some common ways of getting into the above structures.

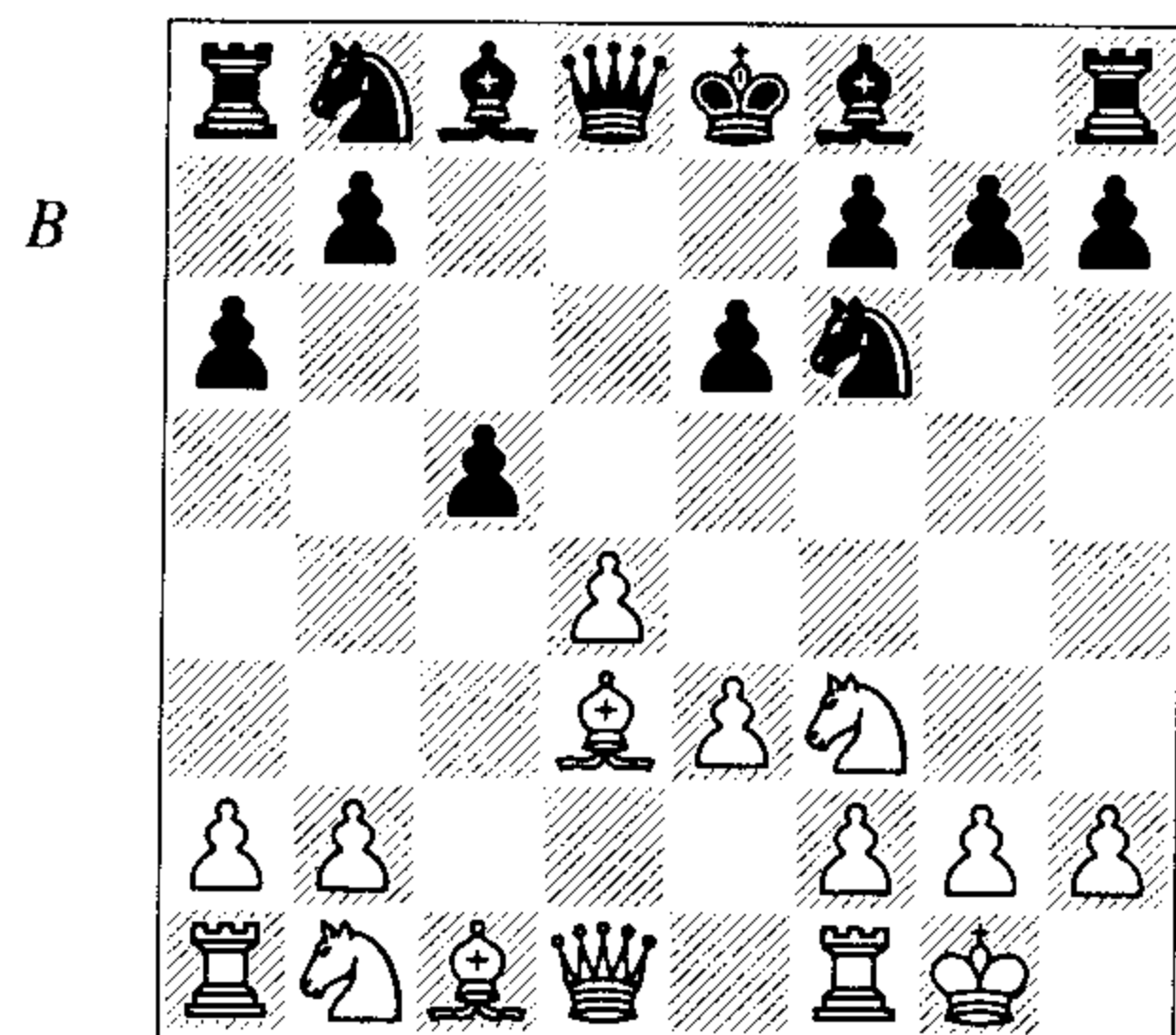
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♙xc4 c5 6 0-0

We now discuss the IQP possibilities after:

- A: 6...a6 7 ♖d3 96
 B: 6...a6 7 ♖b3 98
 C: 6...cxd4 99
 D: 6...a6 7 a4 103

A)

6...a6 7 ♖d3 (D)



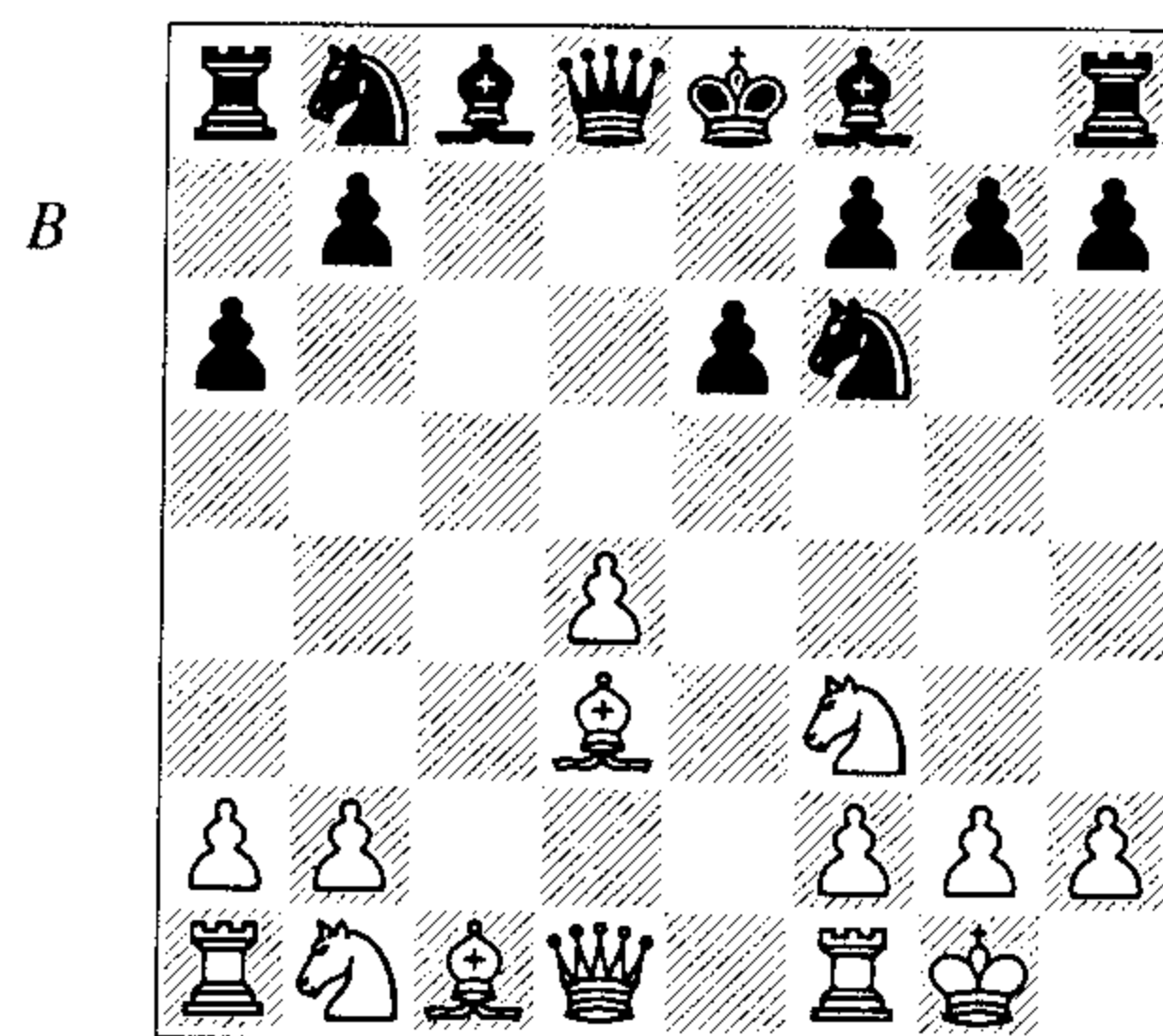
This is a kind of waiting move, and has become popular recently. The basic idea is to steal a tempo by dxc5 after ...♗e7 (as in Chapter 5). In this chapter, Black is having none of that and accepts the challenge of playing against White's isolated d4-pawn.

7...cxd4

This move can be avoided completely (as in Chapter 5), or delayed. The latter case often transposes, but an independent course was taken in the game M.Gurevich-Speelman, France 1994: 7...♗c6 8 ♗c3 ♗c7 9 a3 b6 (at the time a new move in this position; previously 9...♗d7 had been tried) 10 ♗d2 (an interesting little move with

the idea of ♗c1; alternatively 10 dxc5 bxc5 11 ♗e4 ♗b7 12 ♗c2 ♗e5 gives Black counterplay for his weak pawns) 10...♗b7 11 ♗c1 (up until now, both players have been playing cat and mouse: White wants to take on c5 only after the f8-bishop has moved so that he can force Black to lose a tempo, while Black has been finding useful moves, refusing to play ...♗e7) 11...cxd4 (finally!) 12 exd4 ♗e7 13 ♗e4 ♗d7 14 ♗g5 ♗d5 15 ♗b1 f6. Here, I would be concerned about the potential weakness of the e6-pawn, although right now everything is defended. In the game Black had no immediate problems.

8 exd4 (D)



8...♗e7

8...♗c6 is a less attractive possibility: 9 ♗c3 ♗b4 10 ♗g5! (less good is 10 ♗b1 ♗e7 11 ♗e1 0-0 12 ♗e5 ♗bd5 13 ♗d3 with just an edge for White, Cvitan-Raetsky, Biel 1993) 10...♗e7 (preferable is 10...♗xd3 11 ♗xd3 ♗e7 12 ♗e5 with only a slight advantage

for White) 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♗a4+ ♗c6 13 ♗e4 and now:

a) 13...0-0?! 14 ♗xc6 bxc6 and now 15 ♗e4 gives White a considerable plus as Black has some positional problems. Note that here 15 ♗xc6 is not so good since 15...♗b8 offers Black some counterplay down the b-file.

b) 13...♗d7 14 d5 exd5 15 ♗xd5 0-0 16 ♗ad1 ♗e6 17 ♗f4 ♗c8 18 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 19 ♗fe1 again gives White a fair advantage, Bareev – Santo-Roman, Moscow OL 1994.

9 ♗c3

An immediate 9 ♗e5 has drawn attention in many similar positions:

a) 9...♗c6 10 ♗xc6 bxc6 11 ♗c2 (11 ♗e3 0-0 12 ♗c2 ♗c7 13 ♗d2 h6 14 ♗ac1 ♗b7 15 ♗e2 a5 16 ♗fd1 ♗fc8 17 ♗b3 ♗a6 18 ♗f3 a4 19 ♗c5 ♗b5 20 g3 1/2-1/2 Khuzman-Yakovich, Pula Echt 1997) 11...♗b7 12 ♗d1 ♗c7 13 ♗d2 1/2-1/2 Dreev-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 1996.

b) 9...0-0 10 ♗c3 is possible:

b1) 10...b5 (I do not like this) 11 ♗f3 ♗a7 12 ♗g5 ♗c7 13 ♗ad1 ♗b7 14 ♗h3 g6 15 ♗fe1 b4 16 ♗a4 ♗d5 17 ♗c5 gave White an advantage in the game Gelfand-Lautier, Cap d'Agde rpd 1994.

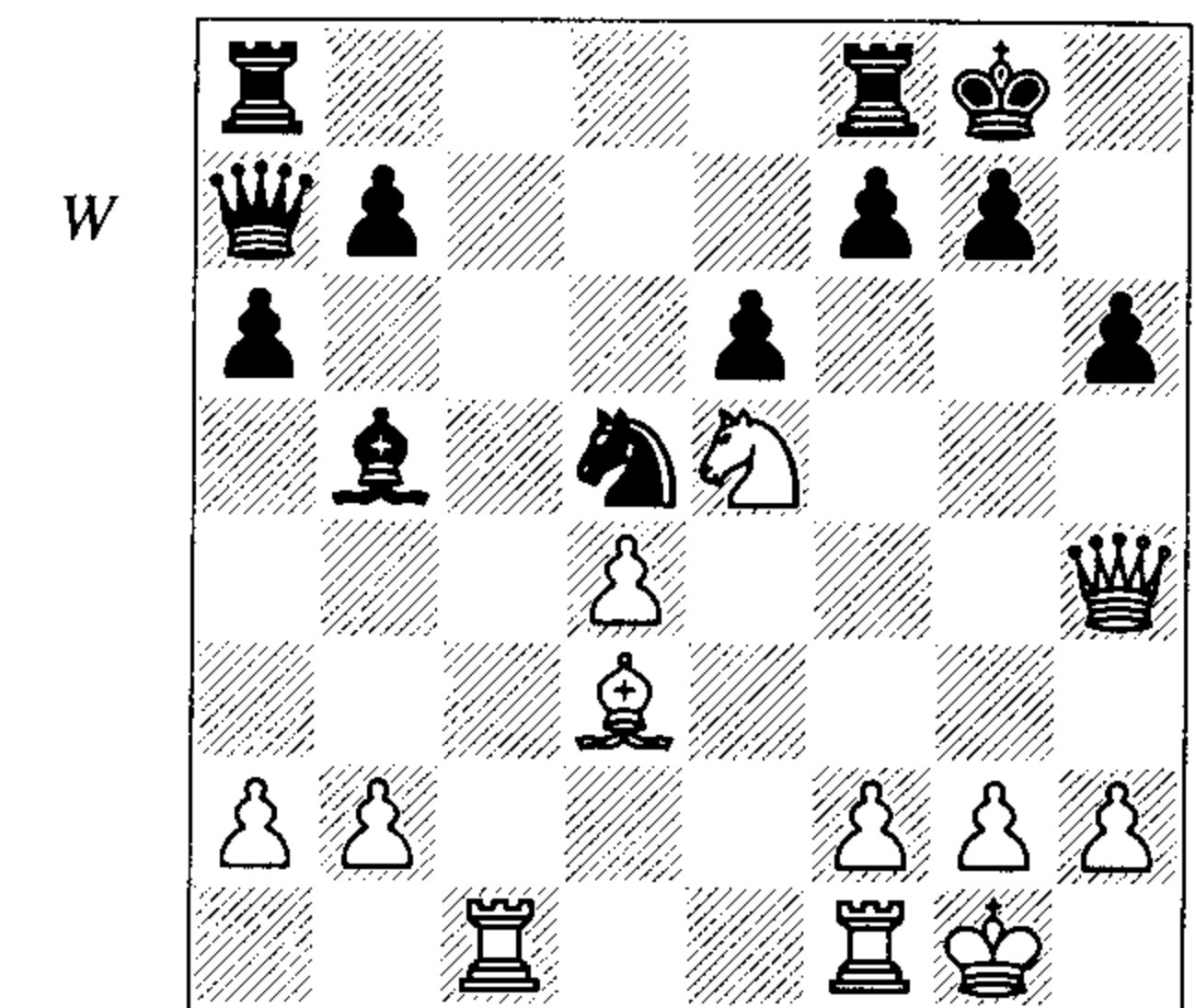
b2) 10...♗c6 11 ♗xc6 bxc6 12 ♗g5 a5 13 ♗c1 ♗a6 14 ♗xa6 ♗xa6 15 ♗e2 ♗b6 16 ♗e3 ♗d5 led to a draw in Gelfand-Hübner, Wijk aan Zee 1996.

9...♗c6 10 ♗g5 0-0 11 ♗c1 ♗d5

11...h6 achieves little, as in Polugaevsky-Ivanchuk, Roquebrune rpd

1992: 12 ♗h4 b5 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♗e4 ♗d7 15 ♗b1 ♗e7 16 ♗d3 f5 17 ♗c5 ♗xc5 18 ♗xc5 with advantage to White.

12 ♗xe7 ♗cxe7 13 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♗e5 ♗b6 15 ♗c4 ♗a7 16 ♗h5 h6 17 ♗h4 ♗d7 18 ♗e5 ♗b5 (D)



19 ♗fd1 ♗ac8

Black could have exchanged with 19...♗xd3 20 ♗xd3 ♗ac8, when he has a slight advantage – but the text-move looks fine too. Black should not lose.

20 ♗b1 ♗f6 21 ♗c3 ♗xc3 22 bxc3 ♗b6 23 ♗g4 ♗xg4 24 ♗xg4 ♗c6

Black could also consider 24...♗c4, trying to penetrate on the white queenside with 25...♗b2.

25 ♗e4 ♗xe4 26 ♗xe4 b6 27 ♗d3 ♗xd3 28 ♗xd3 ♗c8

This is Pinchuk-Cs.Horvath, Kobanya 1991. Black has been patient and has carried an advantage right through to a rook ending. White has three pawn islands versus Black's two. Also, Black's king can rush towards

the central square d5, whereas White's cannot do something similar – a defensive role is all that it has.

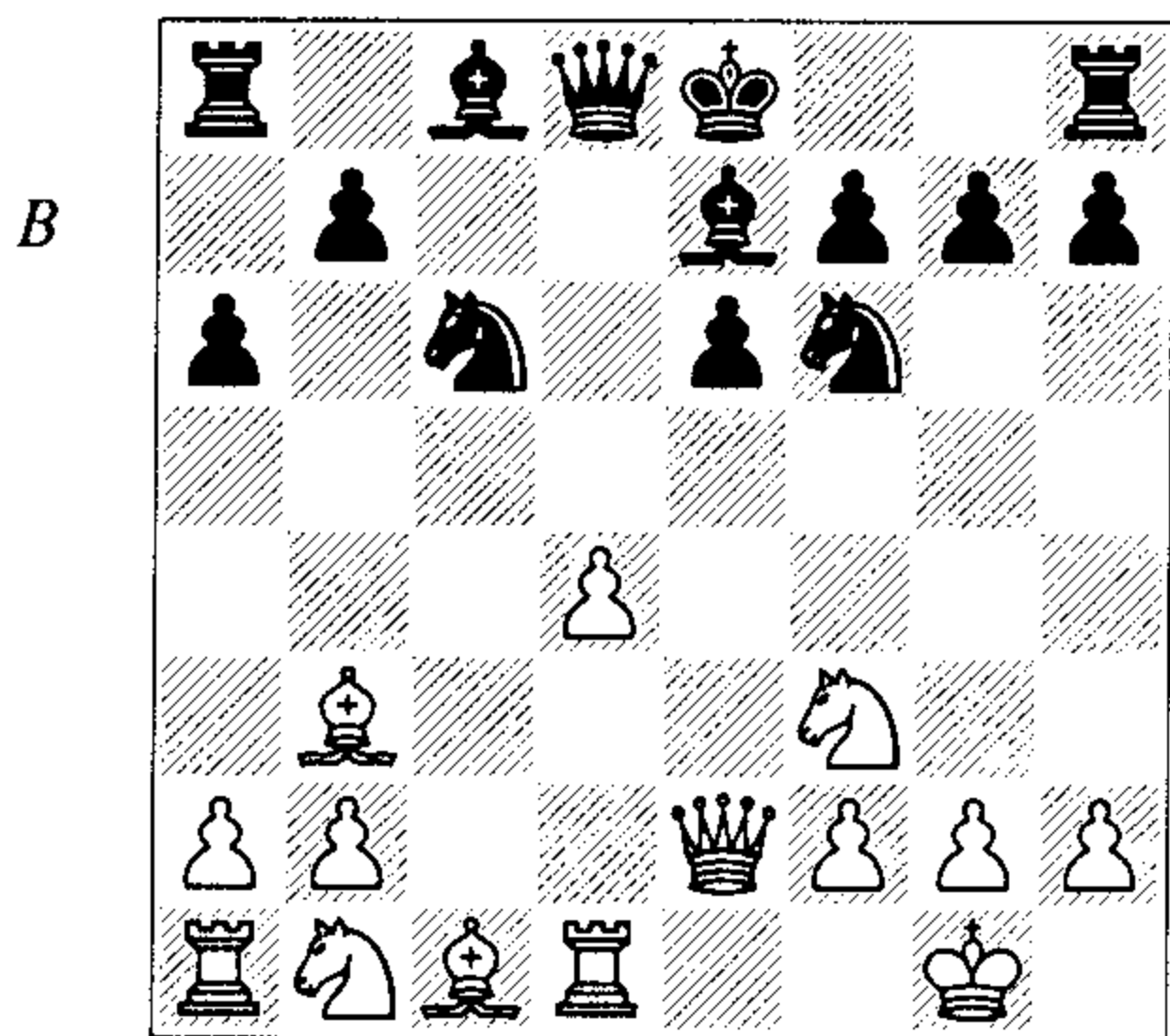
Conclusion: The positions after 7 $\text{d}3$ do not give White optimal attacking chances. Therefore, Black has long-term chances against White's IQP. Additionally, apart from note 'b1' to White's 9 move, the positions after an early $\text{f}3\text{-e}5$ do not offer White anything significant.

B)

6...a6 7 $\text{b}3$ $\text{c}6$ 8 $\text{e}2$ $\text{cxd}4$ 9 $\text{d}1$ $\text{e}7$

In Chapter 4, 9...d3, avoiding the IQP structure, was considered. Much of this is a matter of taste or perhaps mood.

10 $\text{exd}4$ (D)



10... $\text{a}5$

It is important to chase the bishop from b3 so that White cannot play d4-d5, e.g. 10...0-0 11 $\text{c}3$ b5 (11... $\text{b}4$ is an alternative method for Black) 12 d5.

11 $\text{c}2$ b5 12 $\text{c}3$ $\text{b}7$ 13 $\text{e}4$

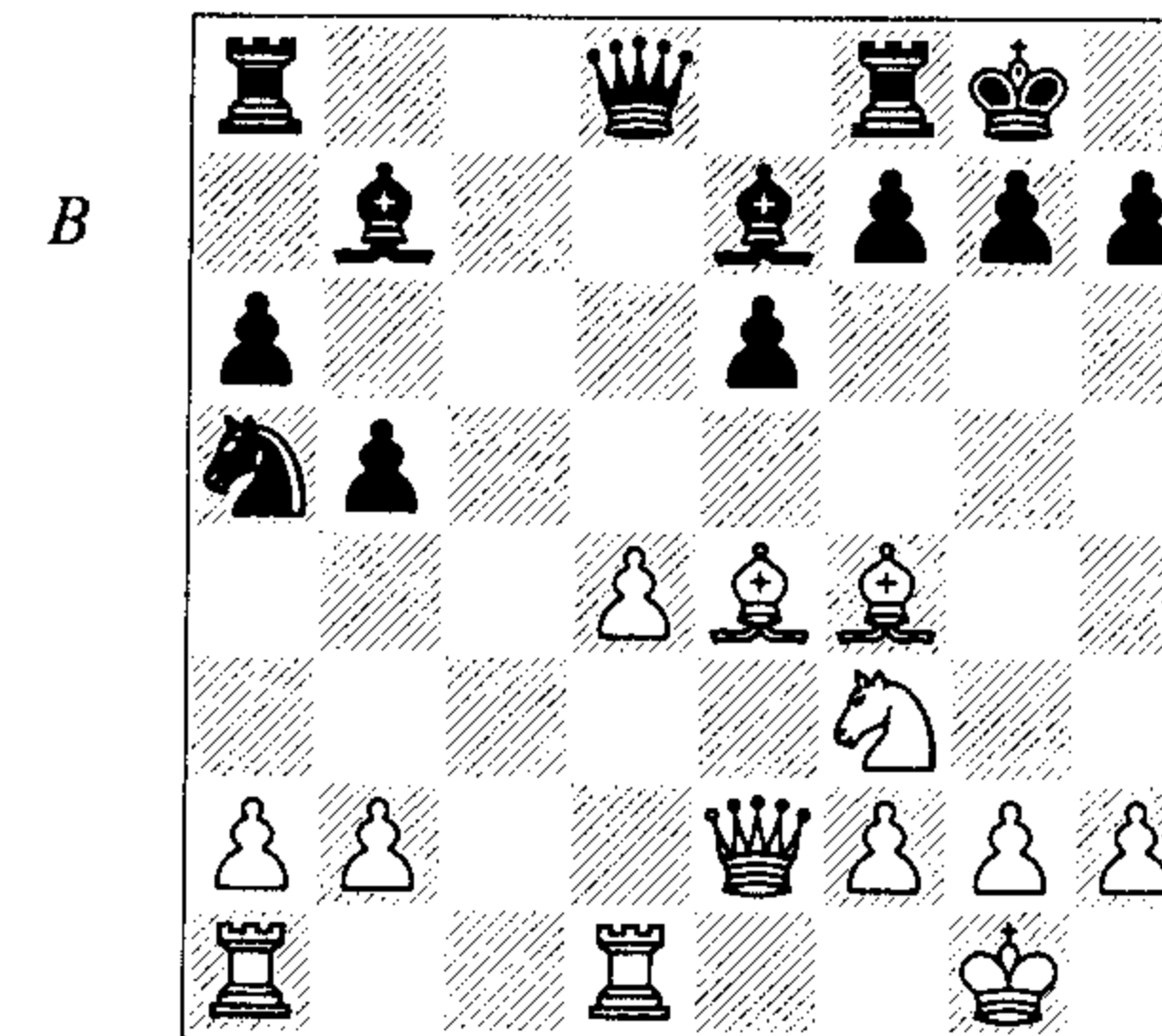
As 13 $\text{e}5$ did not deliver in Illescas-Anand, Leon (2) 1997, the main alternative is 13 $\text{g}5$ 0-0 and now:

a) 14 d5 is interesting, but the onus is on White to prove something: 14... $\text{exd}5$ 15 $\text{d}4$ g6 16 $\text{f}3$ $\text{e}8$ 17 $\text{h}6$ $\text{c}8$ (17... $\text{c}4$ looks more sensible) 18 $\text{f}5$ $\text{c}4$ (admitting a mistake is always difficult, but maybe 18... $\text{a}8$ should have been played; at least then Black is threatening ... $\text{c}8$) 19 b3 $\text{c}7$ 20 $\text{f}4$ $\text{d}6$ 21 $\text{xd}6$ $\text{xd}6$ 22 $\text{cxb}5$ (a consequence of Black's rook moves) 22... $\text{axb}5$ 23 $\text{cxb}5$ $\text{e}5$ 24 $\text{xc}7$ $\text{xc}7$ 25 $\text{xg}6$ $\text{hxg}6$ 26 $\text{xf}6$, Haritakis-Skembris, Ano Liosia 1998. The dust has settled and after being a pawn down, White has got back into the game although Black still has the better chances because his pieces can coordinate well whereas White's extra pawns are far from threatening.

b) 14 $\text{xf}6$ (with fewer pieces on the board, a knight and a queen can often work better with an IQP than a bishop and a queen) 14... $\text{xf}6$ 15 $\text{e}4$ $\text{b}6$ 16 $\text{d}3$ g6 17 h4 (I do not find this plan convincing for White but I am really not sure what to suggest as an alternative) 17... $\text{ad}8$ 18 $\text{xb}7$ $\text{xb}7$ 19 $\text{e}4$ $\text{g}7$ 20 h5 $\text{d}6$ 21 $\text{hxg}6$ $\text{hxg}6$ 22 $\text{g}3$ $\text{c}8$ (it makes sense to avoid White's $\text{c}1\text{-c}5$; earlier, with the knight on c3, there seemed little point going here) 23 $\text{ad}1$ $\text{fe}8$ 24 b3 (this preventative measure makes sense so that the pawn is not lost after the d4-pawn moves) 24... $\text{b}7$,

Lalić-Arencibia, Lucerne WchT 1997. The plan of ... $\text{c}8\text{-c}7$ and ... $\text{d}6\text{-c}8\text{-e}7\text{-d}5$ is worth considering. In general Black has no problems here and it seems to be a question of whether White can exchange the d4-pawn without coming to some sort of grief.

13... $\text{xe}4$ 14 $\text{xe}4$ 0-0 15 $\text{f}4$ (D)



15... $\text{xe}4$

15... $\text{b}6$ is a sensible precaution when the queen sits opposite a rook on d1. We saw the same idea in the game Lalić-Arencibia, above.

16 $\text{xe}4$ $\text{c}4$ 17 d5

A typical try but White's full intention will only become clear in a few moves.

17... $\text{xb}2$ 18 $\text{e}1$ $\text{f}6$ 19 $\text{dxe}6$ $\text{e}7$ 20 $\text{g}5$ (D)

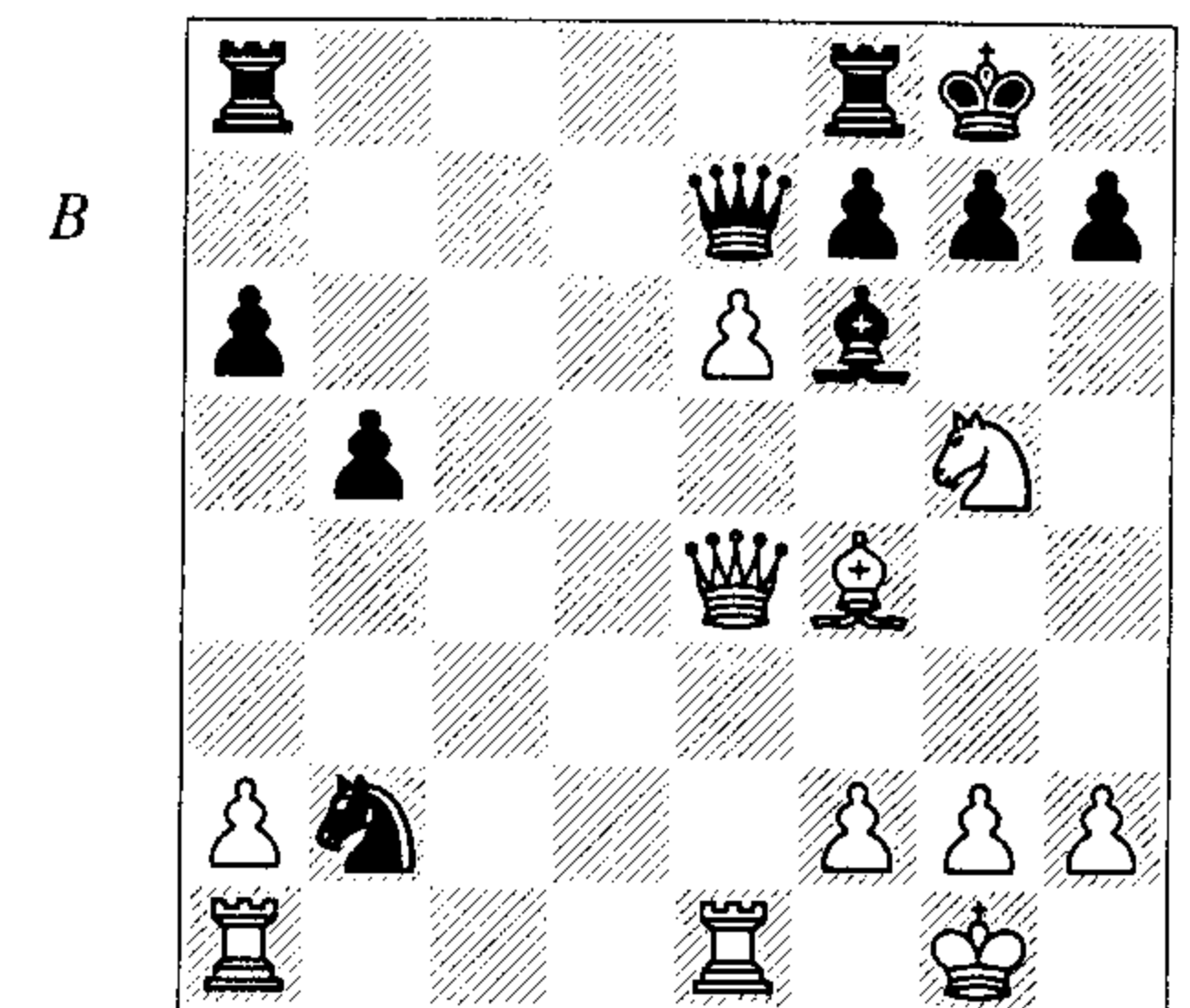
This is it!

20... $\text{xg}5$

The knight must be taken because, in defending h7, f7 will disappear.

21 $\text{xg}5$ $\text{xe}6$

The reason for White's 17th is clear: 21... $\text{xg}5$ 22 $\text{exf}7+$ $\text{h}8$ (22... $\text{xf}7$



23 $\text{e}6\#$) 23 $\text{xa}8$ $\text{xa}8$ 24 $\text{e}8+$ and mate next move.

22 $\text{d}4$ $\text{g}6$ 23 $\text{e}7$ $\text{c}4$ 24 $\text{xf}8$ $\text{xf}8$

White has won the exchange and has enough advantage to win, Aleksandrov-Yakovich, Sochi 1997.

C)

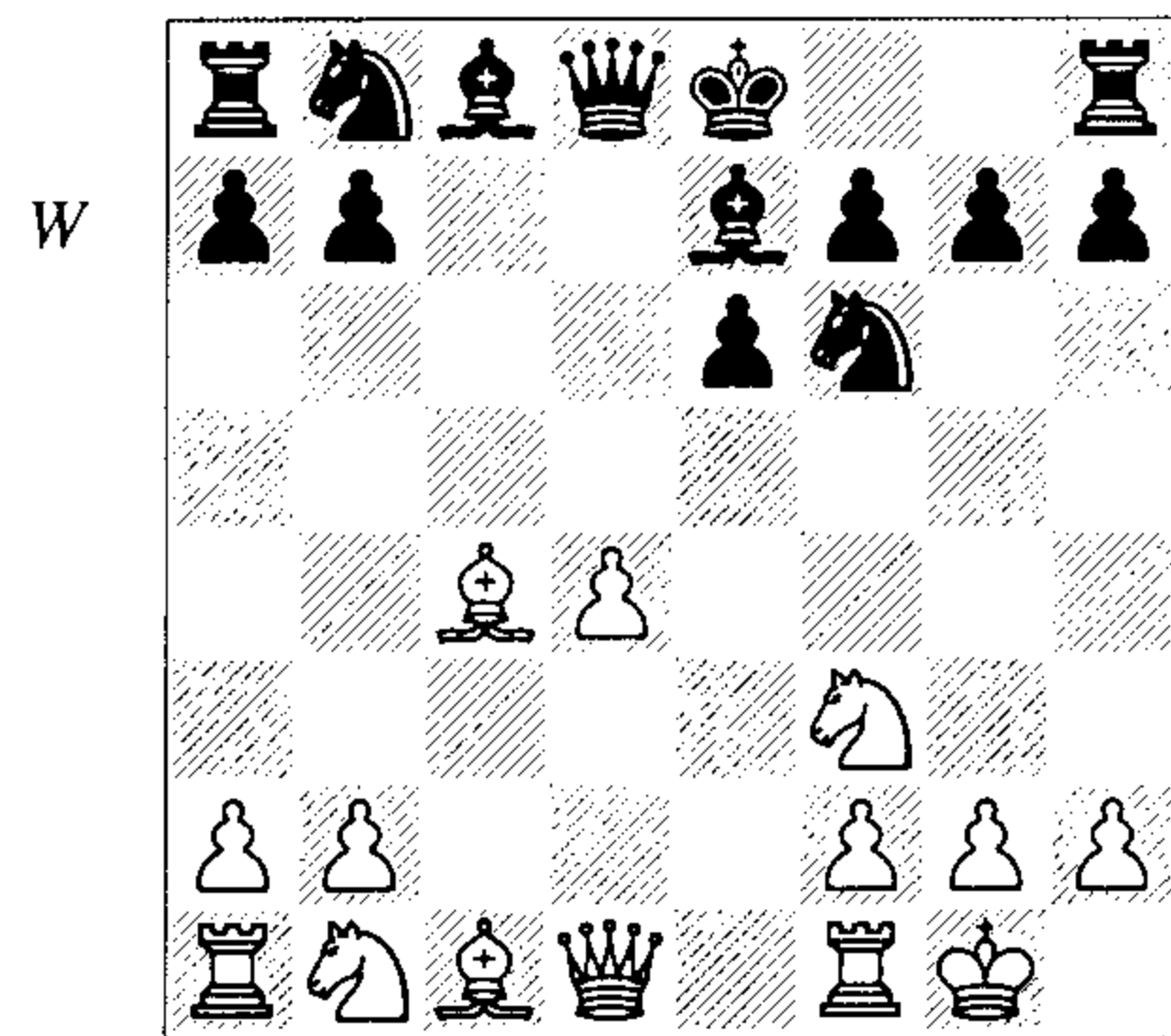
6... $\text{cxd}4$

Black economizes on the move ...a6. An advantage of this is that, since he does not intend ...b5, he will not have problems with the a5- and c5-squares. A disadvantage is that queenside expansion is difficult to implement and Black relies solely on blockading the d4-pawn.

7 $\text{exd}4$ $\text{e}7$ (D)

Black is ill-advised to take the pawn with the immediate 7... $\text{c}6$ 8 $\text{e}2$ $\text{xd}4$ 9 $\text{xd}4$ $\text{xd}4$, as 10 $\text{d}1$ $\text{b}6$ 11 $\text{b}5+$ $\text{d}7$ 12 $\text{xd}7+$ $\text{xd}7$ 13 $\text{c}3$ $\text{f}6$ 14 $\text{e}3$ $\text{c}6$ 15 $\text{ac}1$ a6 gives White a huge lead in development, Malich-Uhlmann, Zinnowitz 1966. 16 b3 and 16 a4 are possible continuations.

Instead 7...a6 may well be met by 8 c3 c6 9 d5.



Now:

C1: 8 e2 100
C2: 8 c3 and e1 100

C1)

8 e2 0-0 9 c3 c6

9... bd7 10 d1 b6 (the plan involving the d5 blockade is the same) 11 d3 (11 b3 with the idea of e5 and d3-g3/h3 is again possible although the development of the white pieces looks somewhat unwieldy; instead, as ... f6-d5 offering exchanges is impossible, g5 looks natural and should be the foundation of a good game for White) 11... bd5 12 e5 d7 13 f3 c6 14 h3 c8 15 g5 g6 and now 16 e1 is a change of heart and a sign that White has gone wrong, Banikas-A.Fernandes, Erevan OL 1996. Black is solidly developed and should not have to fend off a big kingside attack.

10 d1 b4 11 e5 bd5

Or 11... d7 12 g5 c6 (12... fd5 is impossible – White has too many pieces attacking e7 and d5) 13 xc6 bxc6 14 ac1 b8 15 b3 and again the structure offers little, Golod-Vasiliev, Ufa 1993. Both players have three pawn islands and the b- and c-files cancel each other out, as do the d5- and c5-squares. The position is even.

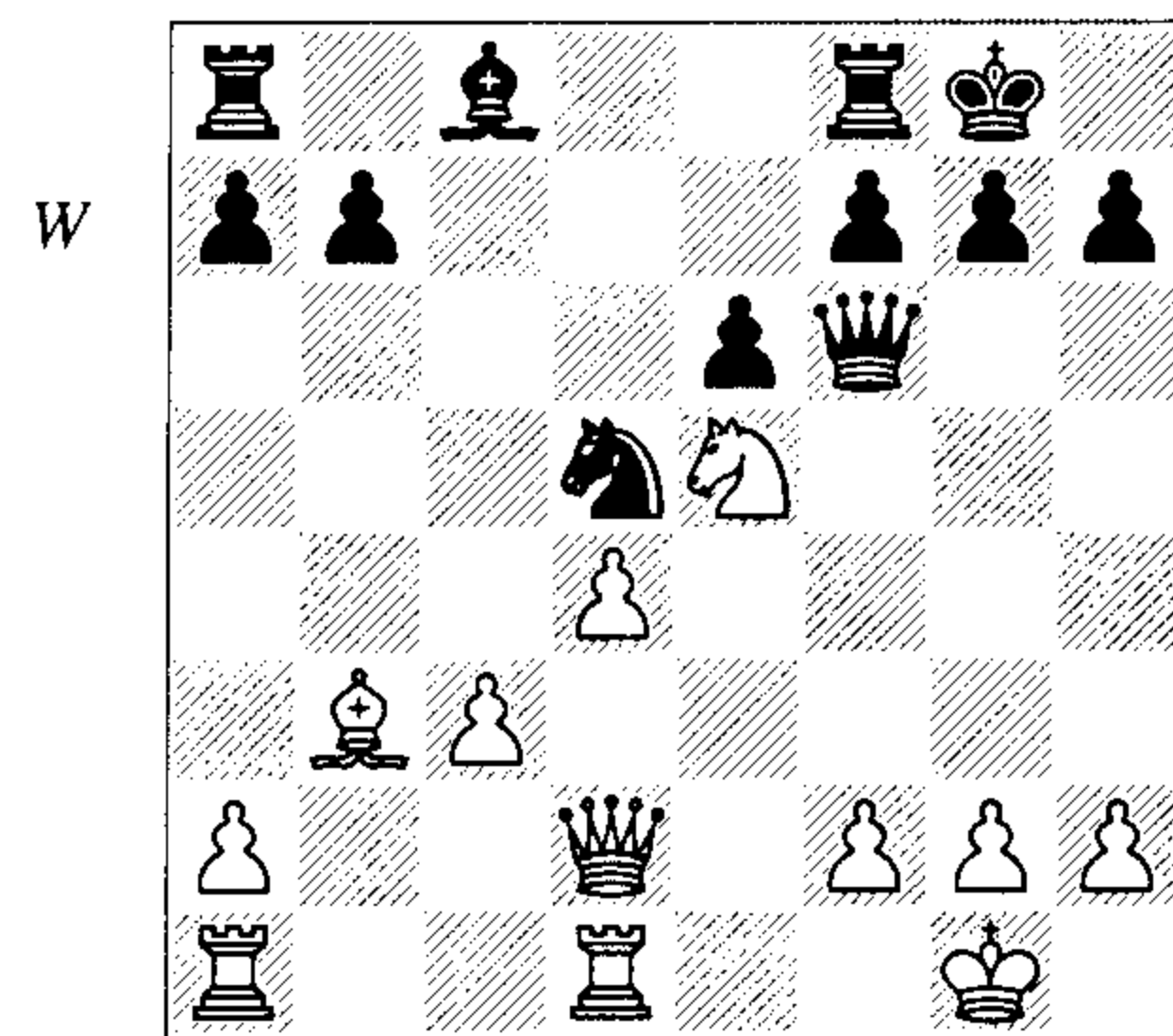
12 g5

The alternative 12 b3 comes into consideration.

12... xc3 13 bxc3 d5 14 d2

Naturally, White avoids the exchange.

14... g5 15 b3 xd2 16 xd2 f6 (D)



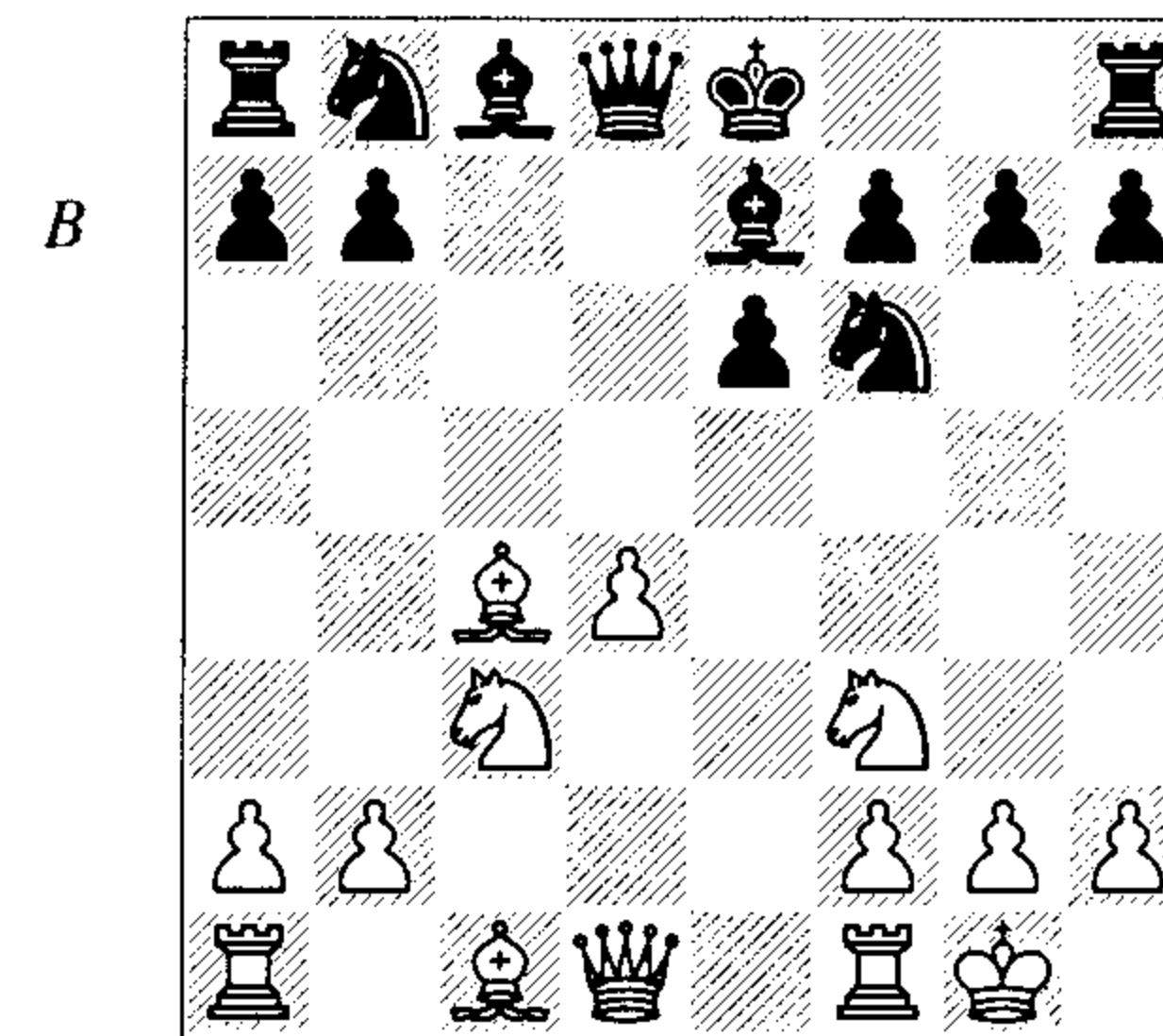
17 c4

Black has still not resolved the problem of the c8-bishop. The position is advantageous to White, M.Gurevich-Schwartzman, Las Vegas 1997.

C2)

8 c3 (D)

8...0-0



After 8... c6 there is no reason to expect that White can achieve an advantage with 9 d5 exd5 10 xd5 xd5 11 xd5 b4 12 b3 xd1 13 xd1 c6 14 h3 h6 15 f4 0-0, when Black is fine, Matlak-Dobosz, Lubniewice 1995.

9 e1

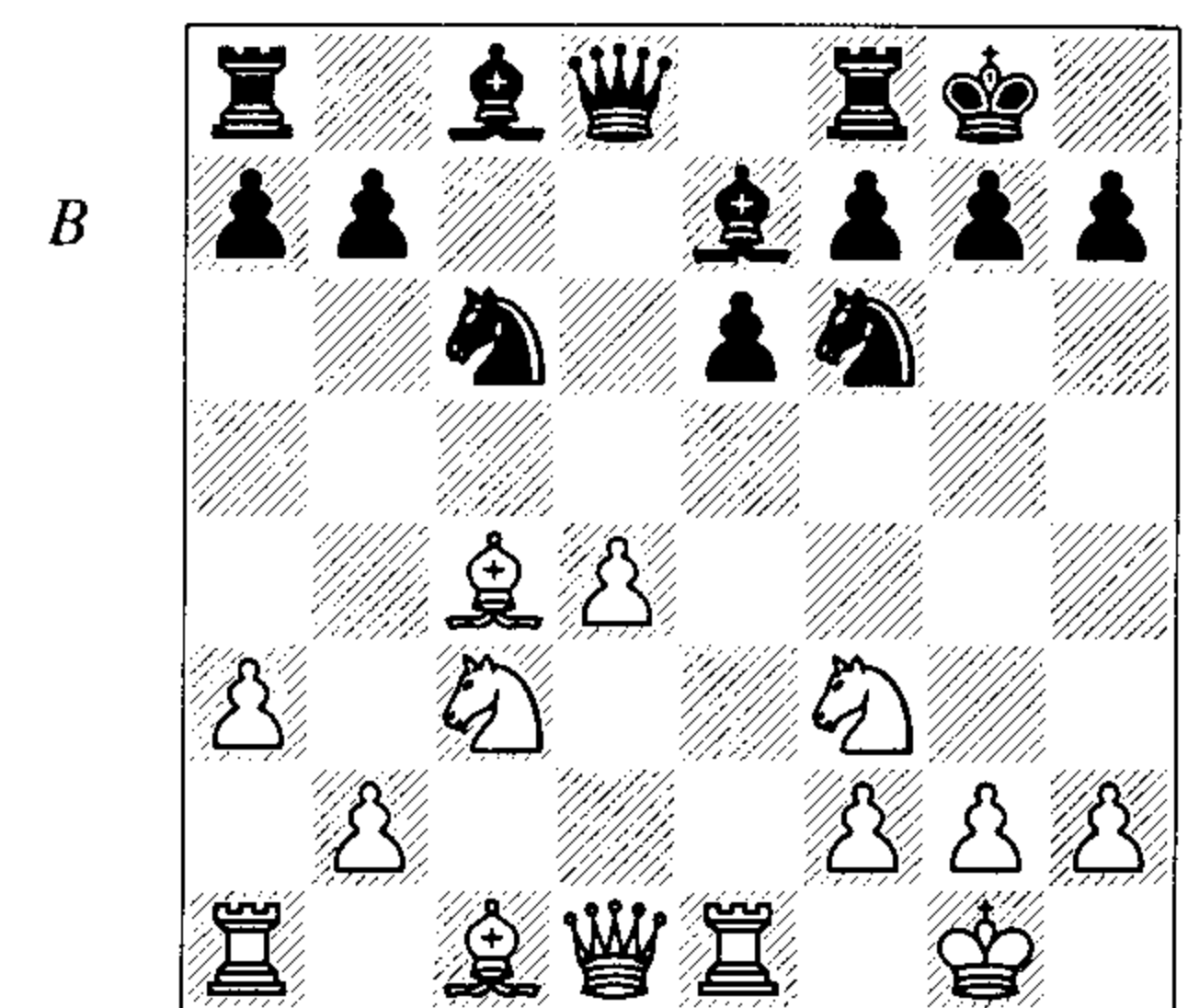
9 g5 is possible, but I believe it is better to decide about the development of the queen and king's rook before deciding on moving this bishop. 9... c6 10 a3 d5 (this is why: Black organizes exchanges before White's rooks are even connected) 11 e4 xg5 12 exg5 h6 13 e4 b6 14 d3 b7 and Black has nothing to fear, Dydyshko-Voloshin, Pardubice 1996. ... f4 will be a future possibility and together with the bishop he can hope for some annoying pressure on g2.

9... c6

The alternative is 9... bd7 10 b3 b6 11 d3 bd5 12 a3 xc3 13 bxc3 b6 14 e5 (without a black knight on c6, White can use his springboard) 14... b7 15 g5 d5 16 c2 f5 (this

move leaves the e6-pawn weak, but Black's alternative was to lose the exchange with 16... g6 17 h6 e8 18 a4) 17 d2 g5 18 c4 f4 19 xf4 (19 g3 h3+ 20 hx3 xd2 21 e2 also comes into consideration) 19... xf4 20 ad1 (better is 20 a4) 20... d6 21 e2 ac8 22 a4 and White had a lasting advantage in the game Gostisa-Osmanbegović, Maribor 1994.

10 a3 (D)



This position can also be reached, with one extra move each, via a Nimzo-Indian move-order. There, Black plays ... f8-b4-e7 and White plays f1-d3xc4 .

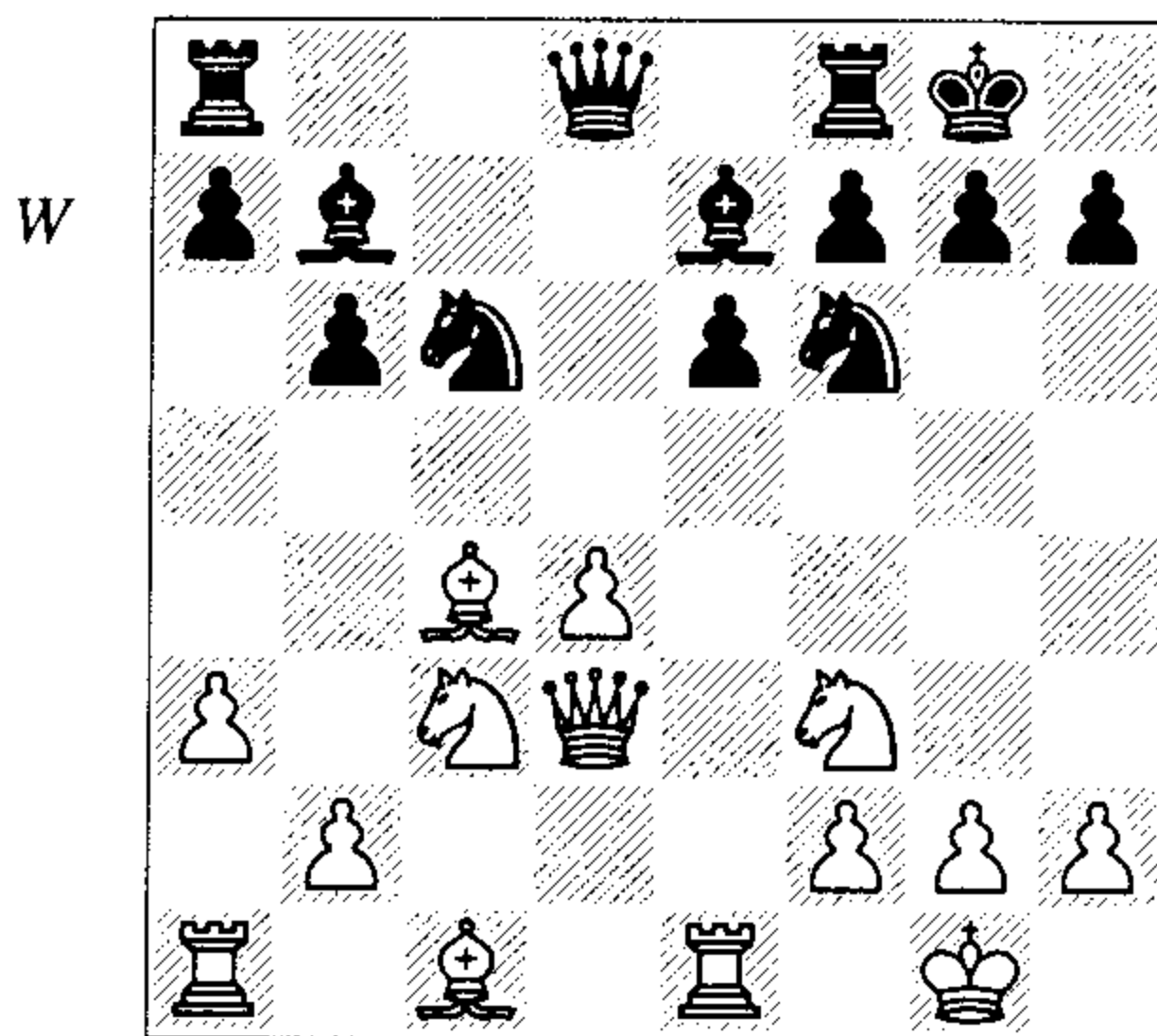
10...b6

10...a6 does not make much sense. Black's move-order has allowed White to choose his preferred set-up with the IQP. Note that by playing 6...a6 instead, Black stops White adopting the e1 and d3 plan as these squares are not good if Black avoids the exchange on d4. Possibilities now are:

a) 11 ♖d3 b5 (consistent, but I do not like it) 12 ♗b3 ♗b7 13 ♗c2 b4 14 ♘e4 (14 ♘a4 is another route into c5) 14...g6 15 ♗h6 ♞e8 16 ♘c5 (not yet, please! White can cause the rook on e8 and the pinned knight far more trouble by 16 ♗a4) 16...♗xc5 17 dxc5 ♜xd3 18 ♗xd3 ♞ed8 19 ♞ed1 ♞d5 20 ♞ac1 bxa3 21 bxa3 ♞ad8 is equal, Tratar-Barle, Maribor 1998.

b) 11 ♗a2 ♞e8 12 ♗g5 ♘d5 (encouraging some exchanges) 13 ♗xd5 exd5 14 ♗xe7 ♞xe7 15 ♞xe7 ♘xe7 16 ♜b3 (White is better) 16...♞b8 17 ♞c1 ♗g4 18 ♘e5 ♗f5 19 ♘a4 (19 h3 is superior – White needs the knight to defend d4) 19...f6 20 ♘f3 ♗g4 21 ♘d2 and we can see that White has gone astray, Bricard-Sellos, St Affrique 1997.

11 ♖d3 ♗b7 (D)



12 ♗g5

12 ♗a2 is possible.

12...♘a5

12...♞c8 13 ♞ad1 ♘d5 14 ♘e4 (14 ♗c1 is often a reliable way of keeping

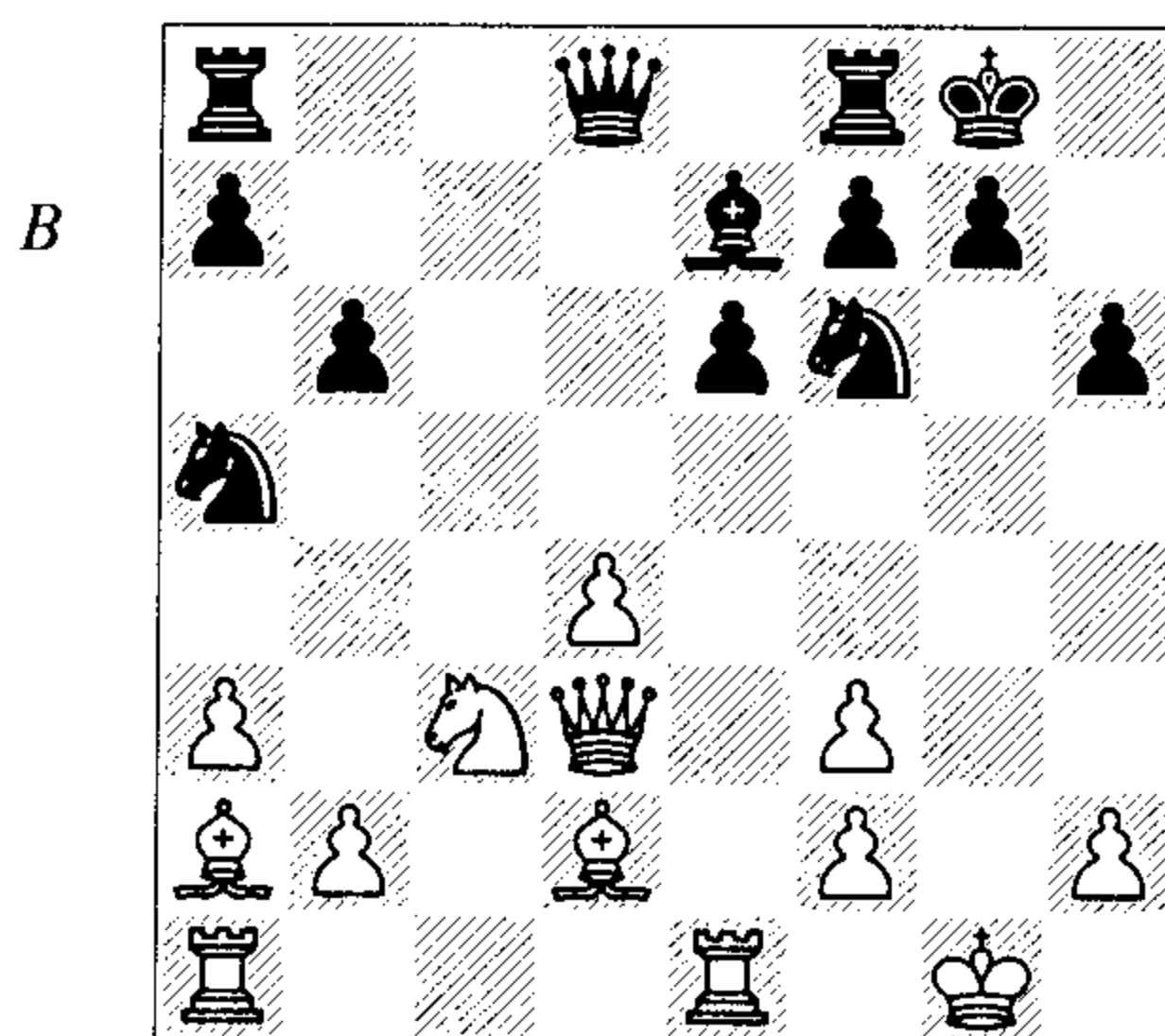
the minor pieces on the board, but no doubt Black was ready with 14...♘xc3 15 bxc3 ♘a5 16 ♗a2 ♗d5, gaining control of the important c4-square) 14...h6 (exchanging bishops is better) 15 ♗c1 ♘b8 (if the e7-square had been vacated then ...♘e7 could have been played) 16 ♘e5 ♘d7 17 ♗a2 ♘7f6 18 ♗b1 ♞e8 and White's position is building up nicely, Reinemer-Wa.Schmidt, Dortmund 1993. ♘g3-h5 is a useful way to continue.

13 ♗a2 h6 14 ♗d2

After 14 ♗f4 ♘d5 (14...♗xf3 15 ♜xf3 is good for White), Black gets what he wants with tempo.

14...♗xf3 15 gxf3 (D)

An original treatment, but 15 ♜xf3 ♜xd4 16 ♗f4 (16 ♞ad1 ♜g4) 16...♜d7 does not give White enough for the pawn.



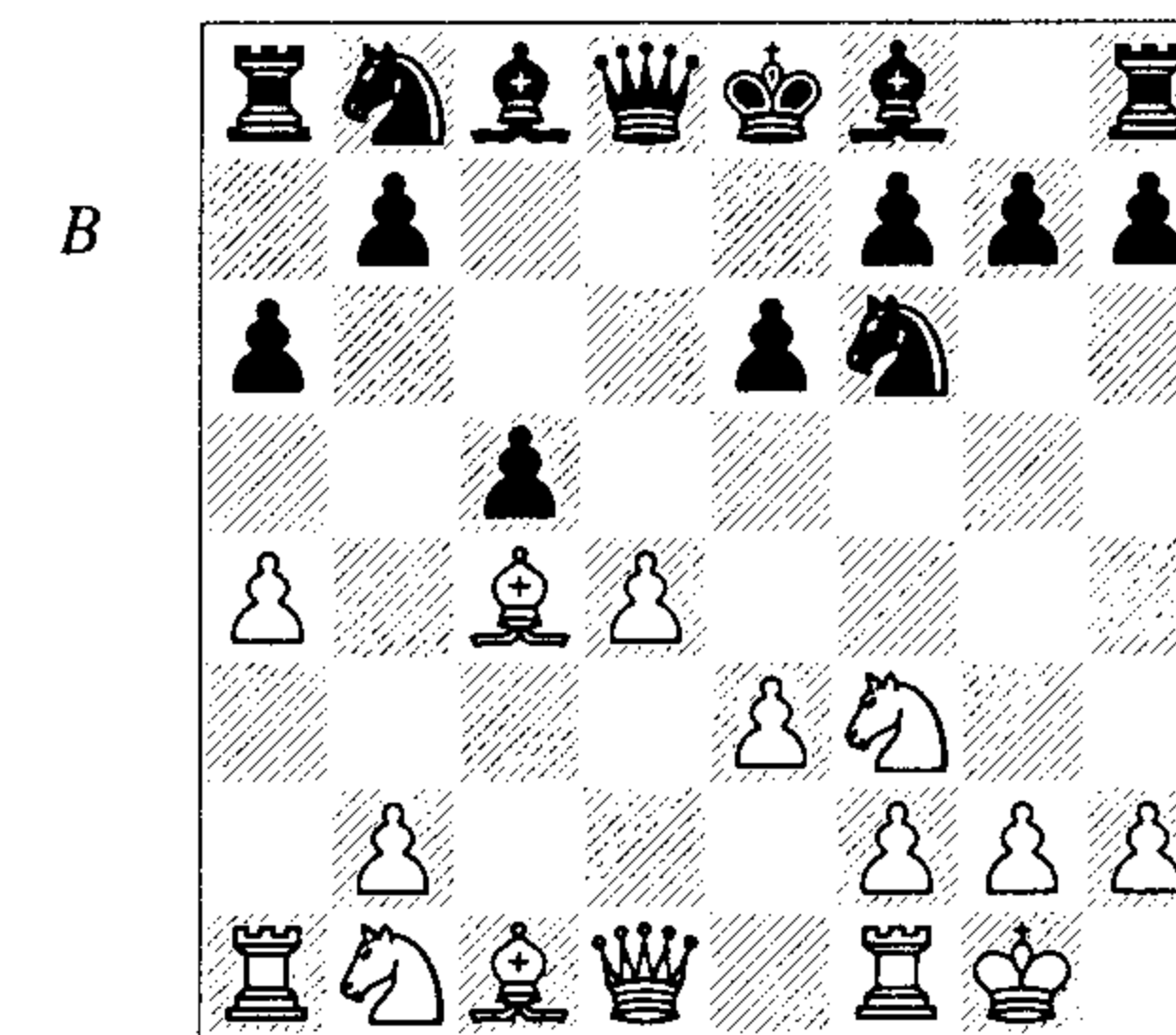
15...♘c6 16 ♗e3 ♗d6 17 ♘e4 ♘xe4 18 ♜xe4 ♘e7

Black does not have any problems and can hope to pressure White's kingside pawns now that he has

rescued his knight from the edge of the board, Eperjesi-Kopisch, Budapest 1996.

D)

6...a6 7 a4 (D)



White chooses to stamp out Black's normal queenside expansion with ...b5. However, on the plus side for Black, he has an extra move compared to earlier lines in this chapter, and has undisputed access to the b4-square. For this reason, after White has played a4, Black should develop, almost without exception, the knight from b8 to c6 and not d7.

7...♘c6 8 ♜e2 cxd4 9 ♞d1 ♗e7

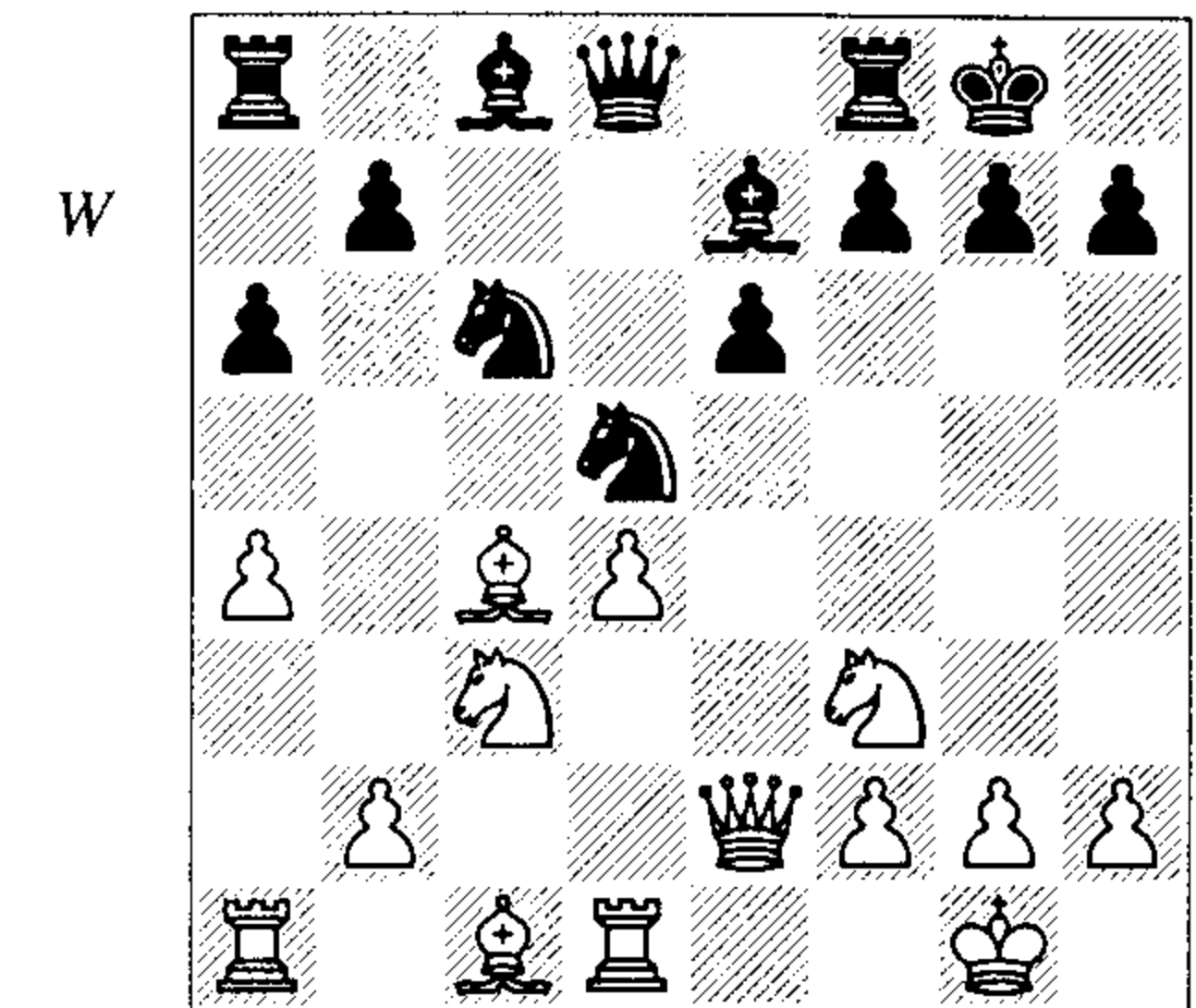
9...d3 is considered in Chapter 6.

10 exd4

We now have the structure under discussion. White will often be looking to get in ♘e5 at some stage, and may have ideas of swinging a rook over to g3 via either a3 or d3.

10...0-0 11 ♘c3 ♘d5 (D)

12 ♘e4



There are several other 12th moves for White. For example, 12 ♗d3, 12 ♜e4, 12 ♗b3 and even 12 h4. We will just choose one, since the positions are all similar in nature, viz. 12 ♗b3 and now:

a) 12...♞e8 13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 dxe5 ♘xc3 15 bxc3 ♜c7 16 ♞d3 ♗d7 (16...b6 is also possible, when a later ...♜c6 may stop White in his tracks; for example, 17 ♞h3 g6 18 ♗h6 ♗b7 19 ♜e3 ♜c6) 17 ♞h3 g6 18 ♗h6 ♞ed8 19 ♜e3 (threatening ♗g7) 19...♜c5 20 ♜f4 with good attacking chances for White, Naumkin-Sadler, Ostend 1992.

b) 12...♘cb4 13 ♘e5 (the usual reaction if the c6-knight vacates its post) 13...♗d7 14 ♜g4 ♘f6 15 ♜g3 ♗h8 (15...♗c6 is best but White's chances are to be preferred, Magerramov-Ibragimov, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1991) 16 d5 exd5 17 ♘xd5 ♘bxd5 18 ♗xd5 ♗e6 19 ♗h6 gxh6 20 ♗xe6 ♜e8 and the complications have again favoured White, Rogozenko-Vaulin, Pardubice 1997.

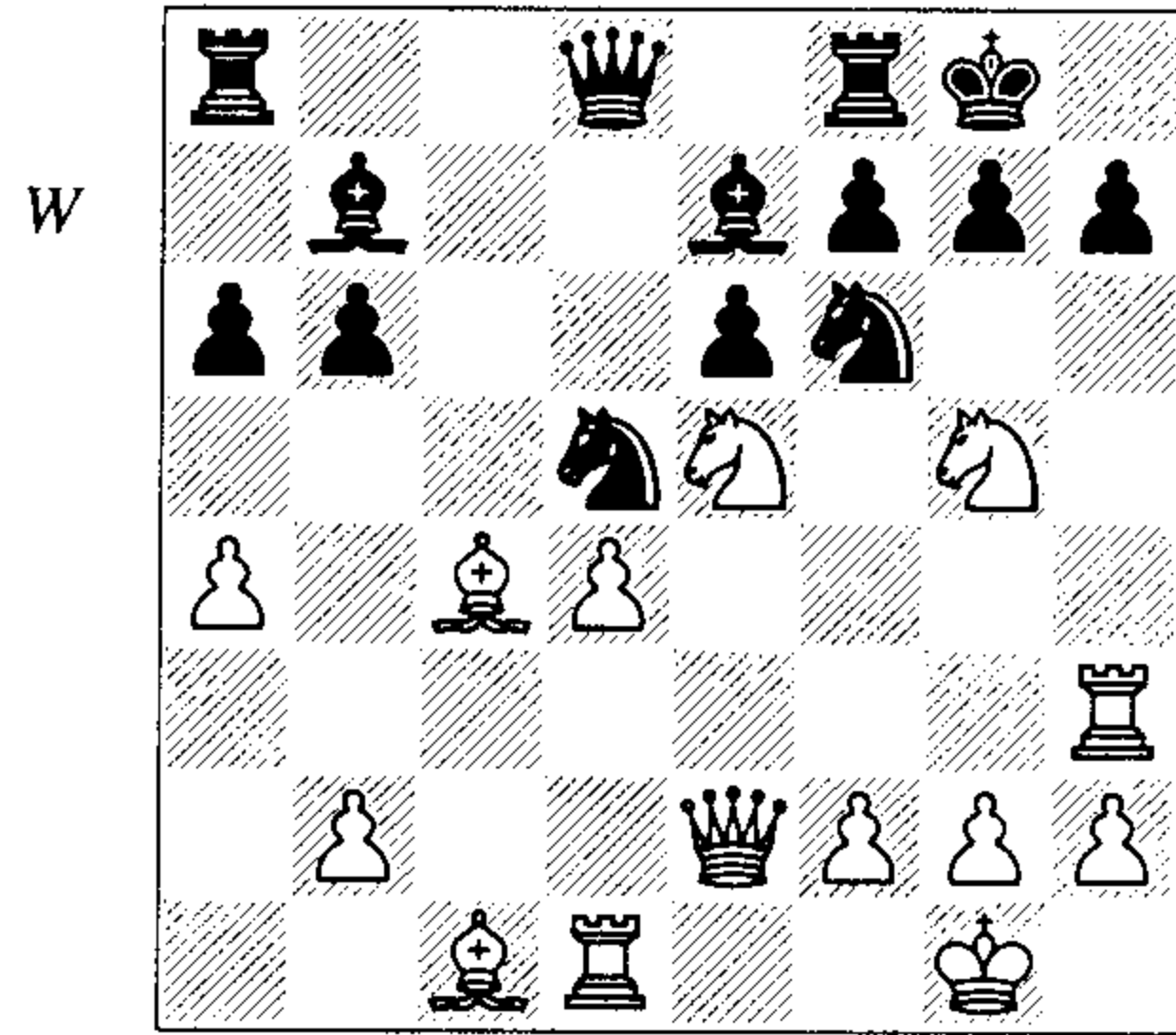
12...♖cb4 13 ♗e5 b6 14 ♜a3

14 a5 b5 is less troublesome for Black to deal with, Flear-Kupreichik, Hastings 1984/5.

14...♗b7

14...f6 proved sound enough for Black in Trois-Van der Sterren, Eerbeek 1978.

15 ♜h3 ♗f6 16 ♗g5 ♗bd5 (D)



One point of placing the knight on b4 is to stop ♜d3-g3/h3. However, the b4-knight is now needed to cover h7 after the possible string of captures and sacrifices on that square, and so the knight makes a dash towards f6.

17 ♗d3

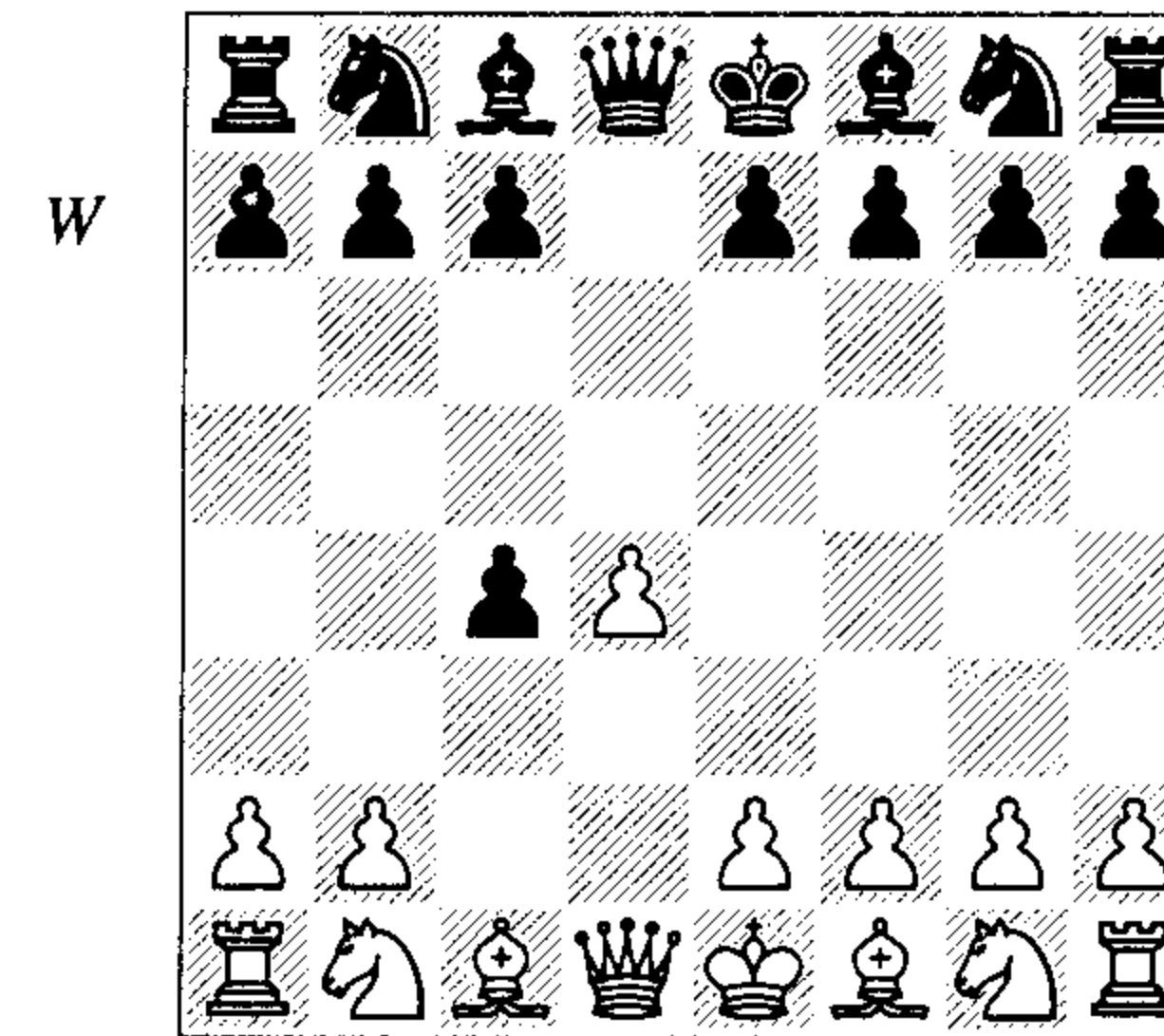
I would prefer 17 ♜dd3 (for example 17...h6 18 ♜xh6 gxh6 19 ♗xe6 fxe6 20 ♜g3+ ♖h8 21 ♗xh6 with mate to follow; the swinging rooks just show what can happen if Black

gets it wrong). However, after the text-move, played in the game Botsari-Miladinović – C.Flear, Pula wom Echt 1997, the rook manoeuvre is still a future possibility and with so many sacrificial possibilities for White, White is clearly going to enjoy proceedings very much more than Black.

I have presented the material in this chapter for the reader who has a particular liking for playing against White's isolated pawn. Personally speaking, I would not make an early capture ...cxd4, particularly if transposing to the Steinitz variation is possible. However, this may purely be a matter of taste because after all, the variation has a number of followers. As Black, I would also prefer to play the positions in Chapter 4 rather than this chapter, particularly after 7 ♗b3, but once again this is a question of taste. Out of all the IQP positions, 7 ♗d3 offers White less of an attack as an effective break d4-d5 is harder to implement and also the sometimes dangerous rook manoeuvres ♜a1-a3-g3/h3 and/or ♜d1-d3-g3/h3 require an all-important extra bishop move. As for the positions with a2-a4, Black again must endure a king-side assault. Sadler's belief in the positions following 12...♜e8 give us some confidence.

9 Other Systems

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 (D)



In this, the final chapter, we look at some other QGA systems not examined in the rest of the book. The chapter is split into nine sections:

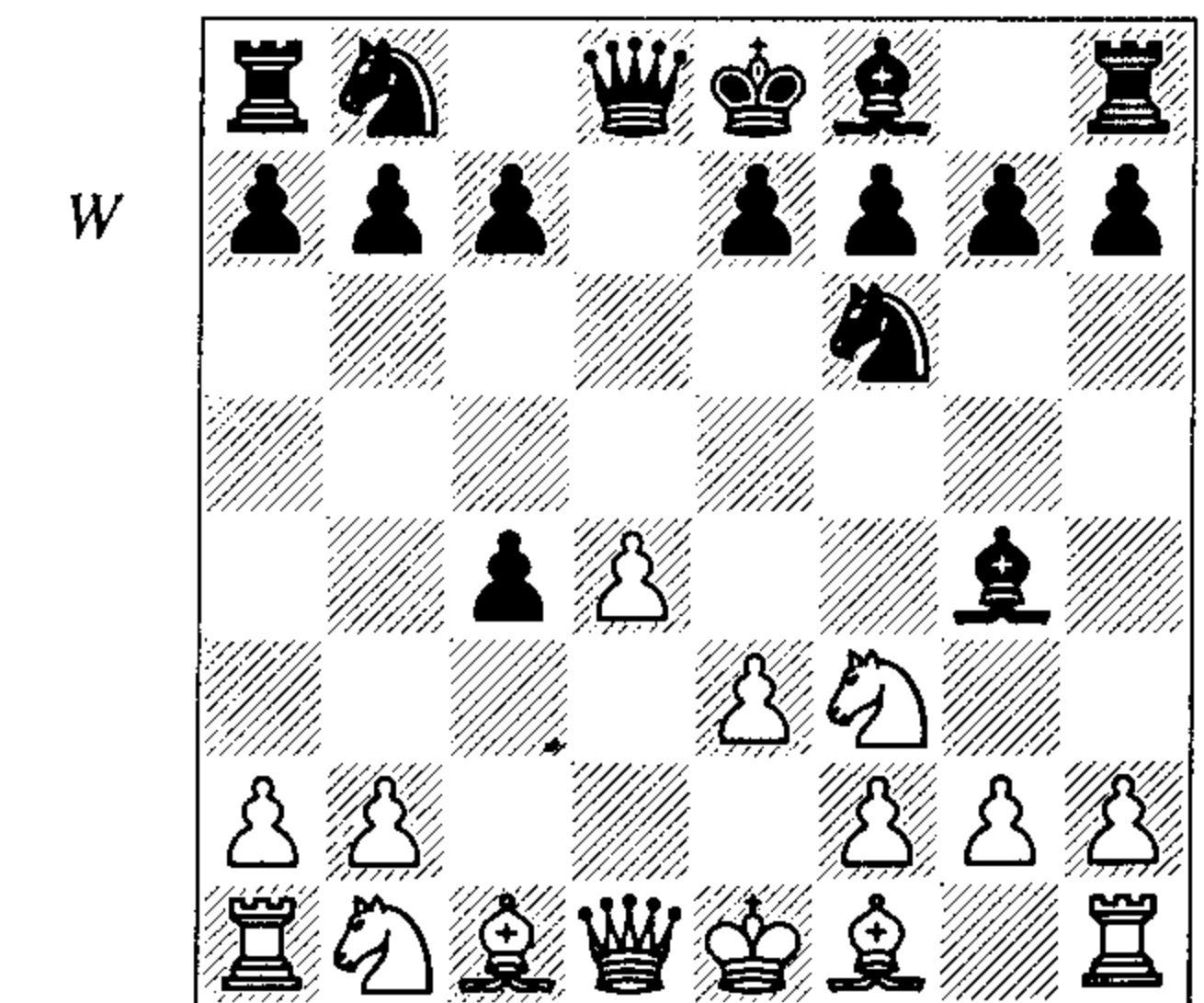
A: 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 ♗g4	105
B: 3 ♗f3 a6 4 e3 ♗g4	109
C: 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 g6	110
D: 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 ♗e6	111
E: 3 ♗f3 a6 (4 e4 b5)	112
F: 3 ♗f3 c5	115
G: 3 ♗f3 ♗d7	117
H: 3 e3	118
I: 3 ♗c3	121

In Lines A, B, C and D, Black avoids a bulk of theory but the positions can be a little defensive from Black's point of view. In some of the sections, notably Line E for example,

the lines are not at all popular for Black. Historically, they have even been considered dubious but more recently this verdict has changed in some cases. The other point worth making, particularly with regard to Line F, is that the move-order can just be a method of avoiding a certain variation and that transposition into the normal Classical lines is all that Black has in mind.

A)

3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 ♗g4 (D)



Here and in Line B, Black deviates from the Classical path and develops the bishop to g4. This does solve the problem of developing that piece which, on occasions, can prove a challenge in the Classical set-up. The resulting positions

are generally not as theoretical as the main lines given elsewhere in this book and can be a little passive, although there is the odd sharp line which is worthwhile knowing if you are to embark on playing these systems with either colour.

The ... $\text{g}4$ systems are not popular due, it seems, simply to fashion. Black's results are satisfactory and he also avoids reams of opening theory.

5 $\text{xc}4$

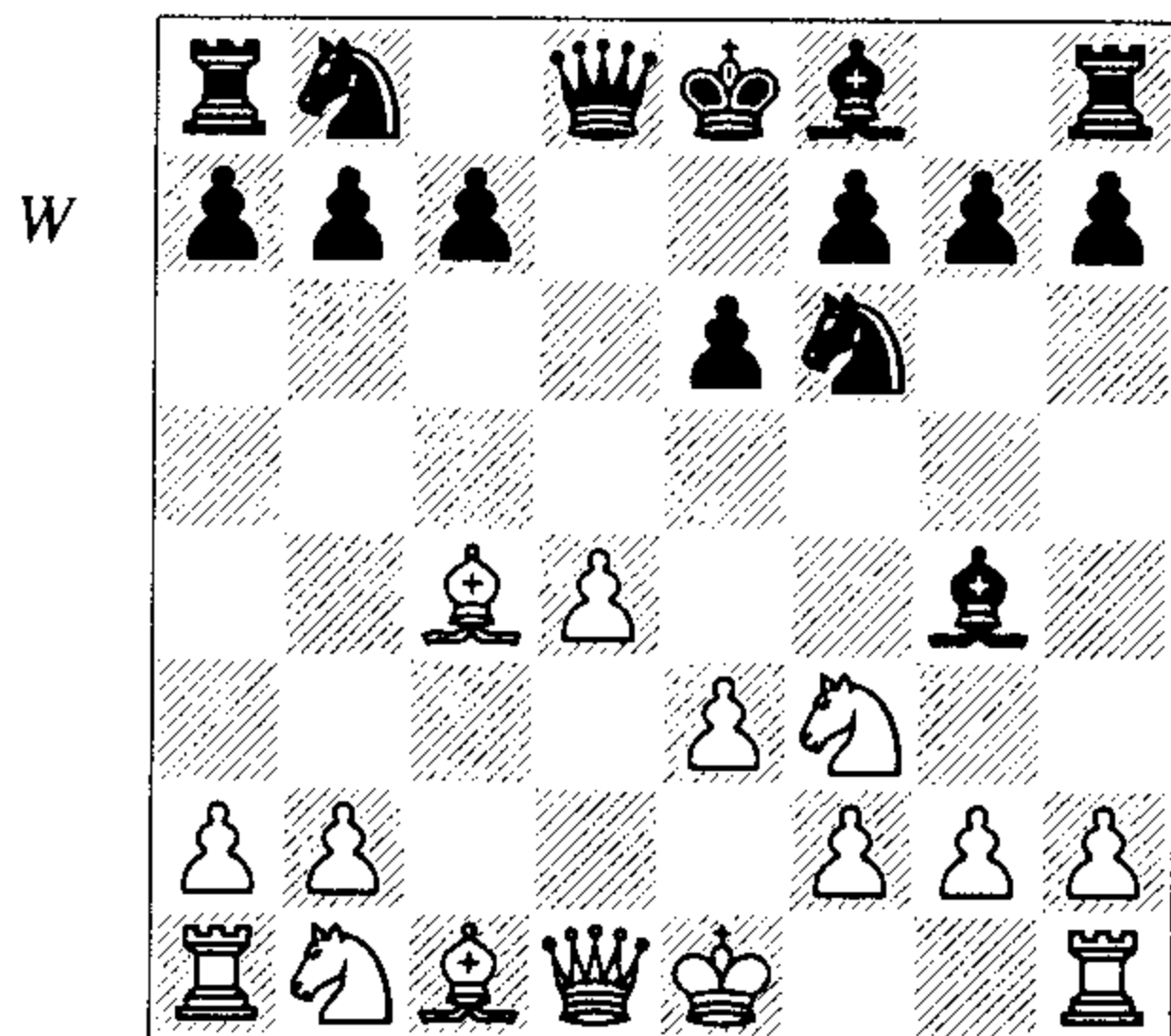
Most tempting since it may catch the unsuspecting opponent with a later $\text{xf}7+$. There does not seem to be anything to be gained by rounding the c-pawn up with the knight from b1. Alternatively, 5 h3 $\text{h}5$ 6 g4 $\text{g}6$ 7 $\text{e}5$ $\text{bd}7$ (by no means the only move; 7... $\text{e}4$ deserves consideration; then after 8 f3, 8... $\text{xb}1$ is possible) 8 $\text{xc}4$ $\text{hxg}6$ 9 $\text{g}2$ c6 10 $\text{d}2$ e5 (the most logical; after 10... $\text{a}5$ 11 0-0 Black may be able to hold on to his extra pawn with ... $\text{a}6$ and ...b5, but his queen is really out of the action in that case) 11 $\text{xc}4$ $\text{exd}4$ 12 $\text{xd}4$ $\text{c}5$ (12... $\text{b}4+$ is possible) 13 $\text{d}3$ $\text{c}7$ leaves White with the bishop-pair and you could argue that Black is a bit passive although nevertheless his position is solid, Neubert-Graef, NW Bavarian League 1995.

5...e6 (D)

6 $\text{c}3$

a) 6 $\text{b}3$ invites a gambit by 6... $\text{xf}3$ 7 $\text{gxf}3$ $\text{bd}7$ 8 $\text{xb}7$:

a1) 8... $\text{b}8$ (an interesting double gambit) 9 $\text{xa}7$ $\text{b}4+$ 10 $\text{c}3$ 0-0



(continuing his quick development) 11 a3 (failing to spot the danger; 11 $\text{a}4$ was desirable) 11... $\text{b}6$ 12 $\text{e}2$ (12 $\text{axb}4$ $\text{a}8$) 12... $\text{xc}3+$ 13 $\text{bxc}3$ $\text{a}8$ 14 $\text{b}7$ $\text{d}7$ (the white queen is trapped!) 15 f4 $\text{fd}5$ 16 c4 $\text{fb}8$ with a decisive advantage for Black, Rapoport-Shevelev, Beersheba 1998.

a2) 8...c5 9 $\text{dxc}5$ $\text{xc}5$ 10 f4 (allowing the queen to retreat to the kingside to help defend its own king) 10...0-0 11 0-0 (risky, as the queen gets cut off from its king; 11 $\text{c}3$ is more sensible) 11... $\text{d}5$ 12 $\text{b}3$ (otherwise the white queen could be in some danger) 12... $\text{b}6$ 13 $\text{e}2$ e5 gives Black a lead in development while White's king position has been weakened, but on the other hand White has an extra pawn, Abou-Murshed, Doha 1993. An interesting battle lies ahead.

b) 6 0-0 $\text{bd}7$ 7 b3 $\text{d}6$ 8 $\text{b}2$ 0-0 9 $\text{bd}2$ c5 10 h3 $\text{h}5$ 11 $\text{e}2$ $\text{c}8$ gives Black no difficulties, Yermolinsky-Lalić, Hastings 1995.

6... $\text{bd}7$ 7 h3 $\text{h}5$ 8 0-0

8 e4 $\text{b}4$ does not look convincing for White.

8... $\text{d}6$

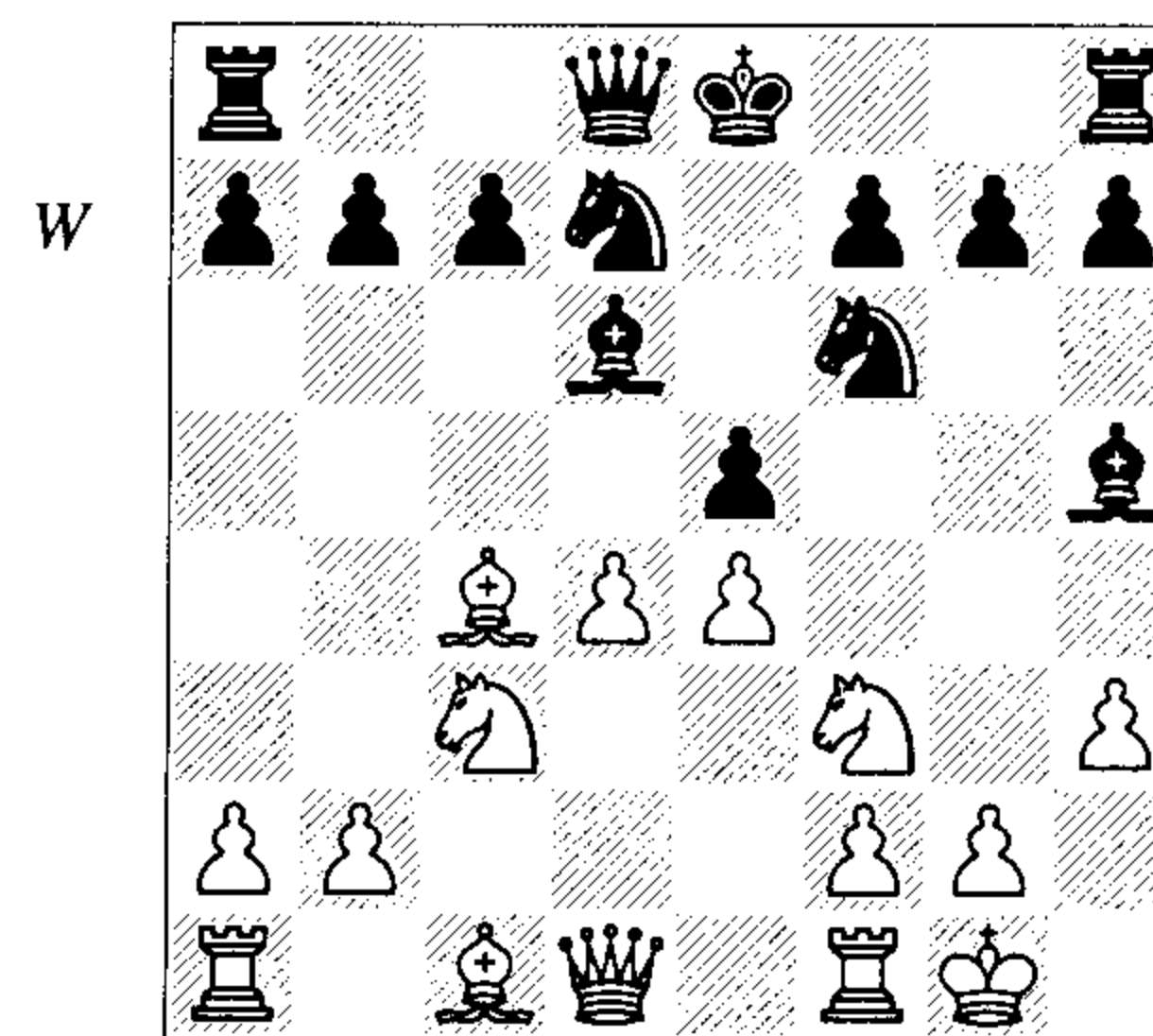
8... $\text{b}4$ again can be played, dissuading e3-e4 – a common idea borrowed from the Slav.

9 e4

9 b3 (the queenside fianchetto with the knight on c3) 9...0-0 10 $\text{b}2$ c5 11 $\text{e}2$ $\text{cxd}4$ 12 $\text{b}5$ $\text{c}5$ 13 $\text{bxd}4$ $\text{e}7$ 14 a3 $\text{ac}8$ 15 b4 $\text{d}6$ 16 $\text{b}3$ and Black is again fine, Ki.Georgiev-Miles, Groningen 1994.

9...e5 (D)

A typical procedure: Black meets e4 with ...e5.



Now we consider the following moves:

A1: 10 $\text{e}2$ 107

A2: 10 g4 109

A3: 10 d5 109

A1)

10 $\text{e}2$ 0-0 11 $\text{dxe}5$

The advantage for White here is that he has an extra central pawn and

thus slightly more control in the centre. Admittedly, this is not much of an advantage, but it is significant.

11... $\text{xe}5$ 12 $\text{d}4$ $\text{c}5$

Black had to do something about White's threat of advancing the f- and g-pawns.

13 $\text{b}3$

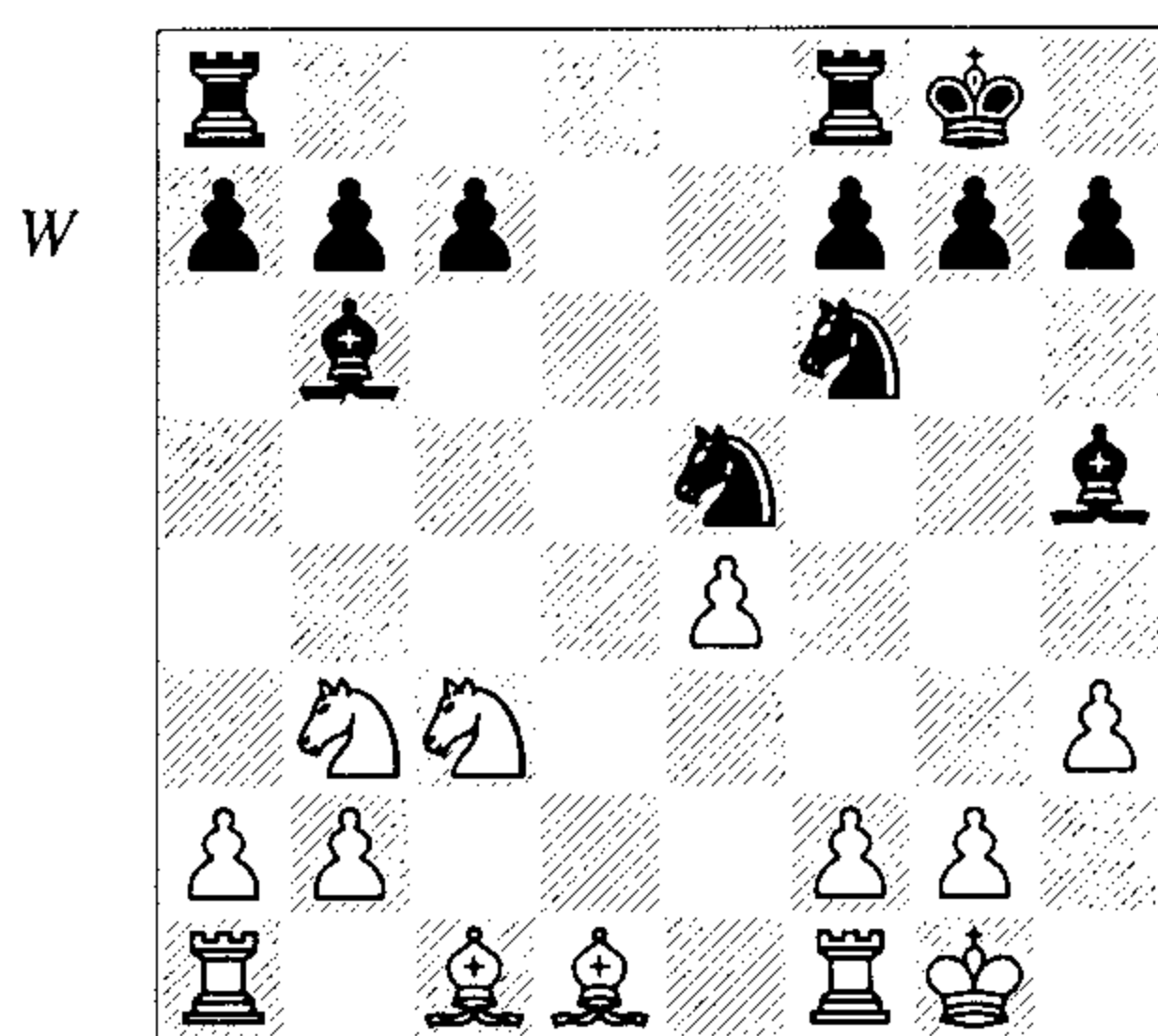
After 13 $\text{hxh}5$, 13... $\text{xd}4$ 14 $\text{d}5$ c5 is marginally better for White (Miles), but Black can try 13... $\text{xd}4$ (Black has some pressure on e4 and White cannot use his central pawn advantage) 14 $\text{e}2$ (preventing ... $\text{c}4$ from being an effective threat) 14... $\text{c}6$ (the knight now threatens an invasion on b4, or d4, after the queen moves) 15 $\text{c}2$ (15 $\text{h}1$ would be my choice) 15... $\text{e}5$ 16 $\text{c}4$ (16 $\text{h}1$ $\text{d}4$ is fine for Black) 16... $\text{d}6$ 17 g3 $\text{c}5$ and unexpectedly, White has run into trouble, Cremer-Frischtatzky, corr. 1988. The threats on c4 and g3 cannot both be covered.

13... $\text{xd}1$ 14 $\text{xd}1$

This is slightly inconvenient but forced because of the attack on the e-pawn. I believe that the resulting positions favour White anyway but Miles's insistence on playing this position with Black gives a different viewpoint as to Black's chances.

14... $\text{b}6$ (D)

This position is different from examples of queenless middlegames discussed in Chapter 7 in that Black's queen's bishop is sitting on the h5-square. Either it will remain there, or move to g6, most probably after White



plays g2-g4, or it will exchange itself off. Over the years, Miles has experimented with this position as Black, although I remain unconvinced about Black's chances.

15 Qg5

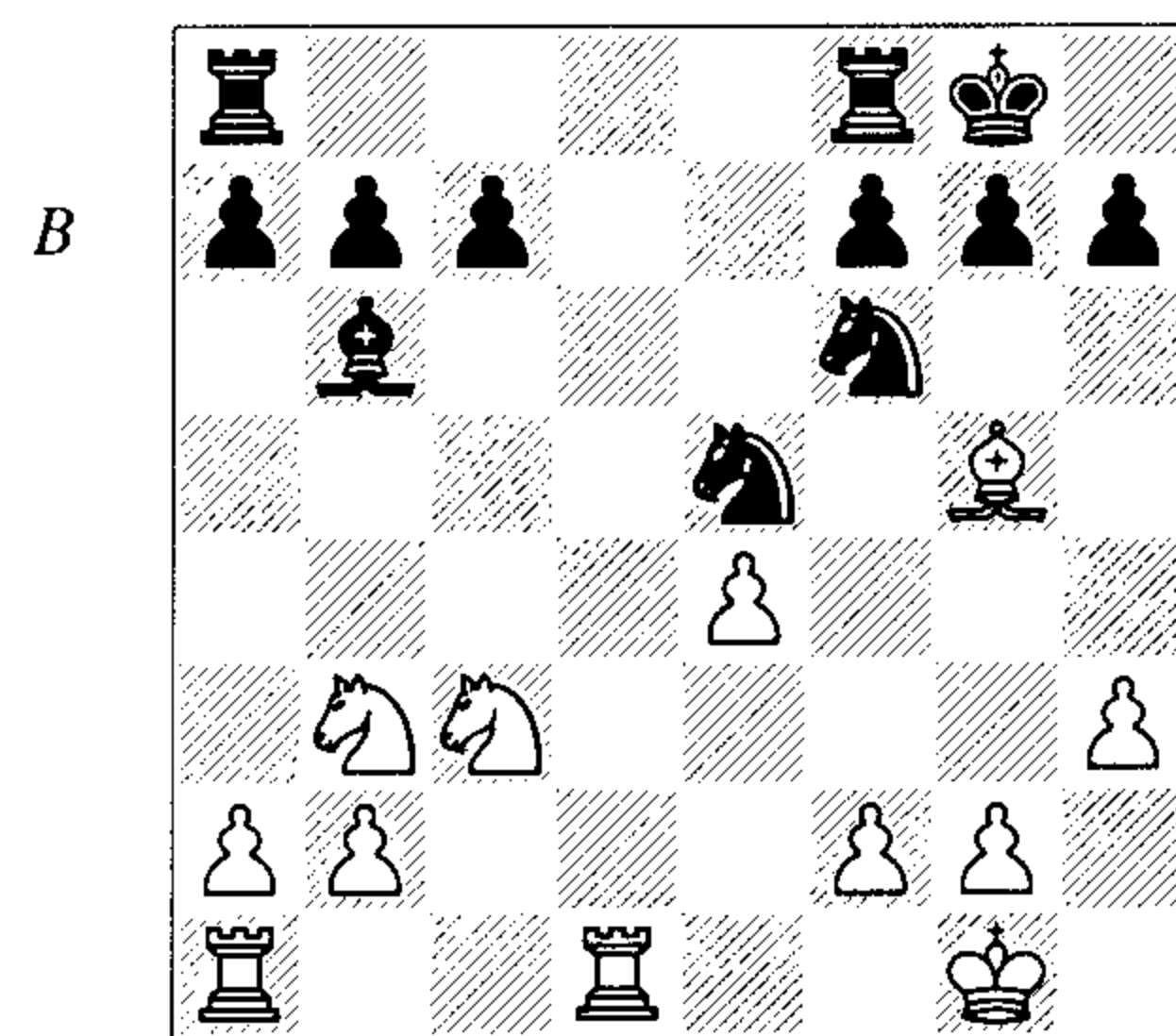
Or 15 a4 Qxd1 16 Rfxd1 and now:

a) 16...c6 17 a5 Qc7 18 f4 Qg6 19 e5 and now, rather than going passive, Black chose to give up a pawn by 19...Qd5 in Portisch-Miles, Lone Pine 1978. However, either way it is pleasant for White.

b) 16...a5 17 Qg5 c6 (the normal problem: Black must accept doubled pawns or allow Qd5) 18 Qf1 (the threat of f4 is greater than doubling the f-pawns immediately) 18...Rfd8 19 Qe2 (19 f4 meets with 19...Qd3) 19...Qc4 20 Rxd8+ Rxd8 21 Qd1! (a good backward move; White has time at his disposal) 21...Re8 22 f3 Qh5 (Black intends ...f5) 23 Qd3 Qe5+ 24 Qc2 f6 25 Qe3 (White continues to nurse his slight advantage; in particular, his minor pieces are working a lot better than Black's, and the knight on

h5 is sidelined) 25...Qxe3 (an error, letting White place his rook on the only open file more quickly; 25...Qc7 is better) 26 Qxe3 (thank you very much! Black has developed the knight for White – it even covers the c4-square, which the e5-knight was hoping to use) 26...b6 27 Rd1 and we have seen White's advantage grow a little in the last few moves, Haselager-Van Roosmalen, Netherlands 1989.

15...Qxd1 16 Rfxd1 (D)



16...Qc4

16...c6 17 Qd4 (17 Qf1 followed by Qe2 makes more sense) 17...Rfd8 18 Qf5 Qd3 (Black has sort of counterplay) 19 Rd2 Rd7 (19...Qa5 is better for Black) 20 Qxf6 gxf6 21 Qd5 (I suppose Black had missed this; here we see the value for White of including the moves a2-a4 and ...a7-a5: the a5-pawn can be a liability and it takes a5 away from the bishop) 21...cxd5 22 Rxd3 Rxc8 23 Rxd5 Rxd5 24 Qe7+ Qf8 25 Qxc8 is somewhat better for Black, Jensen-Klauner, corr. 1993.

17 Qxf6 gxf6 18 Qa4 Qd6

A curious retreat. 18...Rfd8 is better, challenging the open d-file.

19 Qxb6 axb6 20 f3

White, as always it seems, has the better pawn structure.

20...Qc4 21 Rd7

White has the advantage, Stohl-Greenfeld, Olomouc 1996.

A2)

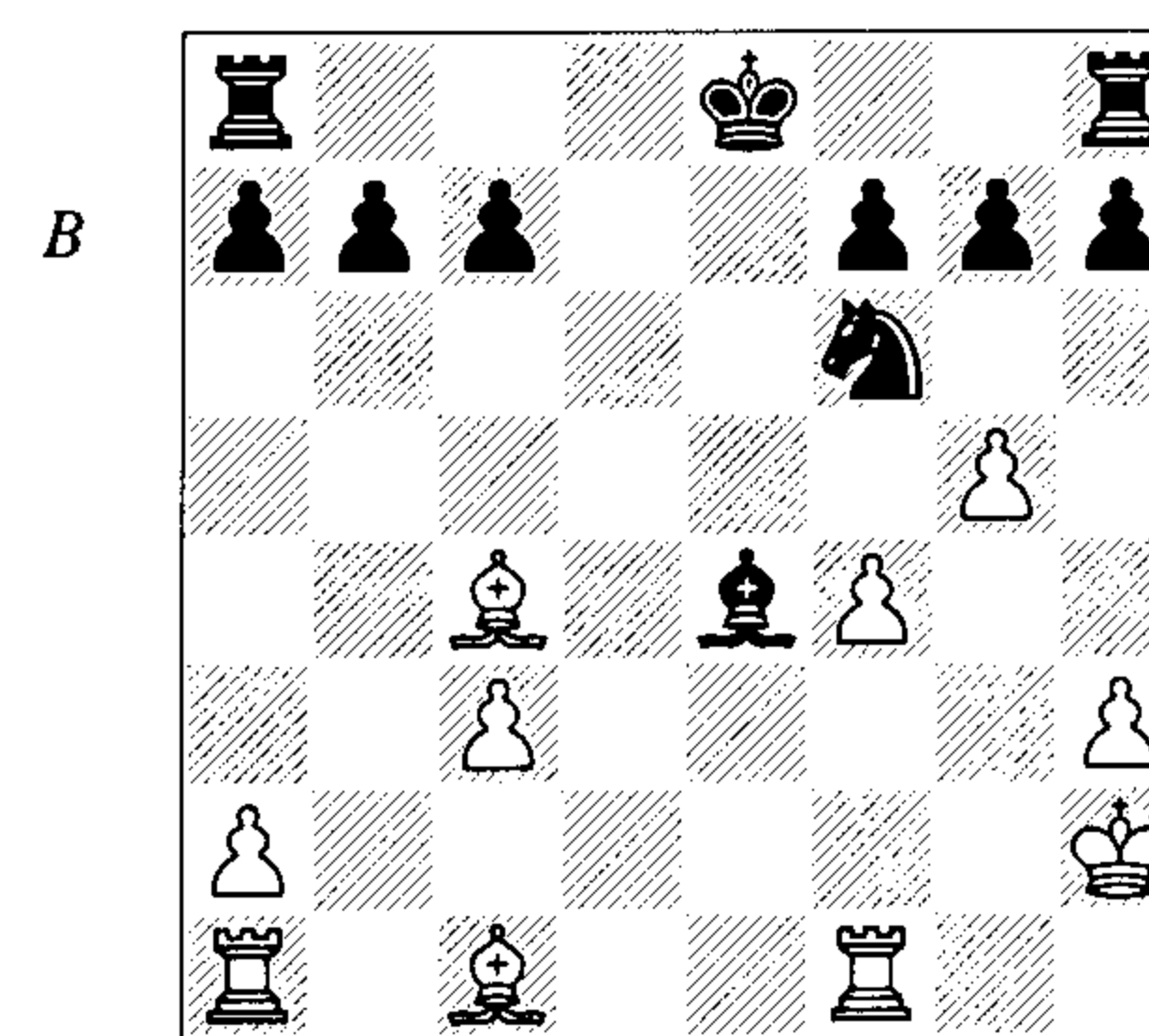
10 g4

The start of an aggressive and forcing continuation, which became quite topical in the late 1970s but has now largely disappeared.

10...Qg6 11 dxe5 Qxe5 12 Qxe5 Qxe5 13 f4

This was all part of the plan when White played 10 g4.

13...Qd4+ 14 Qxd4 Qxd4+ 15 Qh2 Qxc3 16 bxc3 Qxe4 17 g5 (D)



Now:

a) Several games have continued with 17...Qd5, such as Ftačnik-Matulović, Vrsac 1981, in which exchanges

eventually led to an opposite-coloured bishop endgame and a drawn position.

b) 17...Qd7 and now with 18 Qa3, Stefanova-Ciukyte, Kishinev wom IZ 1995, the Bulgarian missed her best chance with 18 Re1 (P.Littlewood-Muir, British Ch (Chester) 1979), which gives Black many more problems.

A3)

10 d5

Seeking a spatial advantage but taking the tension out of the position.

10...0-0 11 Qe2

Development of the c1-bishop is preferable.

11...Qc5 12 Qd2 Qg6 13 Qf3 Qd3

Too automatic; 13...b5 is an attempt to seize the initiative.

14 Qc4 Qxc1 15 Rxc1 a6 16 Qxd6

1/2-1/2 Lassila-Pukkila, Finland 1998, though I prefer Black. He has the pawn-break ...f5 to play for and White's pawns on light squares could end up as liabilities.

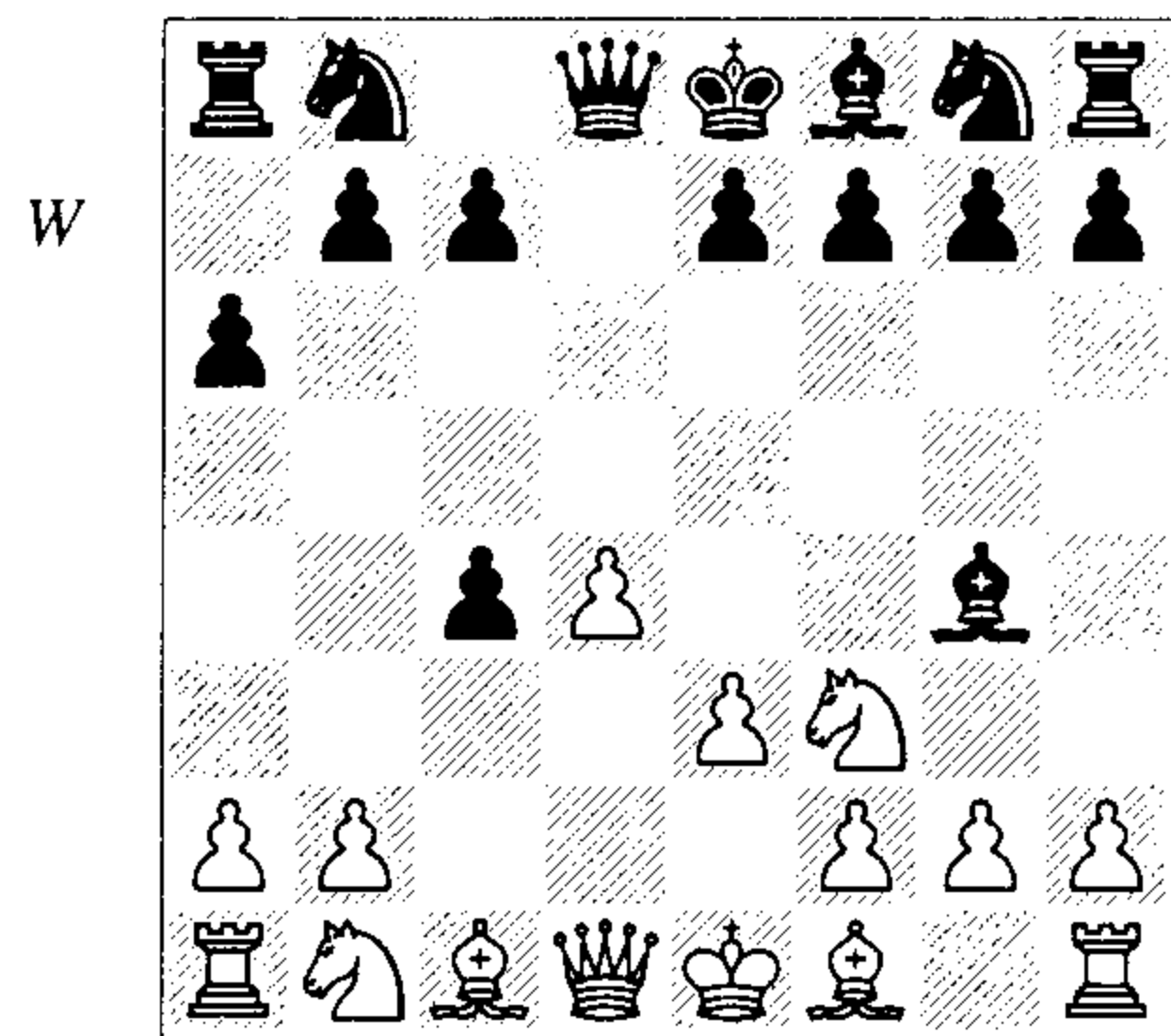
B)

3 Qf3 a6

This move in association with ...Qg4 is known as the Alekhine Variation.

4 e3 Qg4 (D)

The original purpose of this system was twofold. Firstly, it avoids the Mannheim Variation (3...Qf6 4 Qa4+) and secondly, an attack on the b7-pawn by Qb3 can be met by ...b5. However, these reasons are less pertinent nowadays. Firstly, in Line A, the feeling



seems to be that White has better than to try something with ♖b3, and secondly the Mannheim Variation is not the most testing for Black to deal with. Even though there is reasonably detailed coverage in *ECO*, this rather makes Alekhine's Variation less important than it once was.

5 ♖xc4

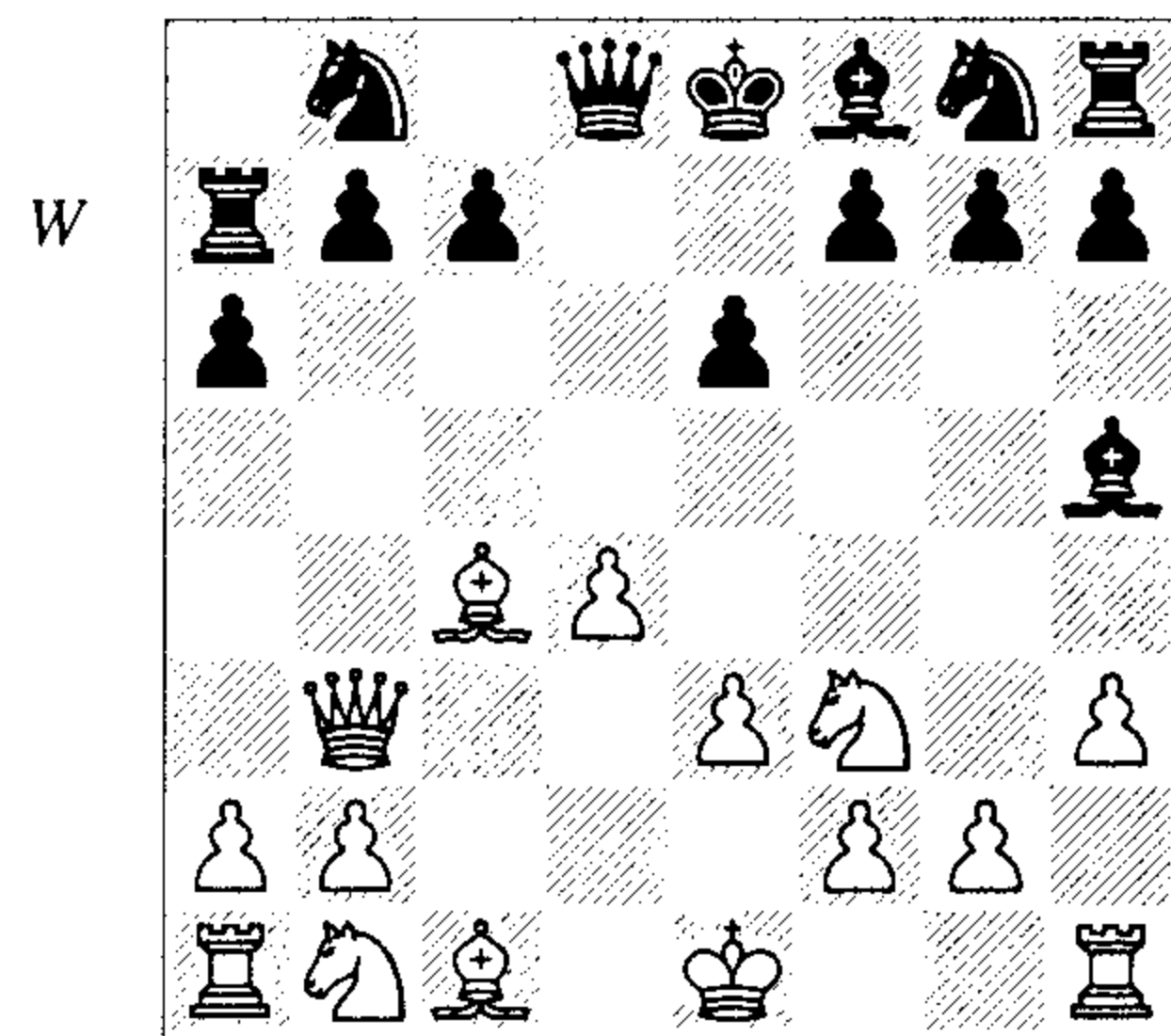
White can also play in similar fashion to Line A with 5 h3 ♖h5 6 g4 ♖g6 7 ♘e5.

5...e6 6 ♘c3

For historical purposes I include two snapshots of the inventor's games. Here is one of them: 6 h3 ♖h5 7 ♖b3 ♖a7 (D).

This rook move avoids weakening the queenside. 8 a4 ♘c6 9 ♖d2 ♘f6 10 ♖c3?! ♘d5 (exploiting White's odd-looking bishop on c3) 11 ♘bd2 ♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♘a5 13 ♖a2 ♘xc4 14 ♖xc4 and White's strange mix of knight, bishop, rook and pawn moves have led him into a difficult position, Zinner-Alekhine, Podebrady 1936.

6...♘f6 7 h3 ♖h5 8 g4



8 0-0 ♘c6 (the move ...a6 makes a little more sense here as it prevents ♖b5) 9 a3 ♖d6 10 ♖e2 (White always has to resolve the pin on the knight in one way or another; the bishop retreat is by no means critical) 10...0-0 11 ♘d2 (this knight retreat looks artificial) 11...♖xe2 12 ♖xe2 e5 gives Black a 'normal' position in that pieces are developed on natural squares and he is fighting for the centre in a conventional way, Bogoljubow-Alekhine, Baden-Baden Wch (3) 1934.

8...♖g6 9 ♘e5 ♘bd7 10 ♘xg6 hxg6 11 ♖f1

No doubt the bishop is best placed on g2 after the g4 advance, but White has spent three tempi getting there!

11...c6 12 ♖g2 ♖e7 13 ♖b3 ♖c7 14 ♖d2

Black is passive, but solid, Lutz-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 1995.

C)

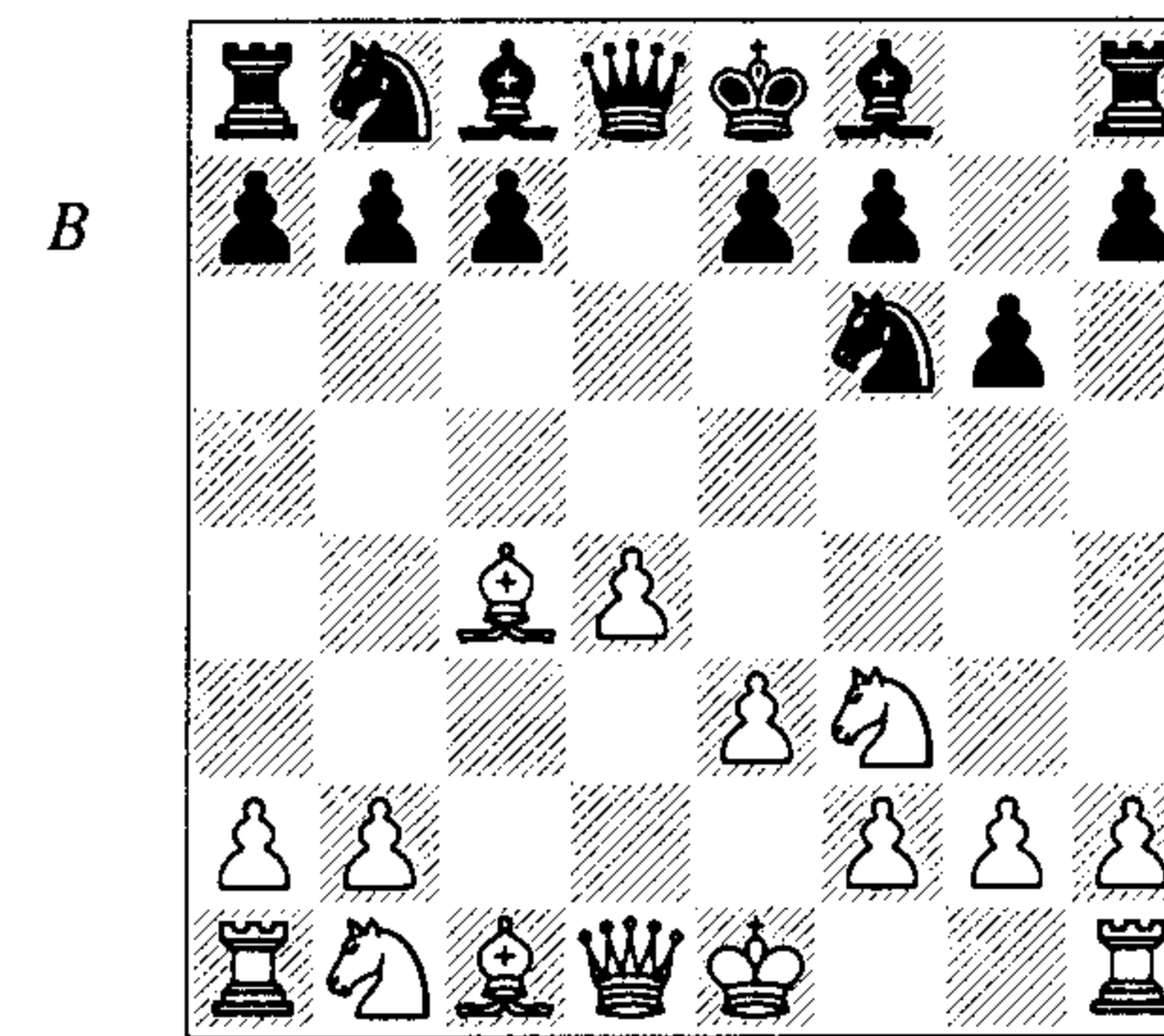
3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 g6

This idea in the QGA belongs to Smyslov but the positions are closer in

spirit to quiet variations of the Grünfeld Defence.

5 ♖xc4 (D)

A luxury, albeit a small one in this quiet opening. In the 5 e3 variation of the Grünfeld White normally has to waste a tempo with the bishop before being able to capture on c4, e.g. 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3 ♖g7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♖d3 dxc4 7 ♖xc4.



5...♖g7 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♘c3

Or 7 h3 – normally the black bishop develops to g4, so this is a good preventative measure. Then 7...♘fd7 (7...c5 is more natural; although this knight manoeuvre is common in the Grünfeld Defence, I would be very hesitant about using it here) 8 a3 ♘b6 9 ♖a2 ♘a6 10 ♘c3 c6 (10...c5 11 ♖e2 does not solve Black's problems, as the two knights are terribly off-side) 11 e4 ♘c7 12 ♖f4 ♘e6 (this is an example of how Black intends to play: he will attack White's centre with pieces) 13 ♖e3 ♘c7 14 ♖f4 ♘e6 15 ♖e3 (White is just teasing; he does not

intend to agree to a repetition here, but he is very happy to have had a free move with the bishop) 15...♘c7 16 ♖d2 (I prefer 16 ♖e2 and later moving the king's rook to d1) 16...♖e6 and now White played 17 b3?! in Agdestein-Zilberman, Havana 1998, but I do not like this move. The bishop has no scope; if this was the best that White could think of, then he should have considered taking the draw more seriously.

7...♘fd7

Here we go again.

8 ♖e2 ♘b6 9 ♖b3 ♘c6 10 ♖d1

I prefer White's set-up here to the one chosen in the note to White's 7th move.

10...♖f5

10...♖g4 is consistent with the system.

11 a3 ♖c8

Last chance.

12 h3 a6 13 e4 ♖d7

Black has all of his pieces on his first three ranks now. This is not ideal.

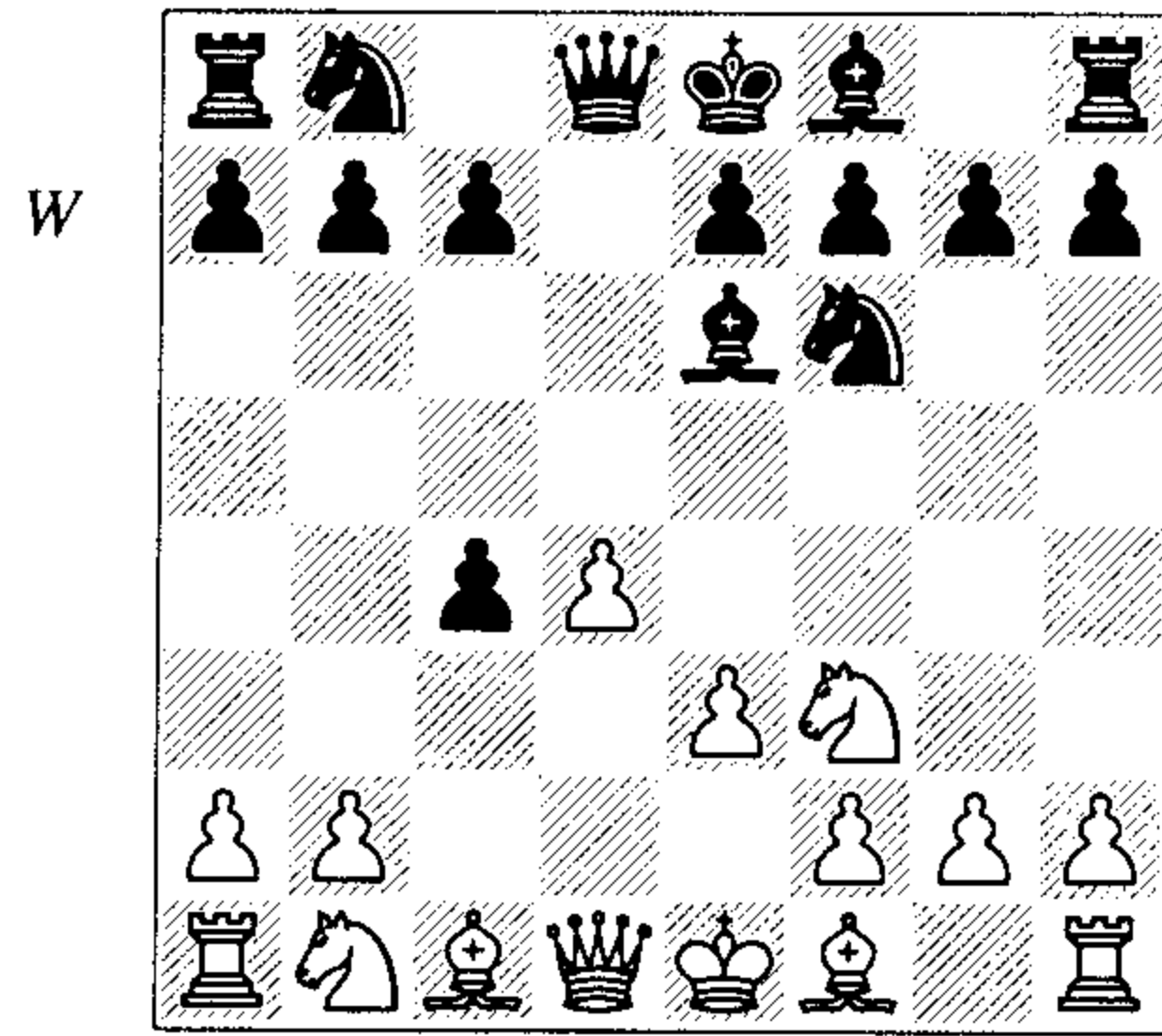
14 ♖e3 e6

Black has a miserable position, V.Popov-Begun, Minsk 1998. I am sure that Smyslov did not intend things to turn out like this for Black.

D)

3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 ♖e6 (D)

This appears to be named after Winawer, having been played by him in 1896. Although the variation has been repeated by Flohr and Keres, I do not think modern-day professionals



will be able to make a living from playing it. The main objective is to exchange off the bishop on c4 after White captures the black pawn there with his bishop. Alternatively, if White takes on c4 with one of his knights, then the bishop can move to d5 and this can be a useful post for it.

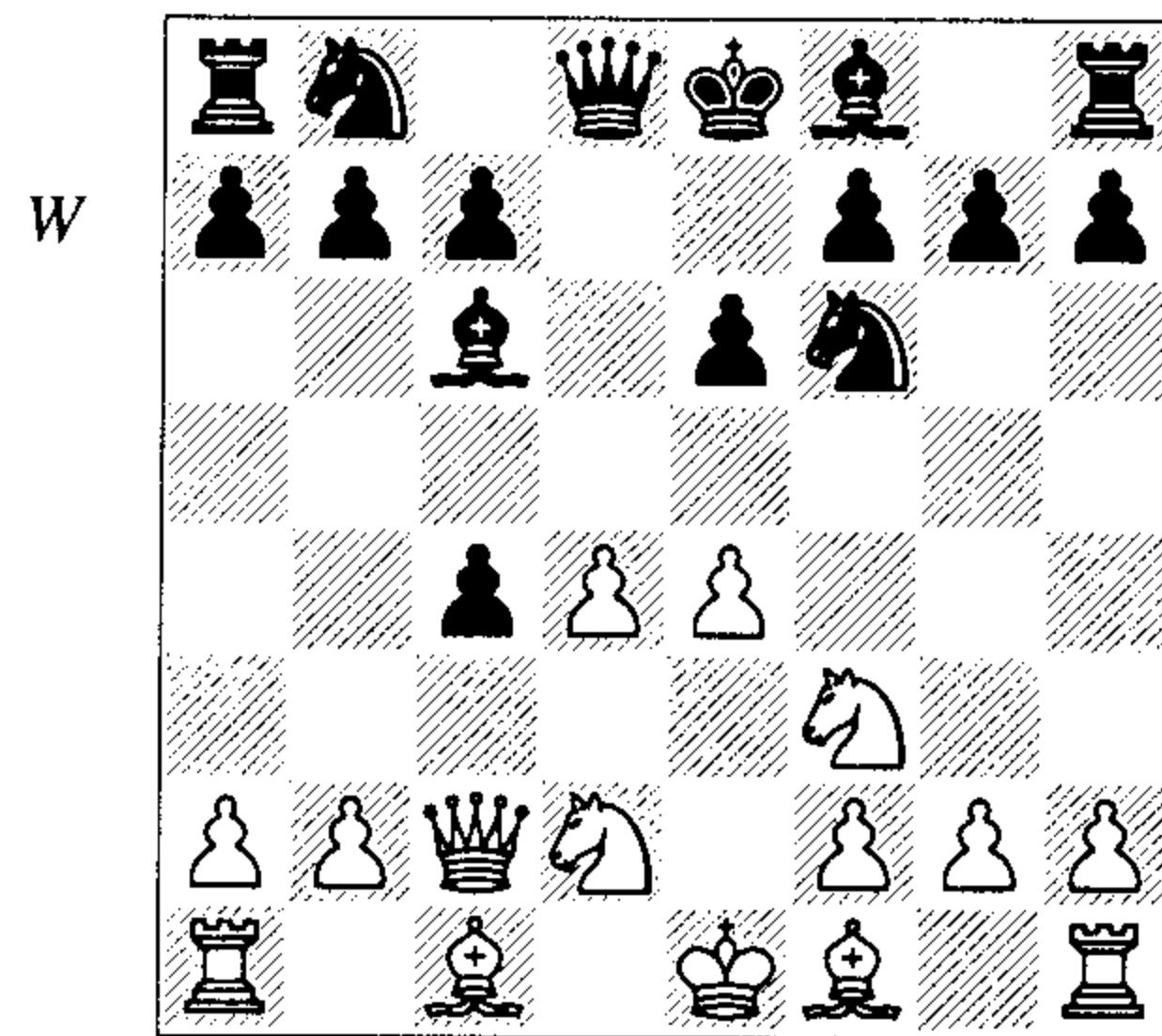
5 ♖bd2

After 5 ♖a3, Black has two choices:

a) In Cobo-Blau, Lugano OL 1968 White avoided any confrontation with 5...♗d5 6 ♖xc4 e6 7 ♗e2 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 b3 c5 10 ♗b2 ♖c6 11 ♜c1 ♜c8, but Black was fine.

b) 5...c5 (a perfectly satisfactory approach) 6 ♖xc4 ♖c6 7 ♖ce5 (White has captured on c4 and the black bishop remains on e6, but he has spent three knight moves just to avoid exchanging light-squared bishops) 7...♗d5 8 ♜a4 e6 9 ♗b5 ♜b6 10 0-0 a6 with equal chances, Reich-W.Hübner, NRW-Liga 1994. Black is up to the task of defending c6.

5...♗d5?! 6 ♜c2 e6 7 e4 ♗c6 (D)
8 ♗xc4



White has captured on c4 with the bishop, while Black is unable to exchange bishops and has not achieved any of his opening objectives.

8...♗e7 9 0-0 a5

The idea of this move is to develop the knight to a6 without being given doubled pawns. However, it is difficult to see how Black can attack White's centre, Miles-Larsen, Linares 1983.

E)

3 ♖f3 a6

With this move, rather than the standard 3...♖f6, Black aims to cut down White's options by threatening to hold on to the pawn by ...b5. Here we investigate what happens if White tries to call Black's bluff by seizing central territory with 4 e4. Play can become very sharp but White is far from refuting Black's strategy.

4 e4

The most critical move. 4 e3 is the standard move:

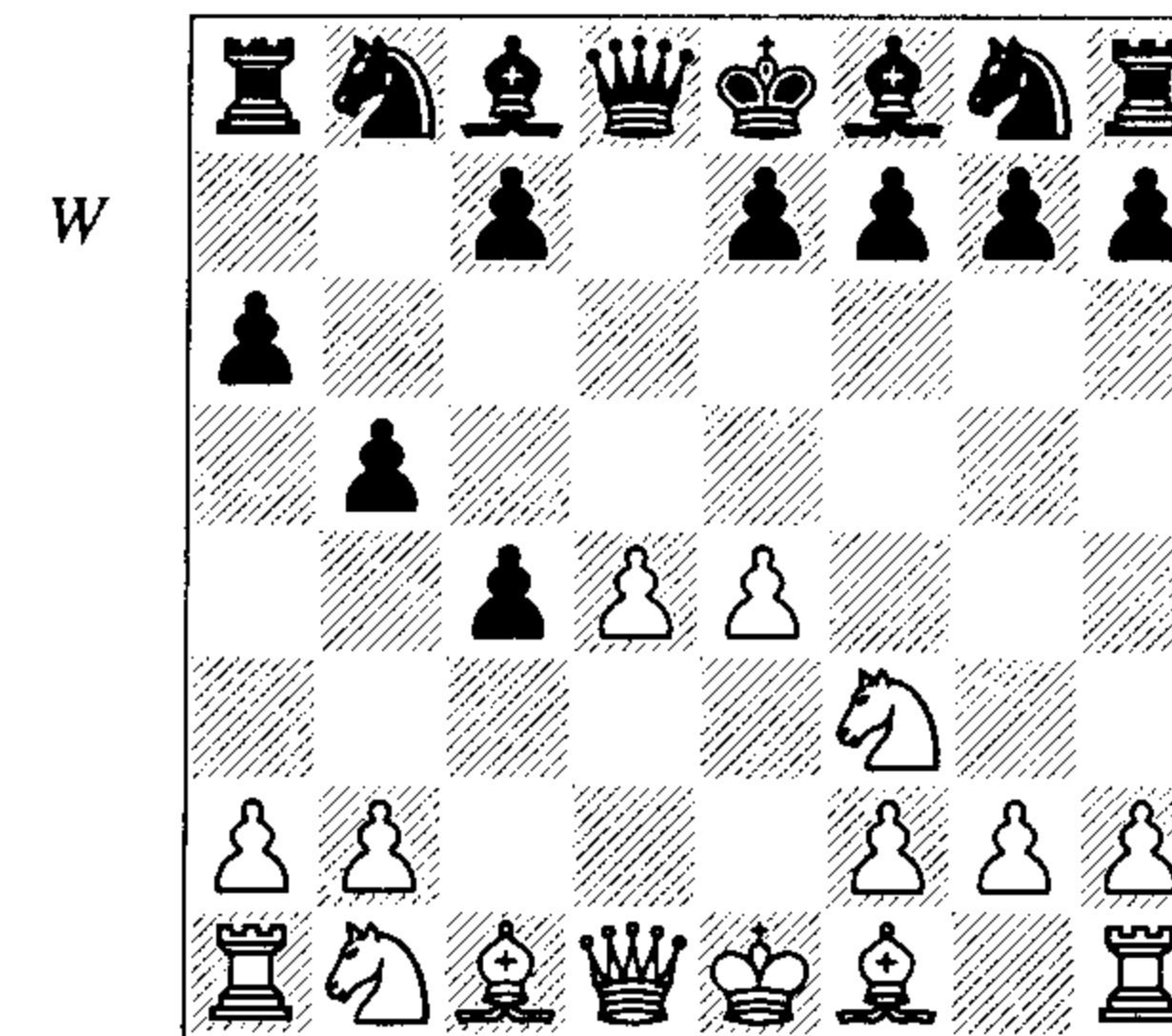
a) 4...♗e6 can prove awkward for White. The move 3...a6 rather than

3...♖f6 (compare with Line D) allows ...b5 to be played here, e.g. 5 ♖bd2 (or 5 ♖a3 b5) 5...b5 6 a4 ♖d7. In all of this, I have assumed that if White plays a4 before Black's ...b5 then Black will be happy to know White's tactics and to transpose into something with the moves ...a6 and a4 included.

b) 4...♗g4 is Line B.

c) 4...♖f6 will lead to Classical lines, having circumvented the lines of Chapter 4.

4...b5 (D)



This is the Borisenko-Furman Variation, a complicated system named after its developers.

5 a4 ♗b7 6 axb5

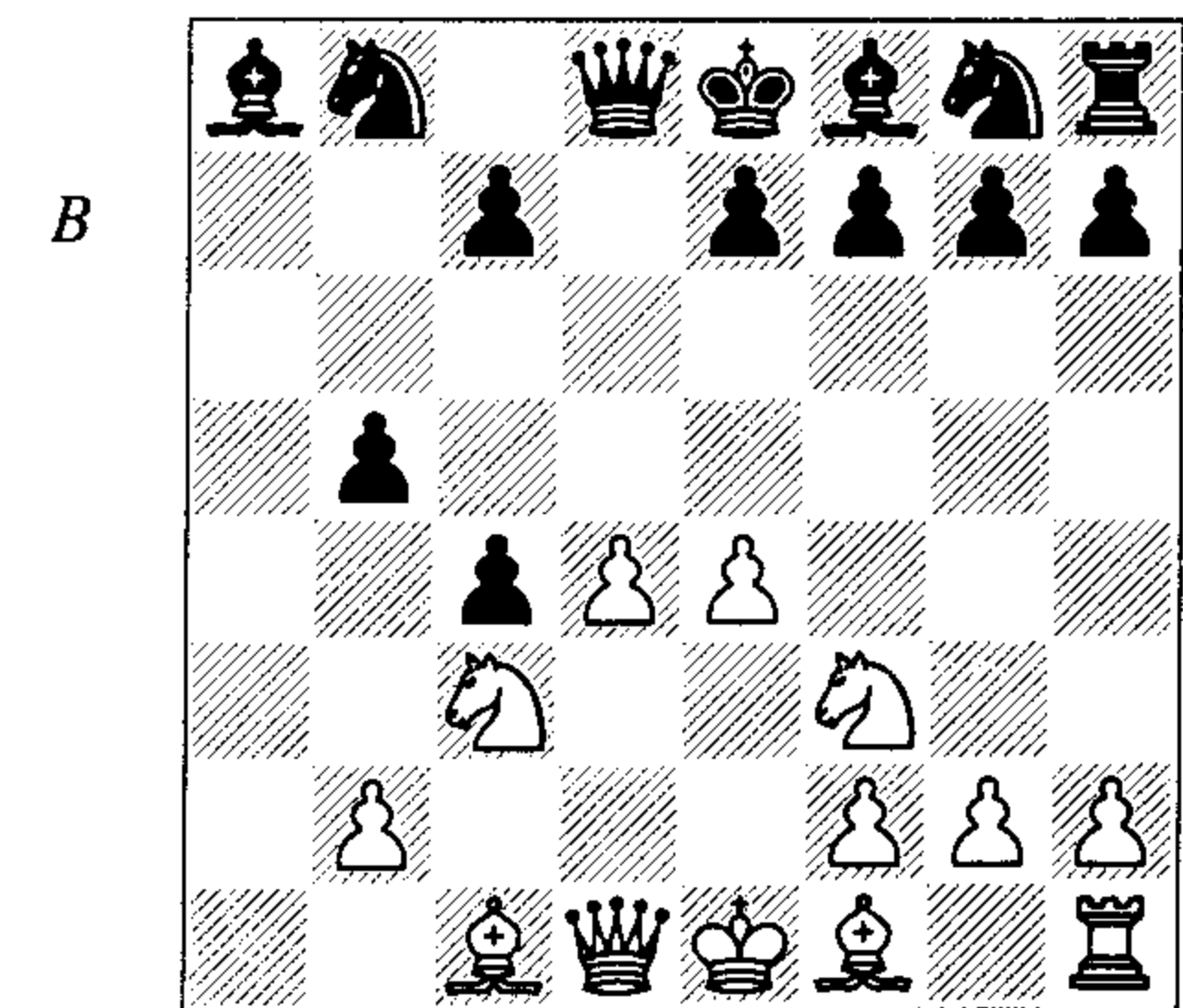
White sets to work on Black's queenside. This makes good sense, since an open a-file gives White more chances to infiltrate. In some situations the white queen may be able to manoeuvre to a7 and embarrass the bishop on b7. Others:

a) 6 b3 e6 7 bxc4 bxc4 8 ♖c3 (if White can capture on c4 without

losing e4 and without allowing ...c5, then he will undoubtedly be better) 8...♗b4 9 ♗d2 ♖f6 (9...♗xc3 10 ♗xc3 ♗xe4 11 d5 spells trouble for Black) 10 e5 (10 ♜c2 c5 frees Black's position) 10...♖d5 11 ♜c1 ♖xc3 12 ♗xc3 c5 (here it is anyway) leaves Black fully developed and well on the way to solving the problem of his weak queenside pawns, S.Ivanov-Salov, St Petersburg 1997.

b) 6 ♖c3 (a multi-purpose move) 6...c6 (6...b4 7 ♗xc4 transposes into less favourable variations for Black, and further complications) 7 ♗f4 e6 8 ♗e2 ♖f6 9 ♜c2 ♖bd7 10 0-0 ♗e7 11 ♜ad1 was Gofshtein-Kharlov, Ubeda 1997. It is true that White is building up and Black's bishop is still shut in on b7, but Black is about to castle and it is only a matter of time before he can arrange a break with ...c6-c5.

6...axb5 7 ♜xa8 ♗xa8 8 ♖c3 (D)



Black must now make an important decision.

8...e6

Black chooses to give back the pawn and develop harmoniously. The alternative is to try to hang on to the pawn by 8...c6:

a) The attempted knockout 9 d5 should not work. 9...c6 10 e4 b4 allowed the impressive 11 a4 bxc3 12 xc4 cxb2 13 0-0 b6 14 b1 xe4 15 xa8 xf2+ 16 h1 b6 17 xb8+ xb8 18 xb8 in Richardson-Hartman, Isle of Man 1996, but 9...e6 10 e4 exd5 11 exd5 d6 still leaves White having to prove his compensation.

b) 9 e2 (a quiet method can be difficult for Black to deal with as he is still to unravel) 9...e6 10 0-0 f6 (10...d7 is also possible) 11 g5 (as a warning, I give an example where White succeeds) 11...b6 (the queen is best placed on b8, but it cannot go there yet; instead 11...bd7 12 e5 h6 is getting really random, but 11...e7 is possible) 12 d2 bd7 13 a1 b7 14 f4 gives White a winning attack in view of the possible penetration to b8 and the attacks on f6 and f7, Rotshtein-Kachur, Lvov 1986.

9 xb5 xe4 10 xc4 b4+ (D)

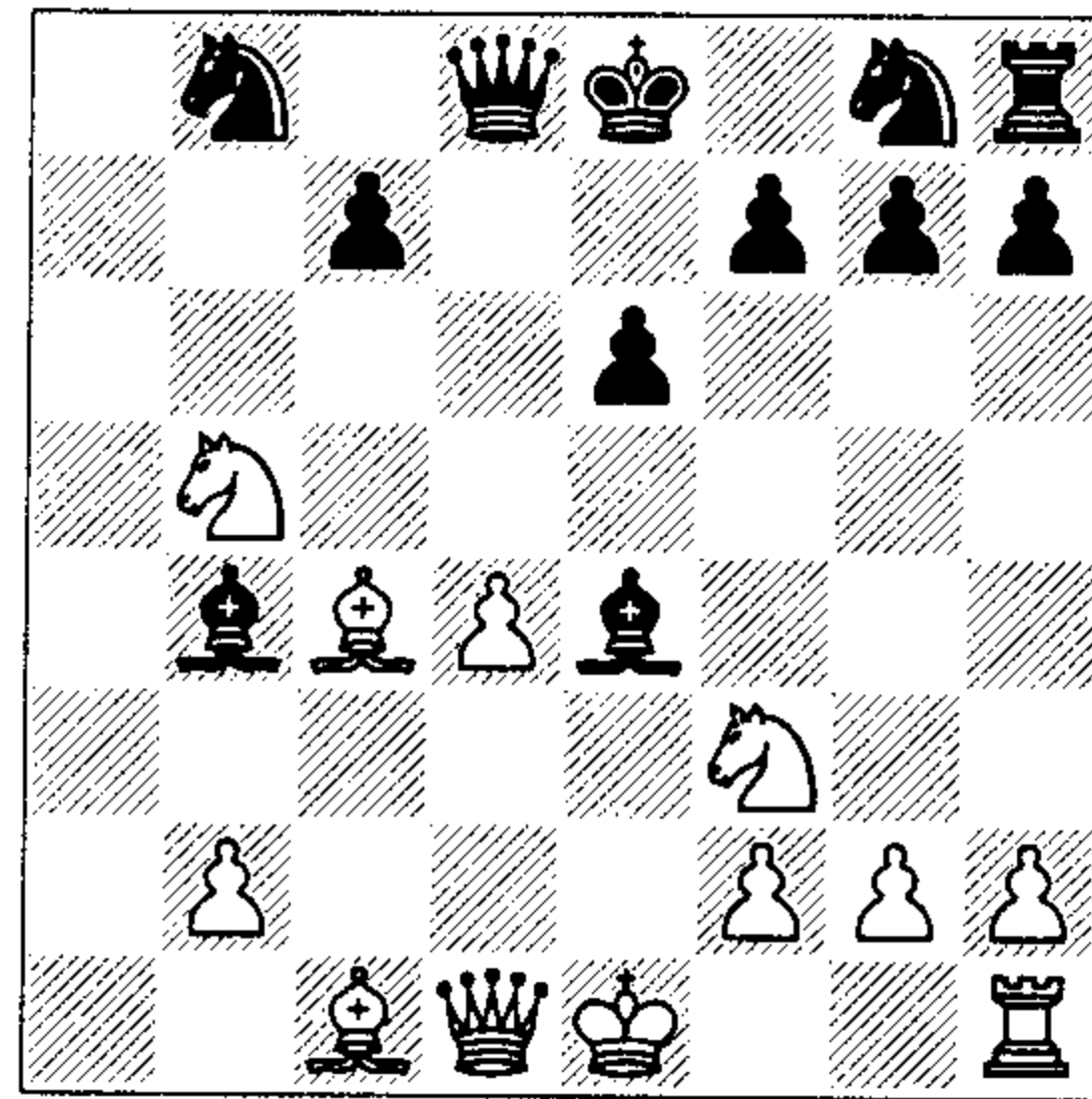
Surprisingly, this is a relatively recent move in top-flight chess. It is odd, because it is easily possible for a newcomer to chess to play this move without thinking. Chess is like that sometimes.

11 c3

Or:

a) 11 e2 (how many newcomers to chess would play this move though?)

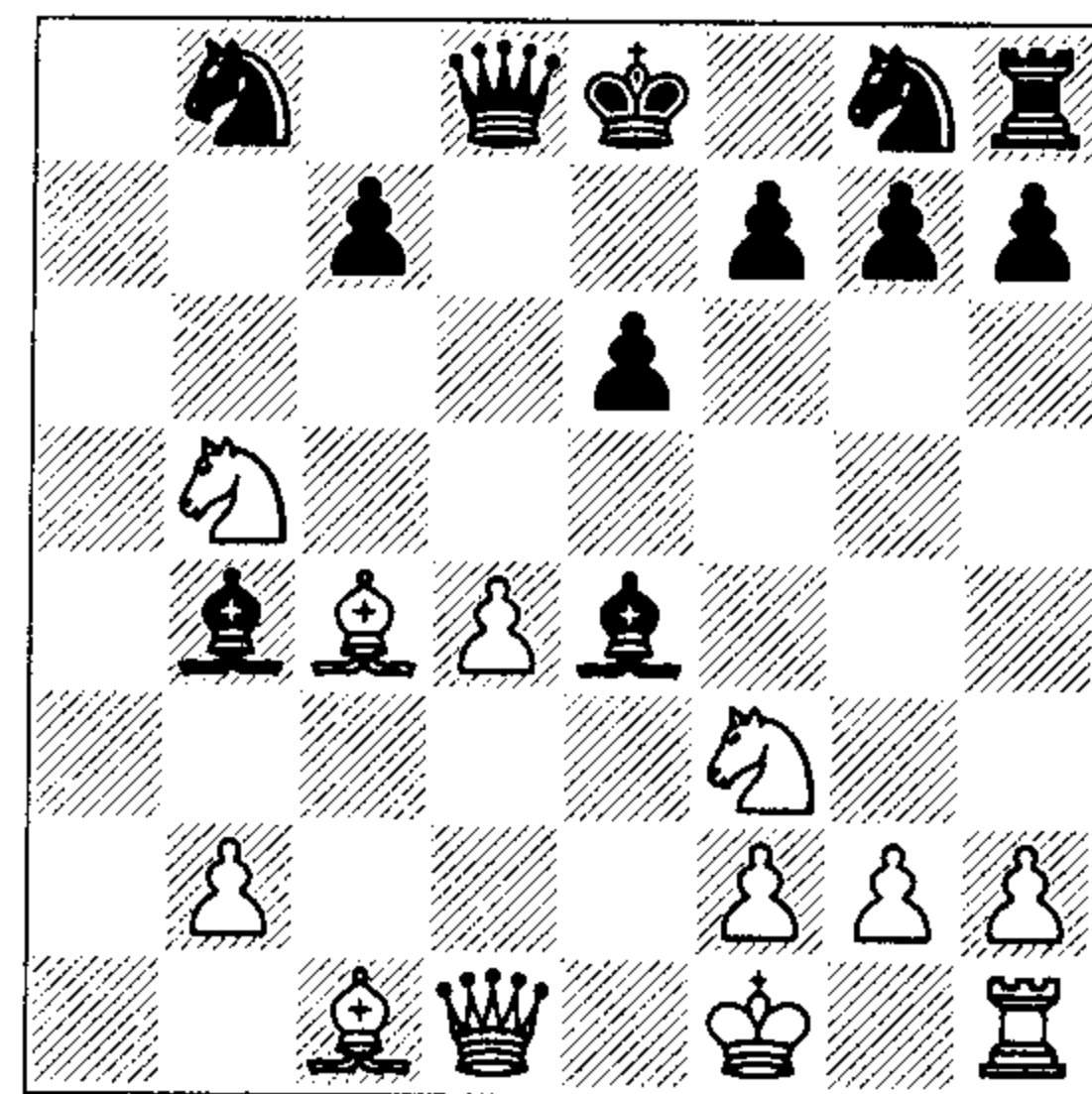
W



In some chess literature the opinion is that this is the only chance for White to try for an advantage, but I am not convinced by it) 11...e7 12 e4 a5 13 a4 bc6 14 d2 d5 15 b3 0-0 and Black is solid; he made a draw in Korchnoi-Seirawan, Biel IZ 1993. If anything, he has the superior pawn structure due to having fewer pawn islands, but White's pieces are situated so as to stop Black penetrating down the queenside.

b) If you really want something a little different then 11 f1 (D) is sharp:

B



b1) 11...c6 12 g5 is an idea.

b2) 11...xf3 12 xf3 c6 13 e4 (a piece is thrown in for good measure, leading to a crazy forcing variation) 13...cxb5 14 xb5+ f8 15 b7 d6 16 xd6+ xd6 17 c8+ e7 18 e2 and Black has to untangle his king-side, but he is a piece up.

b3) 11...e7 12 e4 a5 13 g5 followed by h4 and h3 gives White some attacking chances.

11...e7 12 0-0 xf3 13 xf3 0-0

Black again has a solid king position and, with fewer pawn islands, can claim an advantage as this time he can penetrate with his queen on the queenside, Bekker-Jensen - El-Kher, Lyngby 1996.

F)

3 f3 c5 (D)

This system can be used as a simple transpositional tool. The same can be said about 3...e6. Black may be trying to avoid the line 3...f6 4 c3 e6 5 e4 (see Chapter 3), and if 4...c5, then 5 d5 e6 6 e4 exd5 7 e5 is a different animal, which I have not recommended for Black in this book.

Now White has two main approaches:

F1: 4 e3 115

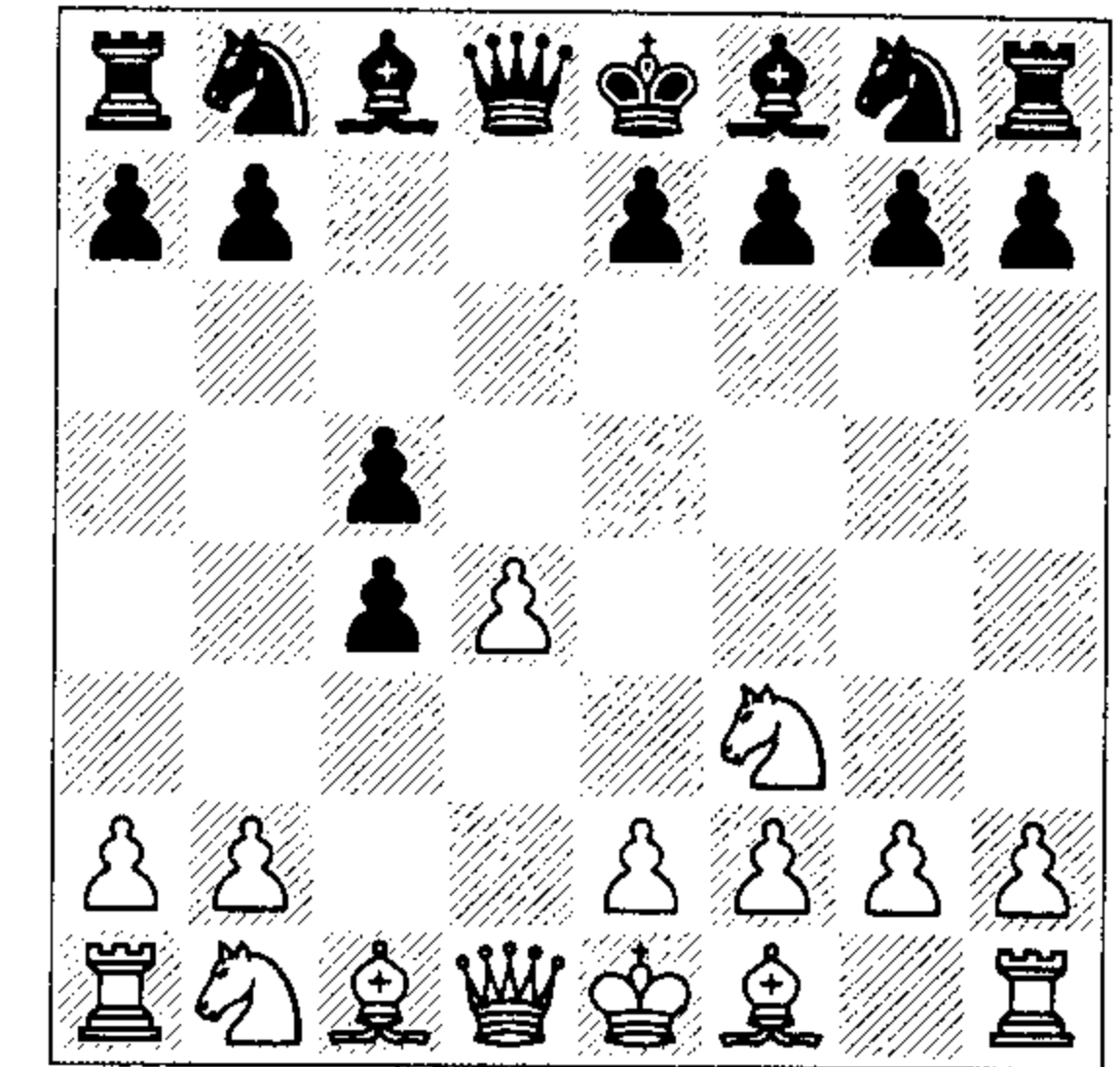
F2: 4 d5 116

F1)

4 e3 cxd4 5 xc4

5 exd4 (this routine recapture gives Black a choice between transposing into a normal IQP position of the type

W



studied in Chapter 8 or playing a system with ...e6) 5...e6 6 c3 f6 7 e5 (White is attempting to recapture on c4 with the knight so that Black does not get everything his own way after playing ...e6) 7...c6 8 xc6 bxc6 (the doubled c-pawns may look ugly, but experience has shown that the chances are pretty even; Black's counterplay down the b-file is compensation) 9 a4 d7 10 xc4 xc4 11 xc4 e6 is about even, Van Wely-Miles, Groningen 1994. This type of pawn structure was also studied in Chapter 8.

5...c7 (D)

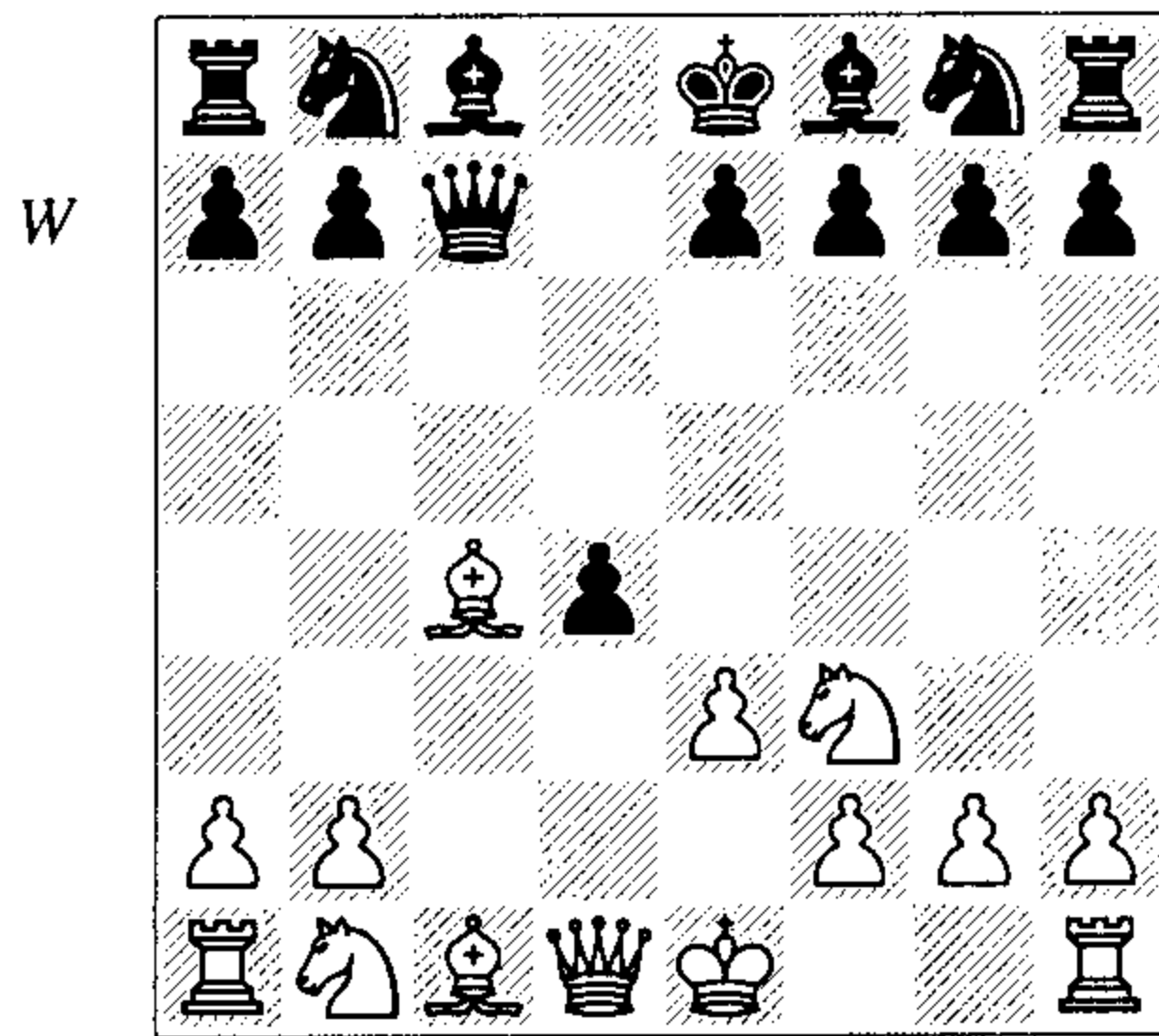
It is only with this move that the variation has independent significance from the main lines.

6 b3

Or 6 c2 e6, cutting out xf7+.

6...e6 7 exd4 f6 8 c3 a6 9 g5 e7?

Black should play 9...c6, threatening ...a5 and thereby forcing the retreat of either queen or bishop. It is interesting to note the similarities to



the IQP given in Chapter 3. There, White had taken three moves to get the queen to b3, whereas here ...Qd8-c7 is arguably not the most useful of moves.

10 d5

A typical IQP break.

10...exd5 11 Qxd5 0-0 12 0-0

White's lead in development begins to tell.

12...Qc6 13 Bfe1 Qf5 14 Bae1 Qa5

Too late – and a bit pointless now.

15 Qa4 Qc6 16 Qxc6 bxc6 17 Qd4

Dire straits for Black here so...

17...Qg4

Black enters complications. White has a choice of ways to finish now.

18 Qxf5 Qxh2+ 19 Qf1 Qxg5 20 Qxg4 Qh1+ 21 Qe2 Bae8+ 22 Qf3

The king-walk is not at all dangerous for White. It is the clearest way to win.

22...Bxe1 23 Qxg5 g6 24 Qh6

1-0 Baburin-Ryan, Kilkenny 1996. Since 24...Qxh6 25 Qxh6+ Qg7 26 Bxe1 Qxh6 leaves White a piece to

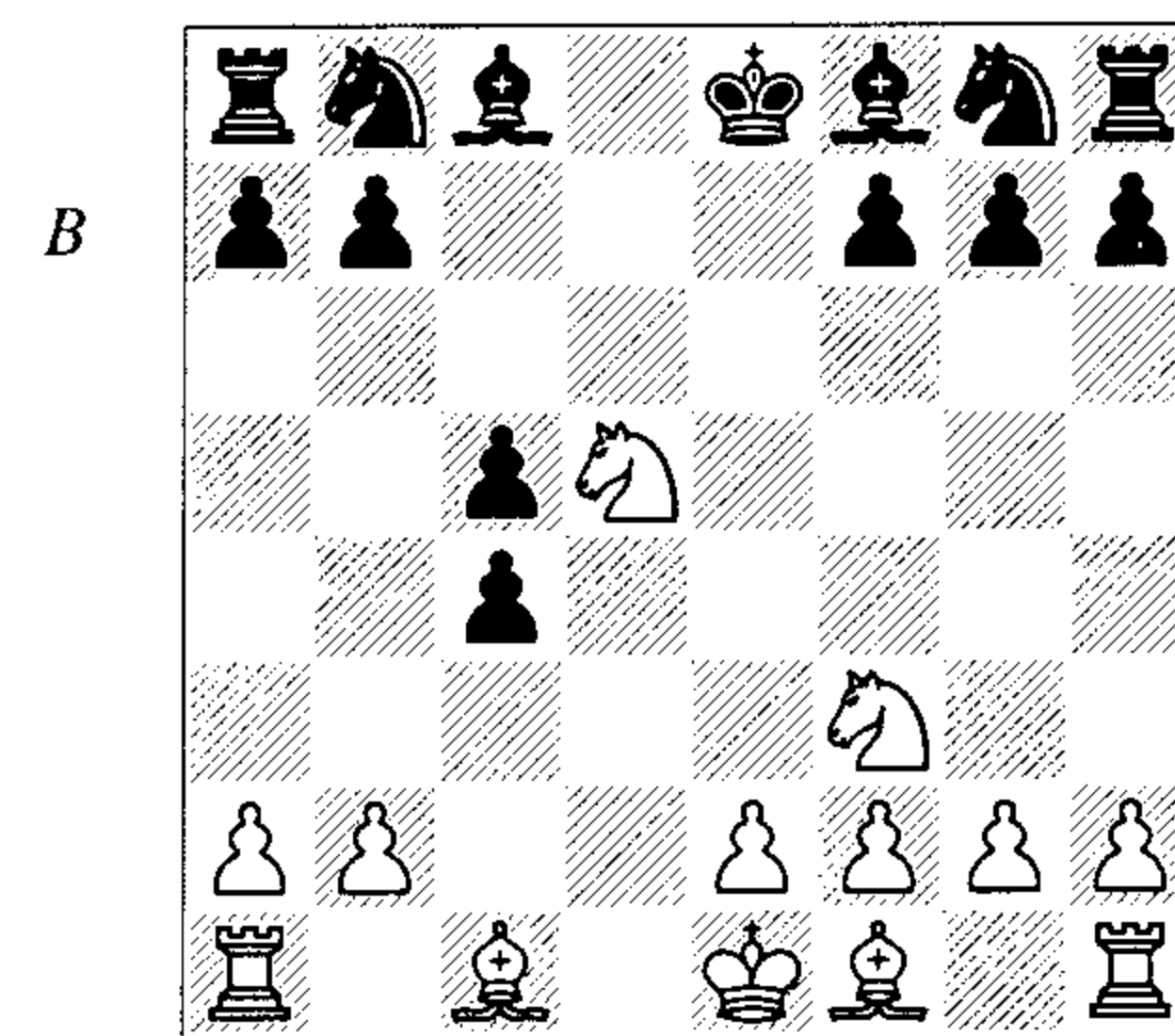
the good. It is often instructive to see how players, in this case Baburin, play against the openings that they themselves play.

F2)

4 d5 e6 5 Qc3

5 e4 exd5 6 exd5 leads to quiet play.

5...exd5 6 Qxd5 Qxd5 7 Qxd5 (D)



7...Qd6

Black, as always, has to decide how to defend the c7-square.

8 Qd2

This retreat has proved popular and difficult to meet on some occasions.

8...Qc6

American Grandmaster Seirawan has thoroughly analysed the two bishops vs two knights position arising after 8...Qe7. I prefer the text-move.

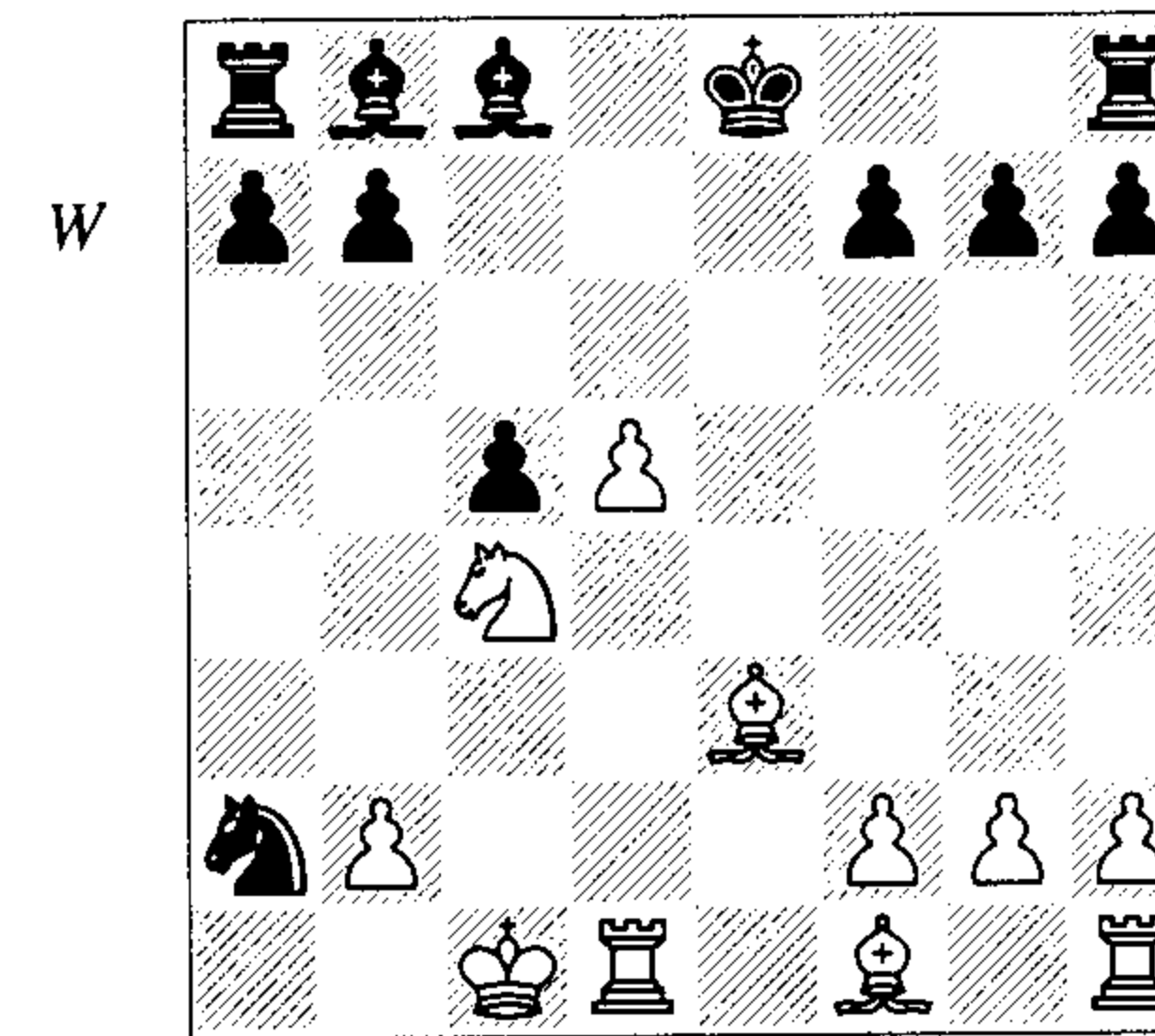
9 Qxc4 Qb8 10 e4 Qf6!

The key here is quick development.

11 Qe3

Note that 11 Qdb6 does not work.

11...Qxd5 12 exd5 Qb4 13 0-0-0 Qxa2+ (D)



Winning a pawn and importantly forcing the white king onto a light square.

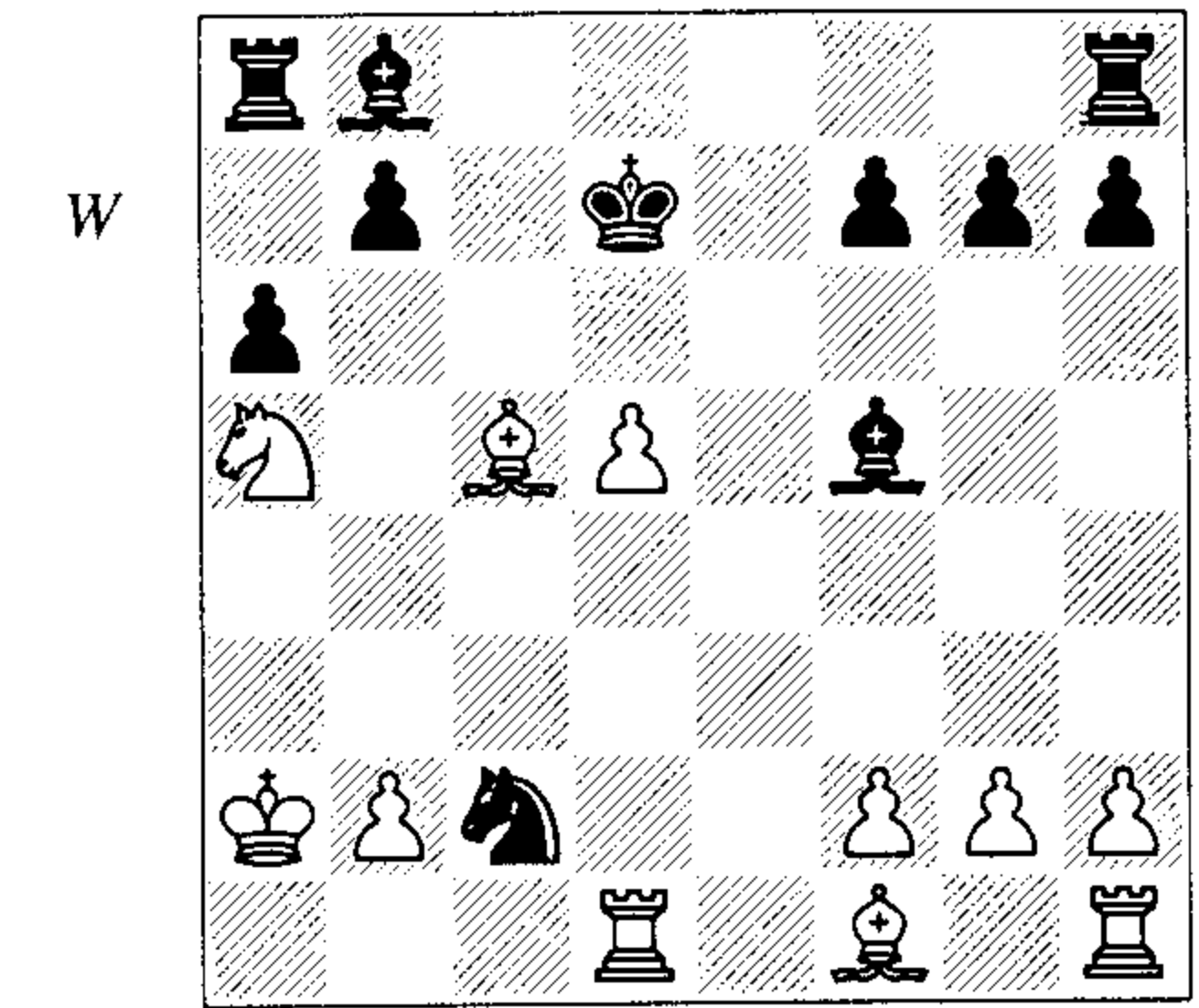
14 Qb1 Qb4 15 Qxc5 Qf5+ 16 Qa1 Qc2+ 17 Qa2 Qd7

A deceptive position. One could be forgiven for thinking that the black knight will get trapped. However, ...b6 will attack the bishop, and this is enough to save the knight.

18 Qa5 a6 (D)

White was threatening Qb5+ and Qxb7. In a later game Sermek deviated. Presumably he had prepared the following variation, which is all fairly forced: 18...Qc7 19 Qxb7 Bxb8 20 Qa6 Qb6 21 Qa3 Qxa3 22 Qxa3 Bxc8 23 Bhe1 Qc5+ (23...Bxb7 24 Qxb7 Bc2 is a lesser evil) 24 b4 Qd6 25 Qxd6 Bc3+ 26 Qb2 Bc2+ 27 Qb3 Qxd6 28 g4 Qg6 29 f4 Bg2 30 f5 Bxg4 31 fxg6 Bgxb4+ 32 Qc3 Bb3+ 33 Qd4 B3b4+ 34 Qc4 Bc8 35 Bc1 hxg6, Dautov-Sermek, Dresden 1998. Black has still not solved his problem in this variation. It seems as though he is best off reverting to the text-move or

trying my idea of sacrificing the exchange.



19 Qc4 Qc7 20 d6 Qc6 21 Qa3 Qd8 22 Qe5+ Qb6

This is the game Sadler-Sermek, Cannes 1996. The worst is over. Black has been given a bit of a run-around, but he can now look forward to exchanging off his knight, and even the king is well placed in the ending.

G)

3 Qf3 Qd7 4 e3

After 4 e4 Qb6 Black threatens ...Qg4 to put more pressure on the centre. Nevertheless, intuition indicates that 4 e4 is more critical and that 3...Qd7 is one of Black's lesser options.

4...Qb6 5 Qbd2 Qe6 6 Qg5

Tempting but possibly too ambitious. 6 Qc2 is more appropriate following White's previous move.

6...Qd5 7 e4 e6 8 Qgf3

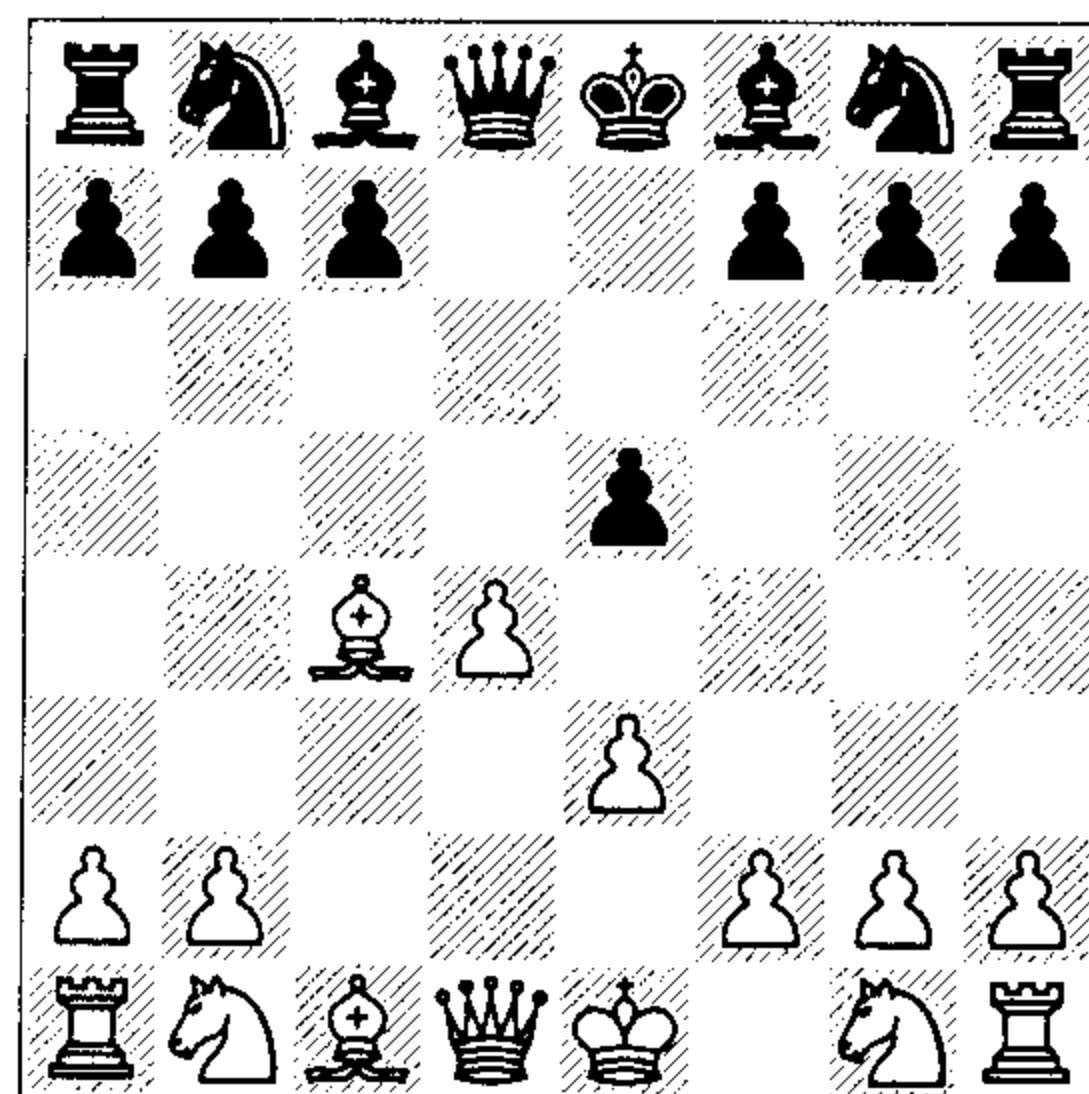
White should avoid 8 Qxf7, 8 Qxh7 and 8 exd5 Qxg5 9 dxe6 0-0-0!

10 exf7 ♖h6 11 ♗f3 ♕g6, when Black is a pawn down but he can regain it at his leisure, while White has severe development problems, Nikolac-V.Kovačević, Yugoslavia 1976.

8...♗c6 9 ♗e2

White intends 0-0 and ♖c2 followed by capturing on c4, most probably after playing ♜e1 to defend e4 after Black's ...♗f6. White will be a pawn down after 9...♗a4 10 b3 but his centre remains strong and intact.

B



Now:

H1: 4...exd4 118

H2: 4...♗c6 119

H)

3 e3

This is the first of two lines we consider by which White avoids ...♗g4 systems (Lines A and B in this chapter). The ...♗g4 ideas should not scare White too much, but move-orders that cut them out are well worth considering from a practical viewpoint if Black has nothing better than transposing back to the Classical.

3...e5

This move has independent significance. The lazy, but perfectly reliable response here is 3...♗f6, when transposition into one of the many lines discussed earlier in this book is probable. White can only alter the set-up by trying ♗e2 instead of ♗f3, or perhaps by trying to sneak the queen out to f3. However, these options are no better for White, and just attempts to avoid theory.

4 ♗xc4 (D)

4 dxe5 ♖xd1+ 5 ♖xd1 ♗e6 is not at all good for White.

H1)

4...exd4

In recent games, White has actually been scoring quite well after this move.

5 exd4

The resulting IQP positions are not to everybody's taste. In one sense they are similar to positions in Chapter 8. The obvious difference is that here Black has a c-pawn instead of an e-pawn. Another route to this position can be found in the Exchange French: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 c4 dxc4 5 ♗xc4.

5...♗b4+

Alternatively:

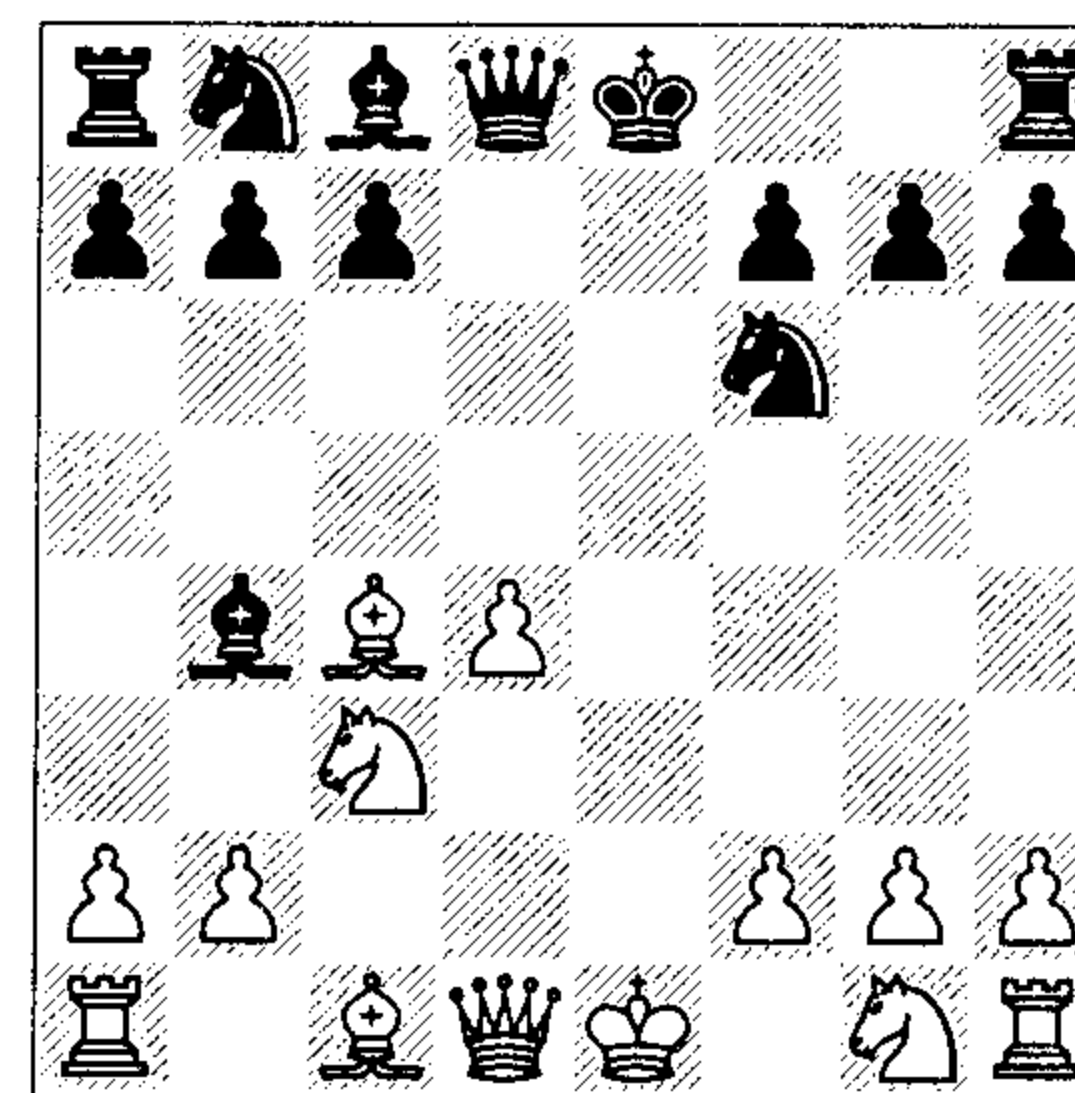
a) 5...♗d6 6 ♗f3 (6 ♖b3 ♖e7+ 7 ♗e2 gives a different feel to the proceedings – see note 'b') 6...♗f6 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 (8 ♗g5 is an attempt to exploit Black's bishop development; the bishop will probably need to retreat to e7 at some juncture, e.g. 8...♗c6 9

♗c3 ♗g4 10 ♗d5 ♗e7 11 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 12 h3 and Black was not quite fully equal in Lputian-Romanishin, Manila OL 1992) 8...♗c6 9 ♗c3 h6 10 ♜e1 ♗f5 11 a3 a6 12 ♗e3 ♜e8 13 ♜c1 ♖d7 14 ♗f1 ♗e4 shows good active development for Black, Hauchard-Sadler, Cannes 1996.

b) 5...♗f6 6 ♖b3 ♖e7+ 7 ♗e2 (it is not necessary for White to make life harder with 7 ♖f1 g6 or 7 ♖d1 {Plaskett} 7...♗e4, which both leave White with a problem king) 7...♖b4+ 8 ♗bc3 is preferable for White.

6 ♗c3 ♗f6 (D)

W



7 ♗f3

Less good is 7 ♖b3 (7 ♗xf7+ fails because of 7...♖xf7 8 ♖b3+ ♗d5, when White does not get his piece back) 7...♗c6 8 ♗xf7+ ♖f8 9 ♗c4 ♖e7+ 10 ♗e2 (10 ♗e2? loses to 10...♗a5) 10...♗xd4.

7...0-0 8 0-0 ♗g4 9 a3

Or 9 ♗g5 ♗xc3 10 bxc3 ♖d6 when Black's superior pawn-structure makes up for White having the bishop-pair.

9...♗xc3

This position suits those who are happy to play against the bishop-pair.

10 bxc3 c5

The most active move.

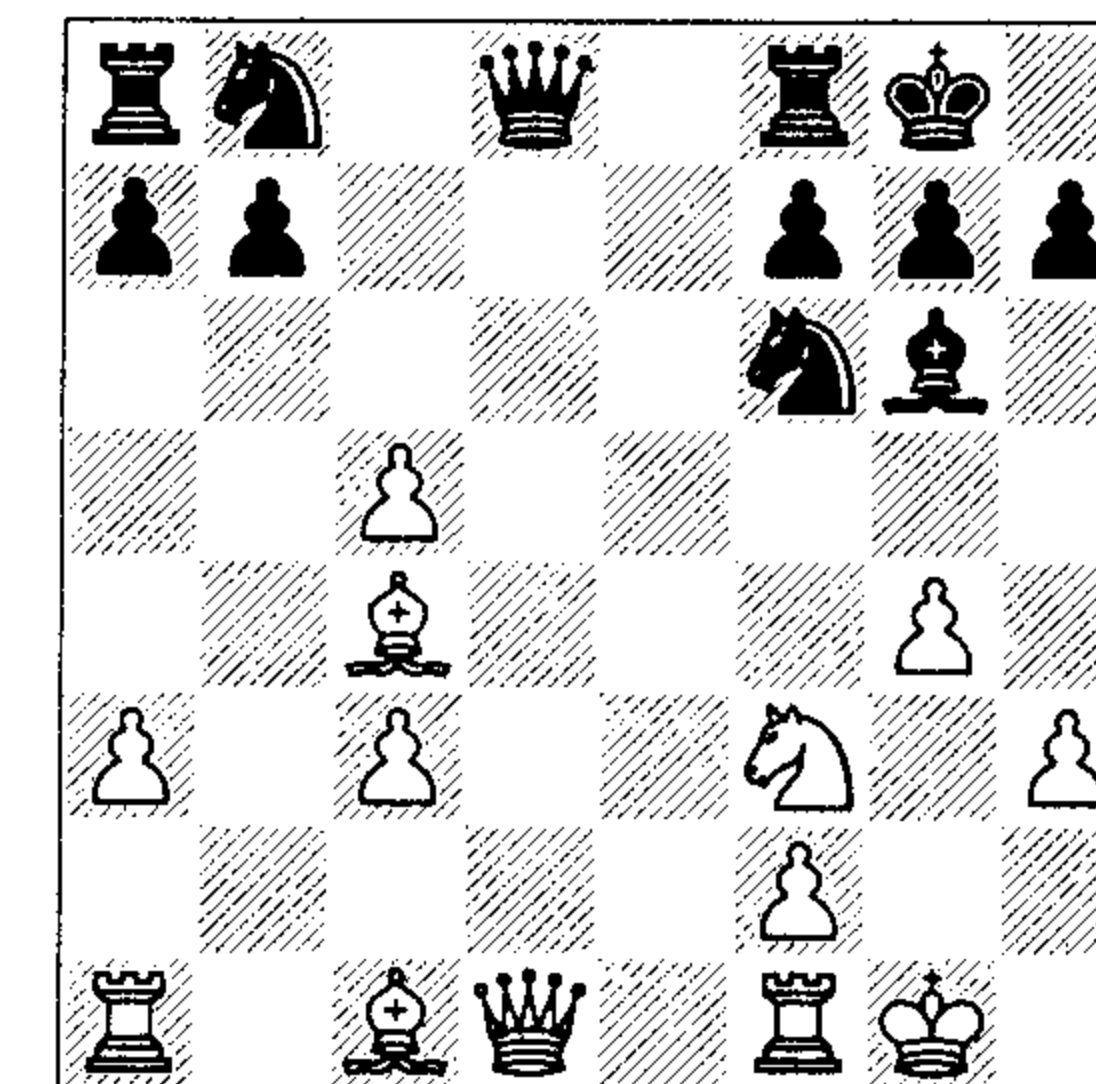
11 h3 ♗h5 12 g4

12 ♗g5 had been played previously.

12...♗g6 13 dxc5 (D)

Or 13 ♗e5 cxd4 14 cxd4 ♗c6 15 ♗xg6 hxg6 16 d5 ♗e5 17 ♗b3 ♜c8 with equality, technically speaking, although I would prefer to play Black than White.

B



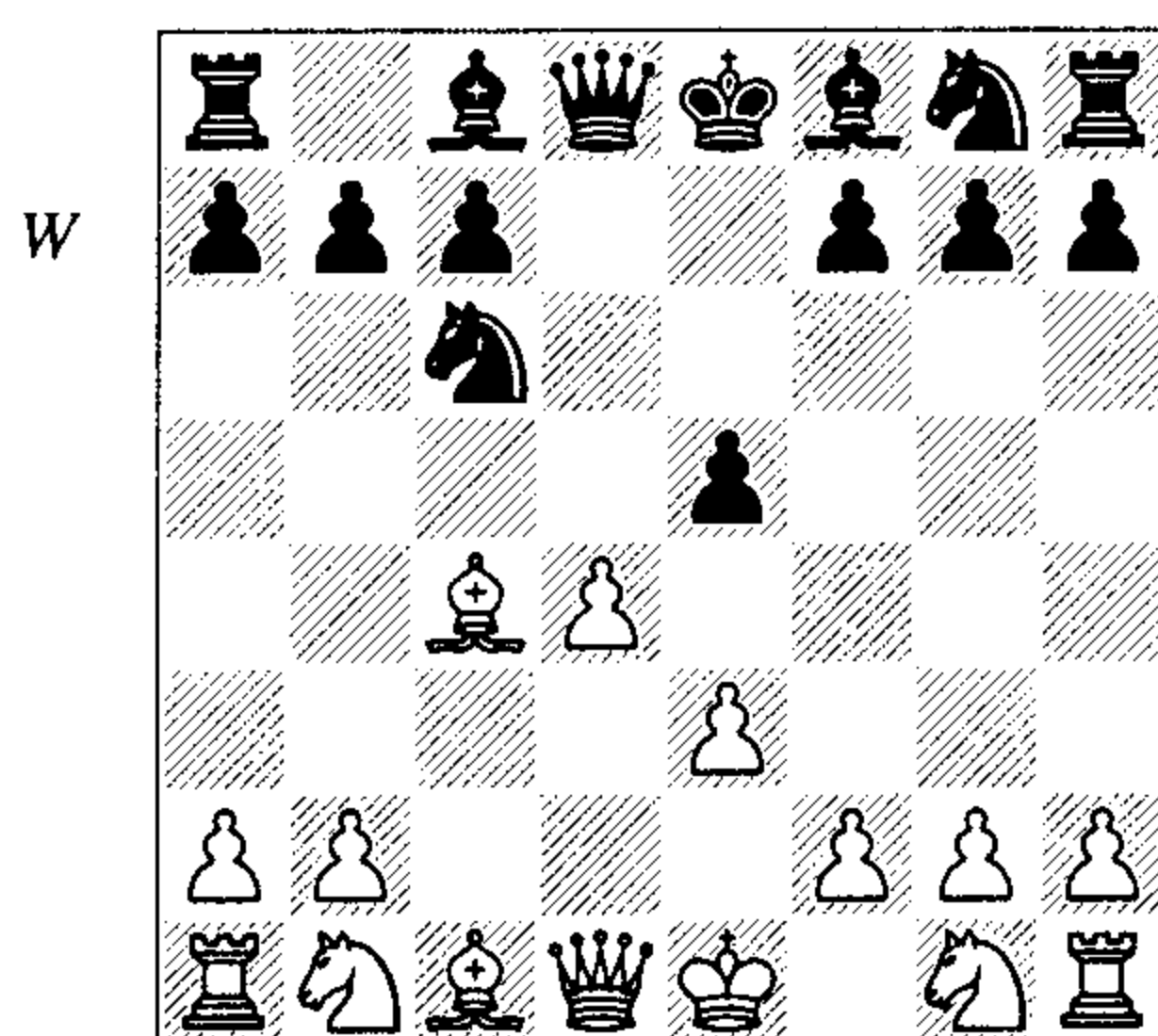
13...♗a5 14 ♗e3 ♗c6

Black is doing fine, Piskov-Maturović, Yugoslav Cht (Igalo) 1994. The white pawns will remain permanent weaknesses.

H2)

4...♗c6 (D)

Refusing to exchange on d4 confines White's dark-squared bishop to c1 and d2 for the time being. The text-move in fact transposes to a minor line of the Chigorin.

**5 d5**

Or 5 Nf3 e4 6 Nfd2 Wg5 7 Qf1 (7 0-0 Rh3) 7... Nf6 8 Nc3 Wg6 9 Rb5 Rd7 10 d5 Ne5 11 Rxd7+ Nxd7 12 Wa4 Rd6 13 Ndx4 0-0, Sliwa-Stahlberg, Gothenburg IZ 1955. Black has punished White for his rather feeble play and it can be considered that he has ample compensation for the pawn.

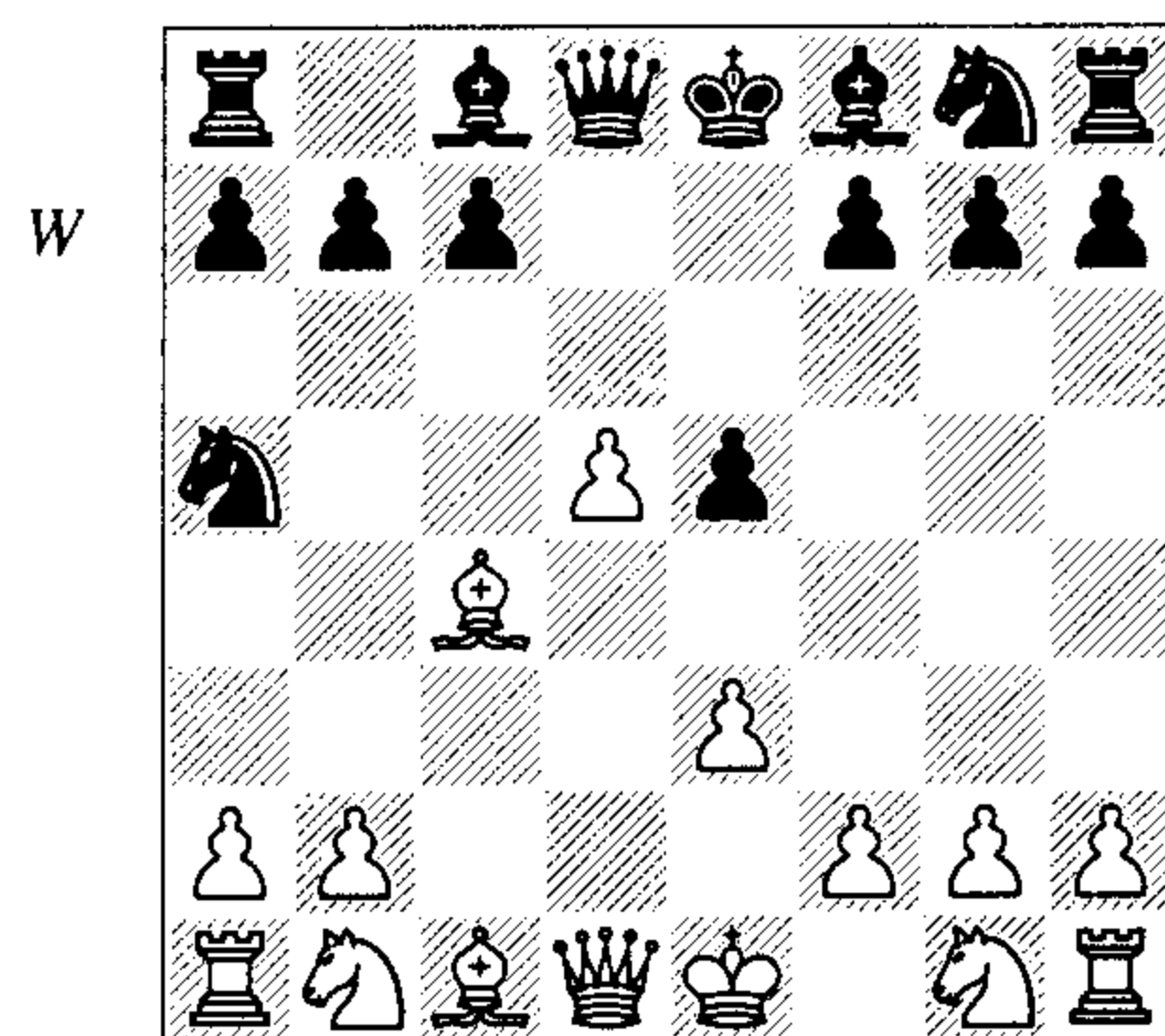
After the text-move Black must decide where to place the knight.

5... Nce7

This approach is not popular for Black, but I cannot see why. Black is bunched up on the kingside but at least his pieces are heading in the right general direction. The reader can draw similarities between this position and ones in Chapter 2. Alternatively:

a) 5... Na5 (D) leaves the knight poorly placed:

a1) 6 Wa4+?! c6 7 dxc6 Nxc6 8 Rd2 Nf6 9 Nf3 Rd6 10 Rc3 0-0 11 Nbd2 a6 is something of a mess for White, Fessler-Keller, Germany 1964. Sooner or later ...b5 will threaten to win a piece even though currently



White can take on b5 with the bishop because the a-pawn is pinned.

a2) 6 Re2 leaves the knight somewhat stranded. Some tricks, like 6... Nf6 7 Nc3 Rb4 8 Wa4+ , help White to defend the centre, so he need not worry about the d-pawn. Additionally, 6... Rd6 7 a3 b6 leaves Black in an ugly situation.

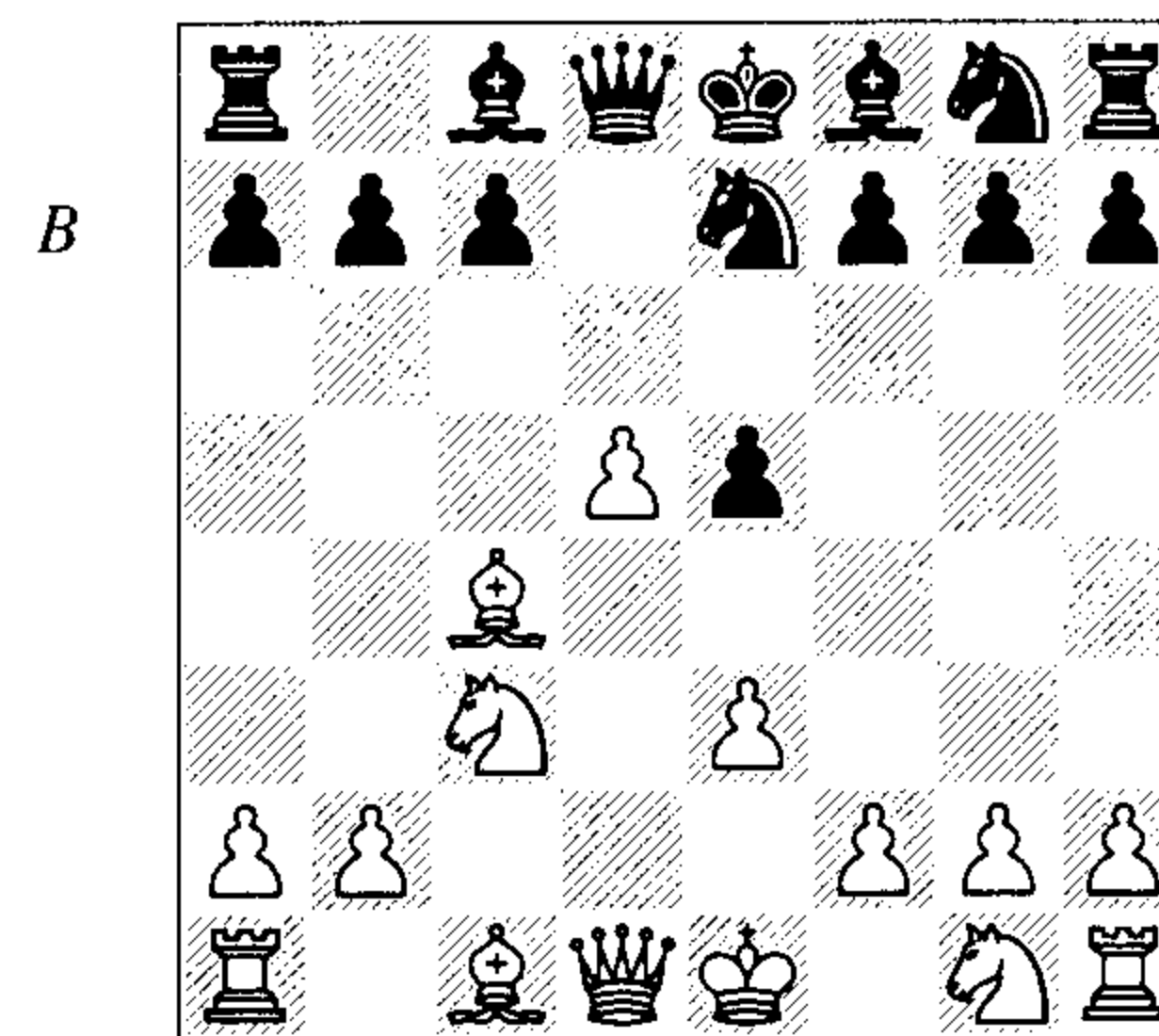
b) 5... Nb8 is better than line 'a' because the knight can get back into the action more quickly here. However, two tempi is a lot to squander in the opening, especially with Black. 6 Nc3 Nf6 7 Nge2 Nbd7 8 0-0 a6 9 a4 Rd6 10 a5 0-0 11 Ng3 b5 12 axb6 Nxb6 13 Rb3 Re8 14 f3 and with split pawns and less space, Black has very much the worse of it, Hodgson-Sachs, Capelle la Grande 1992.

6 Nc3 (D)

6 Wb3 Nf5 prevents White's discovered attack on f7 following d5-d6.

6... Nf6

Again in comparison to Chapter 2 (3 e4 e5 4 d5), set-ups with ...f5 are also possible, but playing for this

**13 e4**

Previously, the e-pawn had been preventing ... Nf4 . However, White now felt that he could not do without this move in Behrhorst-S.Mohr, Bundesliga 1987/8, but does this not justify Black's 4th and 5th moves? Black has a slightly improved version of some of the positions given in Chapter 2 following 3 e4 Nc6 .

I)**3 Nc3 (D)**

We will treat this move, which also avoids ... Rg4 systems, in a similar fashion to 3 e3.

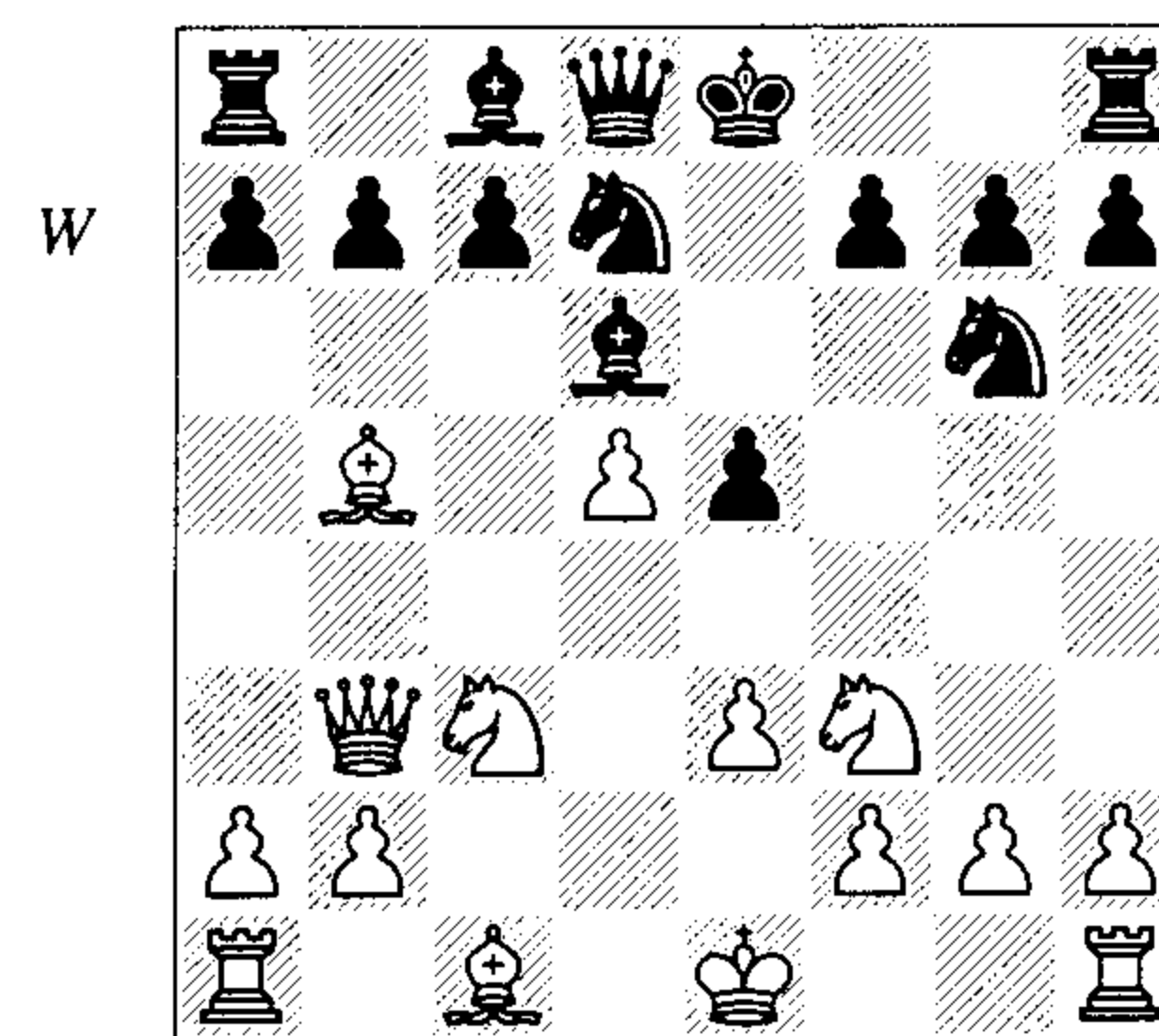
advance is not the only way to see positive chess.

7 Nf3 Ng6 8 Wb3 Rd6 9 Rb5+

Black could have prevented this with 6...a6, if he had wanted.

9... Nd7 (D)

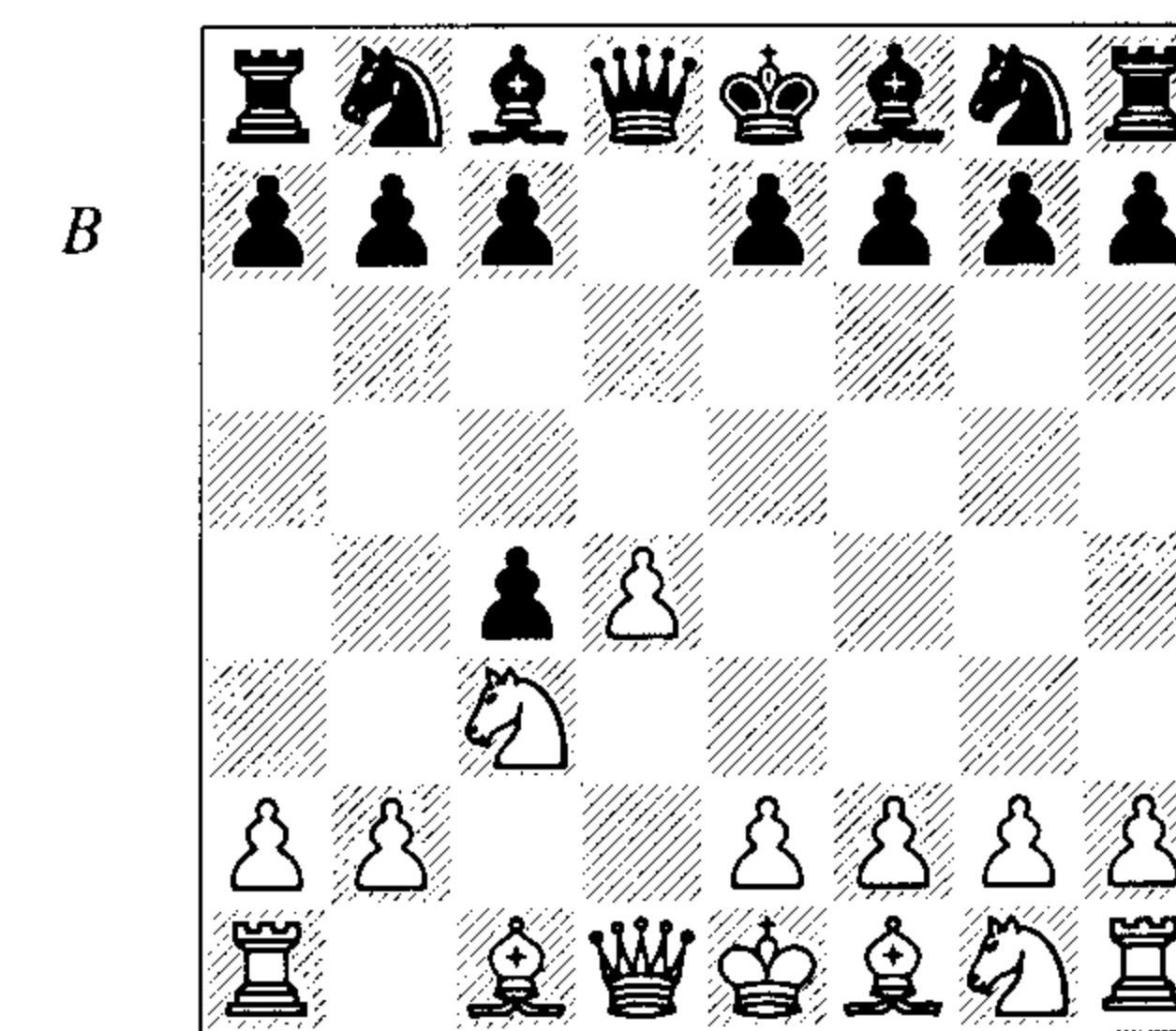
Just as in similar positions in Chapter 2, waiving the right to castle with 9... Qf8 is possible.

**10 0-0**

Better is 10 Ne4 .

10...0-0 11 Ne4 Nc5 12 Nxc5 Rxc5

The exchange of knights transfers the black bishop to a better diagonal.

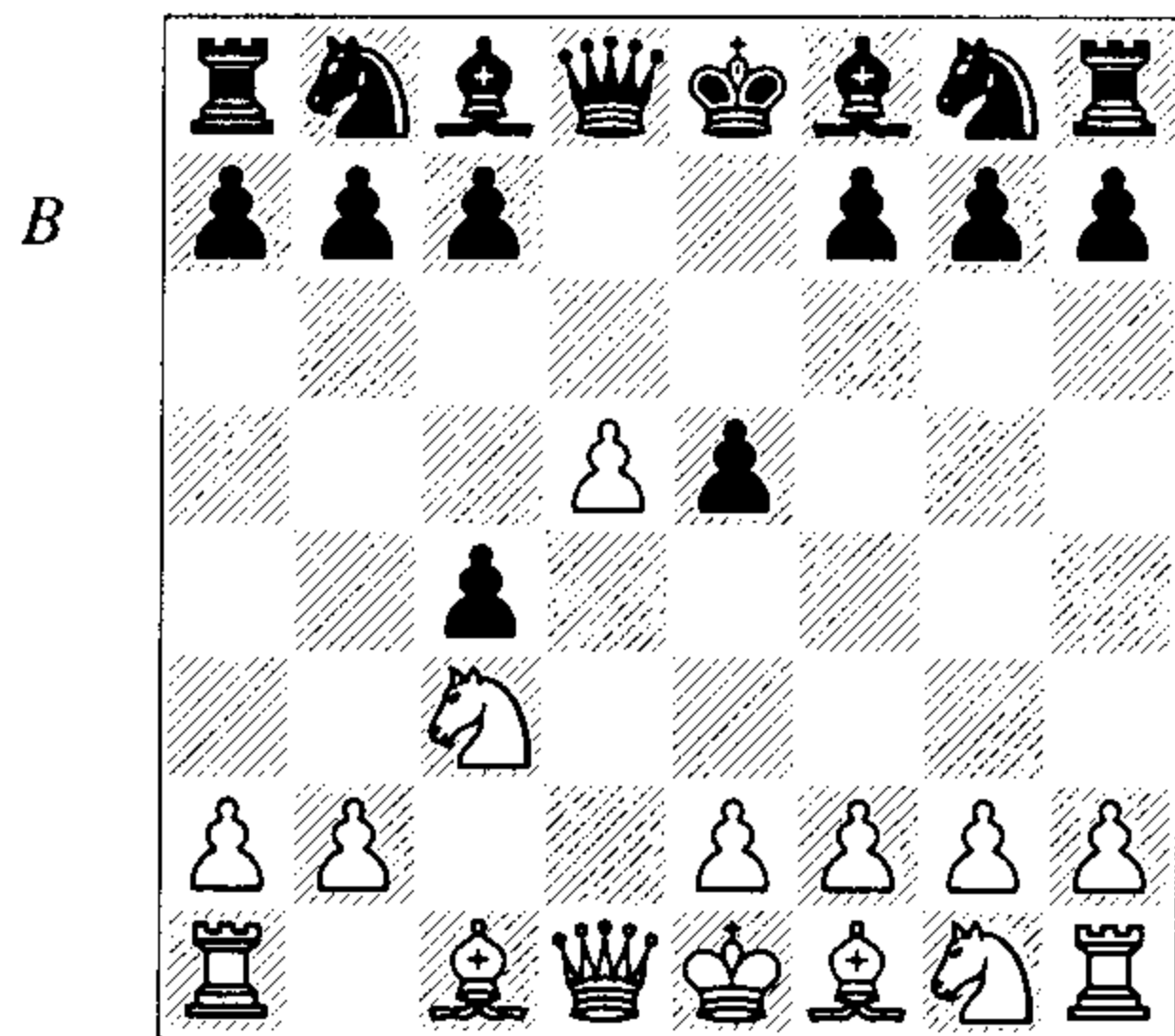
**3...e5**

Once again, this central advance has been allowed.

If 3... Nf6 then 4 e4 Rg4 5 f3 and Black does not have the consolation of pinning a knight on f3.

4 d5 (D)

4 e3 Nc6 transposes to Line H. 4 Nf3 and subsequent exchanges on d4 take us into the realms of Chapter 7.



4...a6

Black loses time with 4...♞d7 5 e4 ♞b6 and then 6 ♙e3 or 6 ♙xc4 ♞xc4 7 ♚a4+.

5 e4 ♙d6

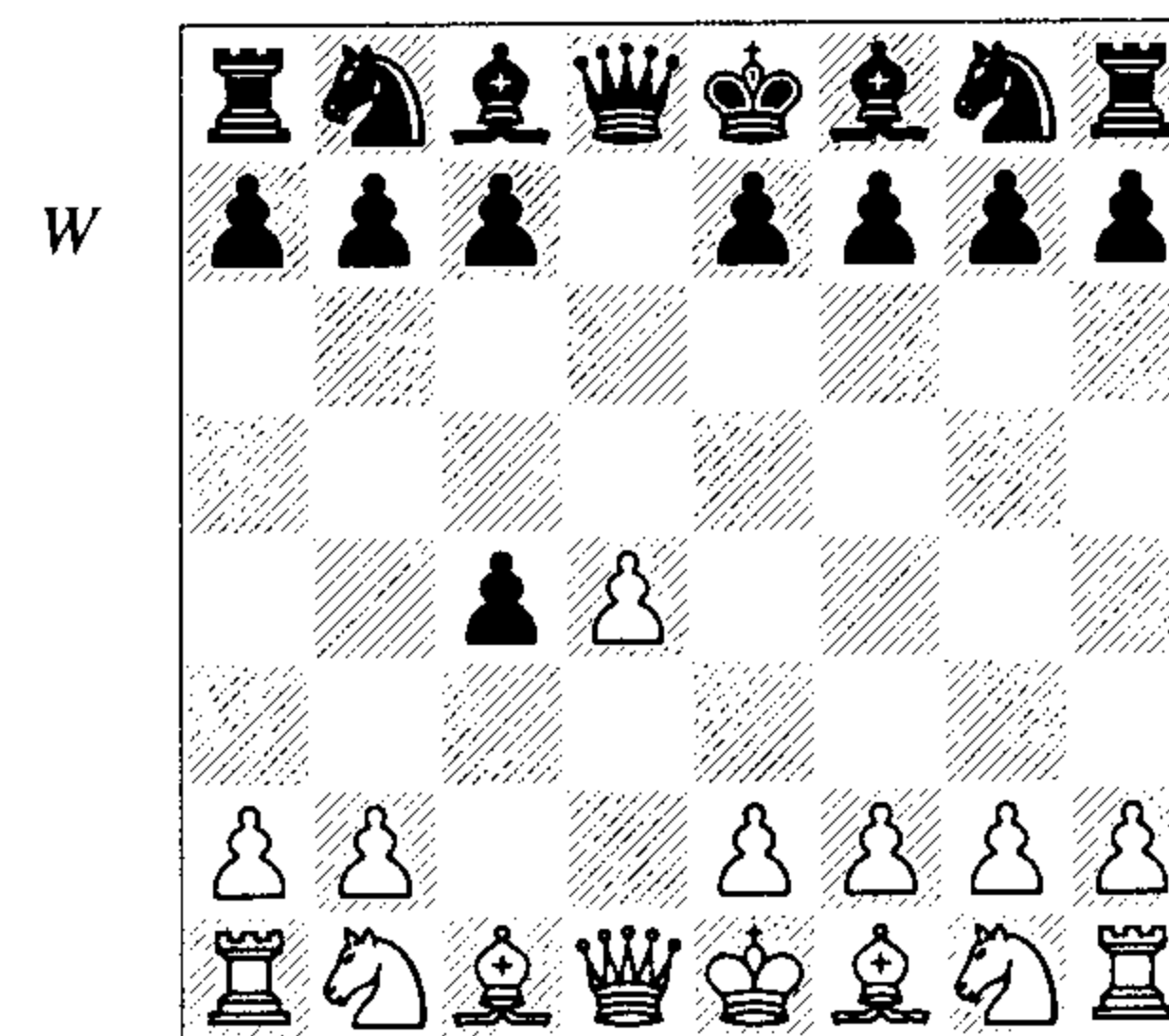
Returning to positions already covered. After 5...b5 6 a4 b4 7 ♞a2 White will win his gambit pawn back.

6 ♙xc4

There is nothing more of any significance here except to mention that since White has played e2-e4, Black may consider the manoeuvre ...♞bd7-f8-g6 before castling.

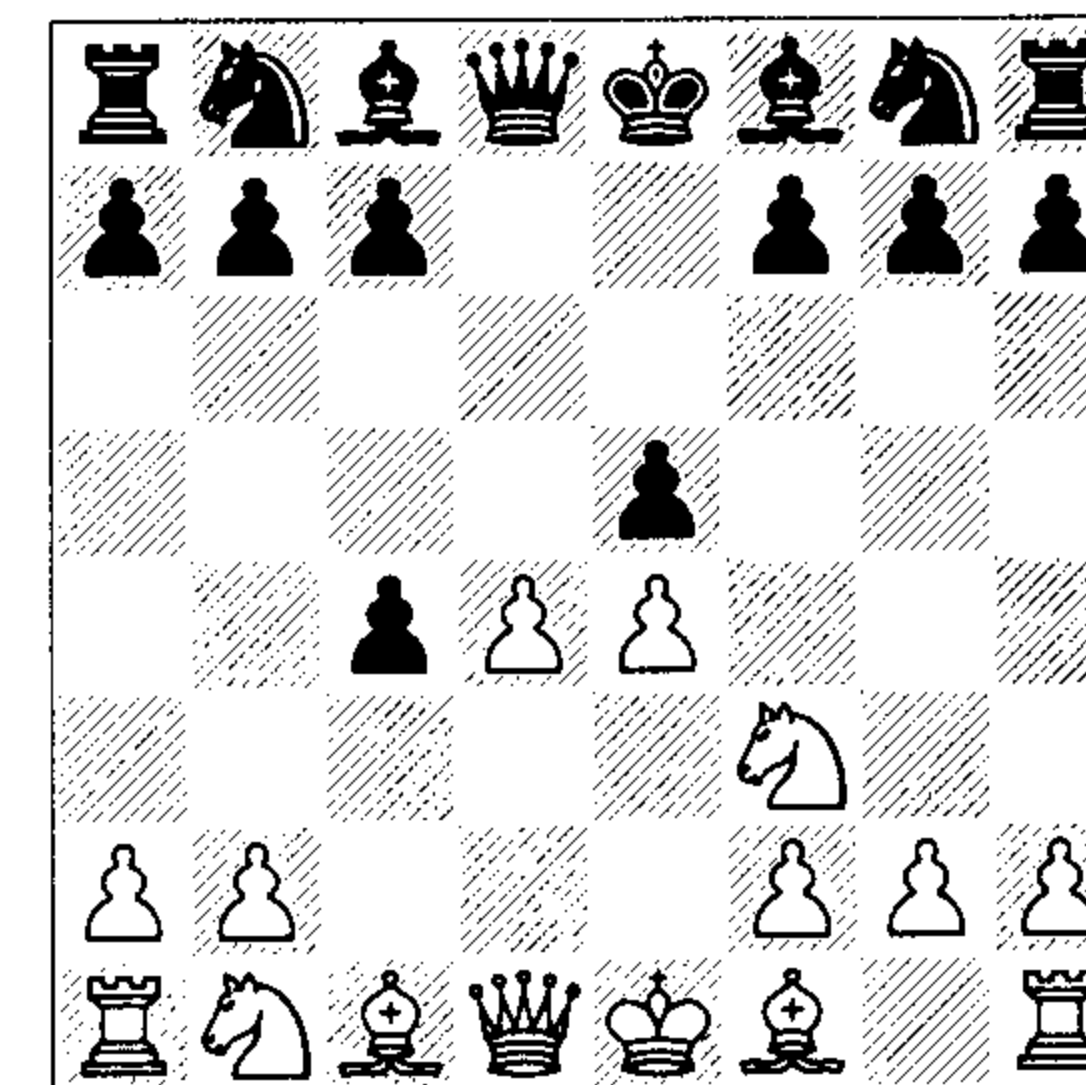
Index of Variations

1 d4 d5
2 c4 dxc4 (D)



W

5 ♞c3 35
5 f4 36
4 ♞f3 (D)



B

Now:

A: Miscellaneous

B: 3 e4

C: 3 ♞f3

A)

3 e3 118

3 ♞c3 121

3 ... e5

4 ♙xc4

4...exd4 118

4...♞c6 119

B)

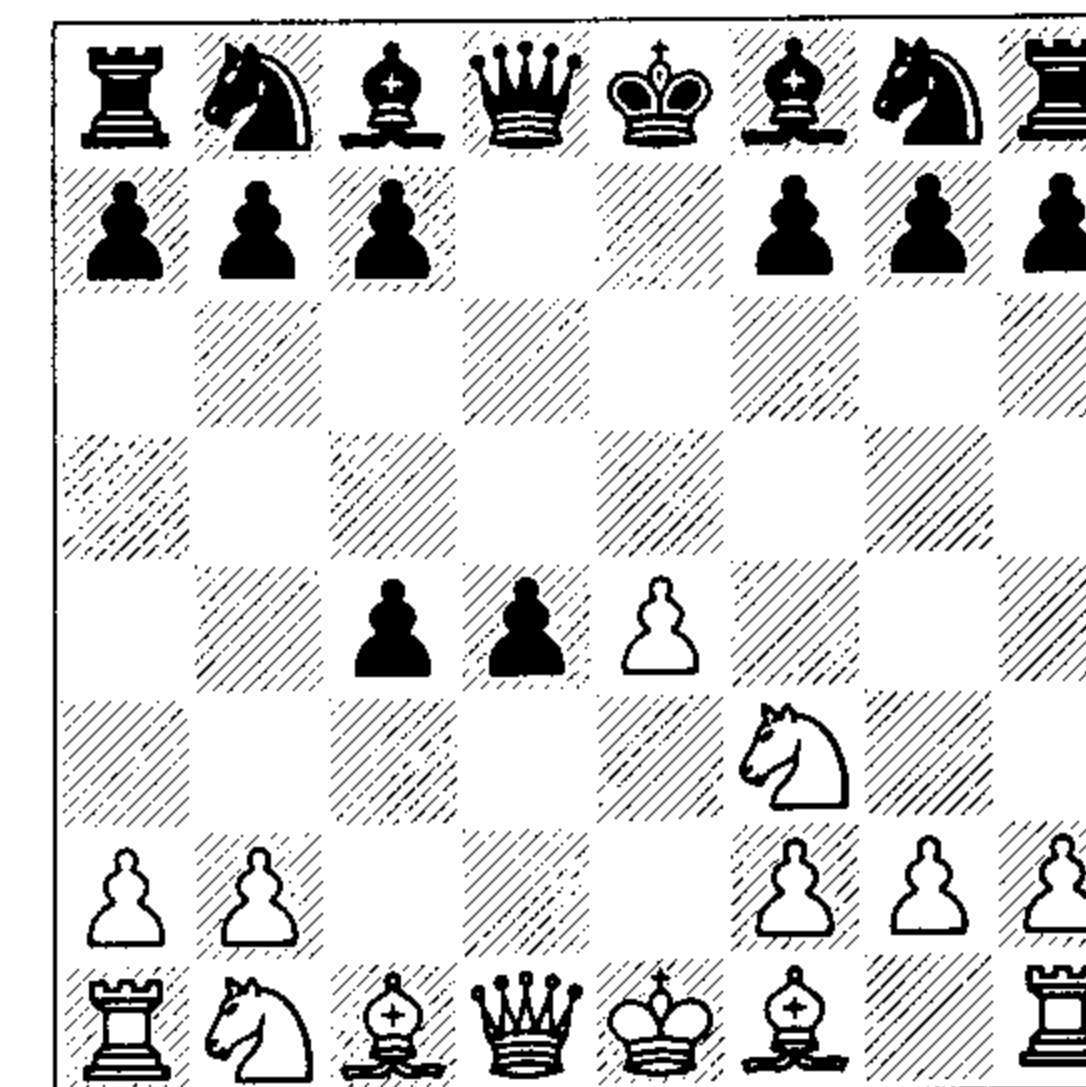
3 e4 e5 22

3...♞c6 33 4 d5 34 (4 ♙e3 33; 4 ♞f3

37) 4...♞e5:

5 ♚d4 34

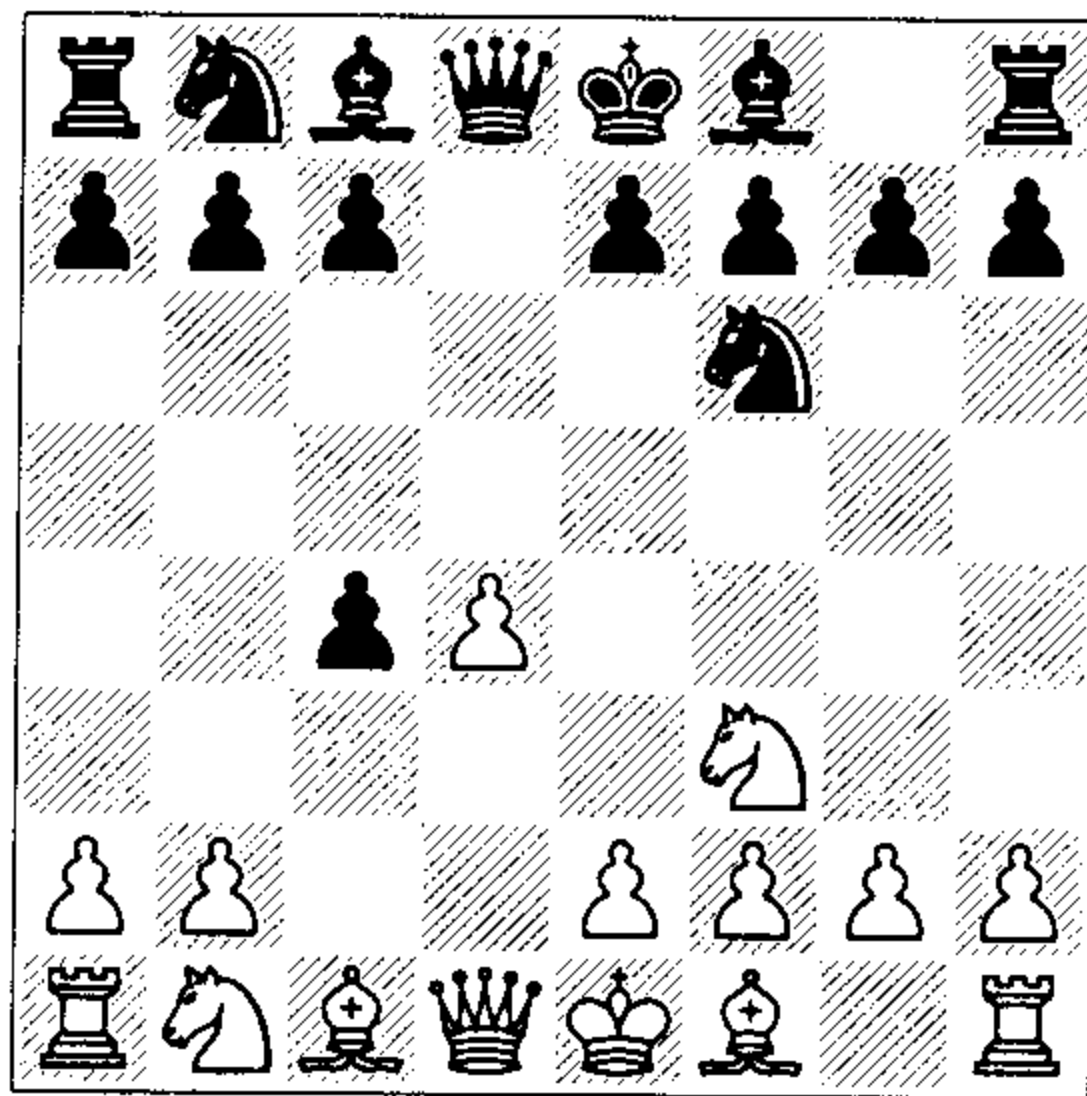
4 ... exd4 (D)
4...♙b4+ 22 5 ♞c3 exd4 6 ♞xd4 24
(6 ♚xd4 23) 6...♞e7:
7 ♙xc4 25
7 ♙f4 26



W

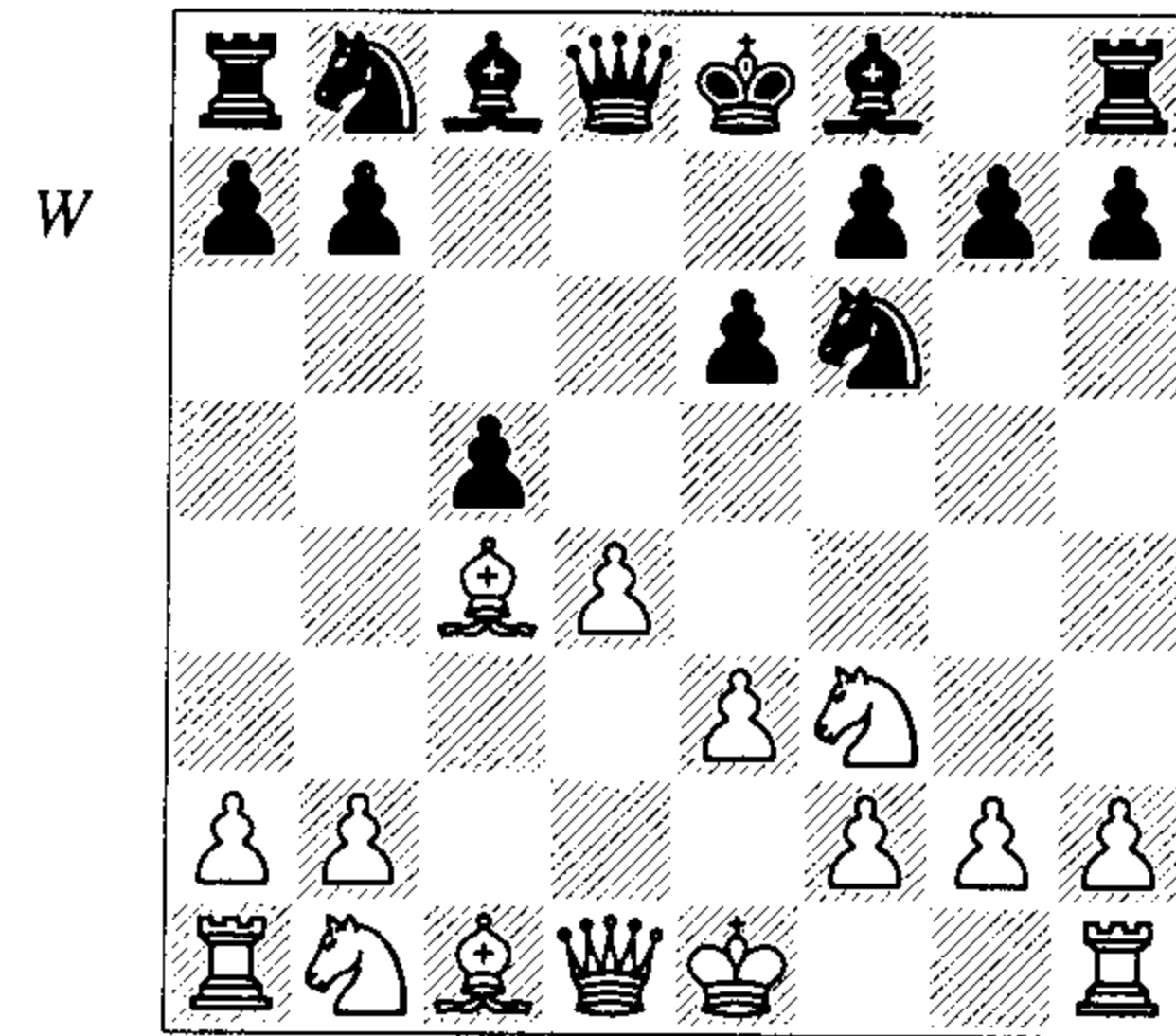
5 ♖xc4 29
 5 ♜xd4 32
 5 ... ♘c6
 5...♗b4+ 27:
 6 ♗d2 27
 6 ♘bd2 28
 6 0-0 ♗e6 29
 7 ♗b5 29; 7 ♗xe6 30

C) 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 (D)
 3...♘d7 117
 3...a6:
 4 e3 112 4...♗g4 109
 4 e4 b5 113
 3...c5 115:
 4 e3 115
 4 d5 116

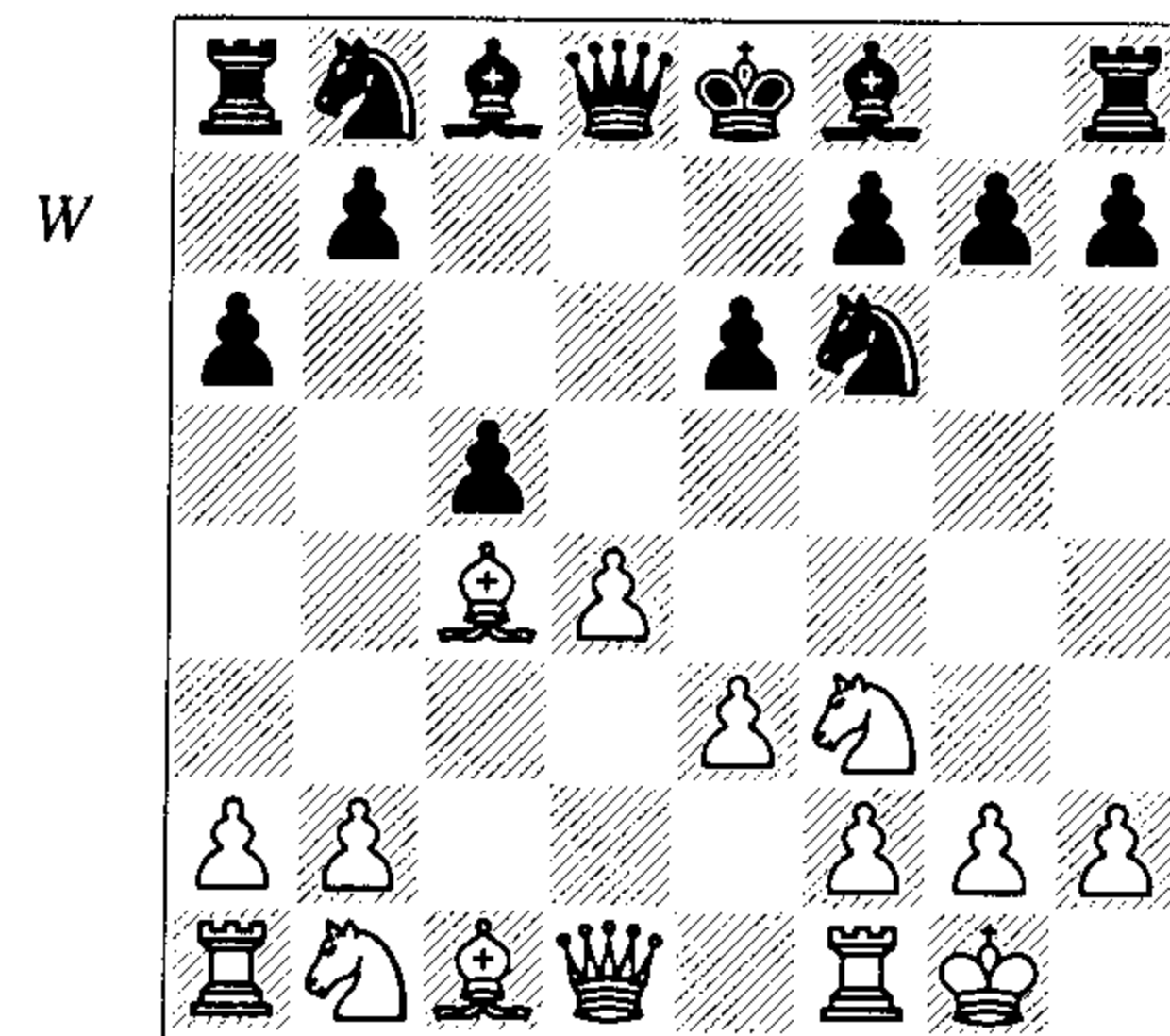


4 e3
 4 ♜a4+ 40 4...♘c6 5 ♘c3:
 5...e6 41
 5...♘d5 43
 4 ♘c3 46
 4 ... e6
 4...g6 110
 4...♗e6 111

4...♗g4 105 5 ♗xc4 e6 6 ♘c3 ♘bd7 7
 h3 ♗h5 8 0-0 ♗d6 9 e4 e5:
 10 ♗e2 107
 10 d5 109
 10 g4 109
 5 ♗xc4 c5 (D)



6 0-0
 6 ♜e2 56:
 6...a6 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 56
 6...cxd4 7 exd4 ♗e7 8 0-0 100
 6 ... a6 (D)
 6...cxd4 7 exd4 99 7...♗e7:
 8 ♜e2 100
 8 ♘c3 100



After 6...a6 White may play:
 7 b3 70
 7 e4 59
 7 ♘c3 62
 7 ♜e2 62
 7 ♗d3 68 7...cxd4 8 exd4 96
 7 ♗b3 60 7...♘c6:
 8 ♘c3 b5 9 dxc5 87
 8 ♜e2 cxd4 (8...♜c7 80) 9 ♜d1 ♗e7
 8 ♗d3 60 7...♘c6:
 8 ♘c3 ♗e7 9 dxc5 88
 8 ♜e2 cxd4 (8...♜c7 80) 9 ♜d1 ♗e7
 (9...d3 80) 10 exd4 103
 exd4 98
 7 ♘bd2 71 7...cxd4 8 ♘xd4 ♗d6 9 b3
 0-0 10 ♗b2:
 10...e5 72; 10...♗c7 72
 7 a4 80 7...♘c6:
 8 ♘c3 ♗e7 9 dxc5 88
 8 ♜e2 cxd4 (8...♜c7 80) 9 ♜d1 ♗e7
 (9...d3 80) 10 exd4 103

CADOGAN chess

easy guide
to the
**Queen's Gambit
Accepted**

The Queen's Gambit Accepted is one of Black's most trustworthy and yet dynamic ways of facing the Queen's Pawn Opening. Black immediately accepts the invitation to open the position, leading to positions rich in positional and tactical complexity. Now, for the first time, Graeme Buckley uncovers the secrets behind the opening which has become a firm favourite amongst many of today's top players.

Cadogan's new Easy Guide series represents a new approach to chess opening books: just enough detail and just enough explanation to enable readers to play an opening with confidence, without months of memorizing theory - the easy way to master a chess opening.

Graeme Buckley caused quite a stir in his first year as a professional player, securing his International Master title in a matter of months, quickly followed by his first grandmaster norm. More recently he has also been involved in some major coaching projects. In 1996 he was manager of the English youth team, who achieved the impressive double of winning both the Glorney and Faber Cups.

published by
Cadogan Books plc
London

distributed in the US by
the Globe Pequot Press

ISBN: 185744 523 6

