

Author**Message****Batgirl**

Joined: 06 Dec 2003

Posts: 165

Location: North Carolina

■ Posted: Wed Jan 07, 2004 6:13 pm Post subject: Chess History: Gioachino Greco - short bio.



Gioachino Greco, also known as *Il Calabrese*, was born around 1600 in Celico, which near Cosenza in Calabria. Calabria had already produced such players as Leonardo di Bono and Michele di Mauro. From his writing it's apparent the he wasn't educated and likely came from a lower class family. Already in 1619, Greco started keeping a notebook of tactics and particularly clever games and he took up the custom of giving copies of his manuscripts to his wealthy patrons. In Rome Monsignor Corsino della casa Minutoli Tegrini, Cardinal Savelli and Monsignor Francisco Buoncompagni all received copies (of which there are extant copies, dated 1620 in the Corsiniana library in Rome, under the title, *Trattato del nobilissimo gioco de scacchi*).

Despite his popularity in Rome, in 1621 Greco took off to test himself against the rest of Europe leaving this paper trail as he went. In 1621 he left a fine copy of his manuscripts with Duke Enrico of Lorraine in Nancy. He traveled to Paris where he played Arnauld(Isaac) de Corbeville, Enrico di Savoia (the Marquis of St. Sorlin and the Duke of Nemours and Geneva) and others. He had apparently been quite successful because in traveling from Paris to England he was waylaid by robbers who divested him of 5,000 scudi, a princely sum. Finally making it to London, he beat all the best players. Sir Francis Godolphin and Nicholas Mountstephen were given copies of his manuscripts. While in London, Greco developed an idea to record entire games, rather than positions, for study and inclusion in his manuscripts. He returned to Paris in 1624 where he rewrote his manuscript collection to reflect his new ideas. He then went to Spain and played at the court of Philip IV. There he beat his mentor and the strongest

player of the time (other than himself), don Mariano Morano. He finally returned to Italy where he was enticed to traveling to the New Indies, the Americas, by a Spanish nobleman. He seemingly contracted some disease there and died around 1630 (possibly 1634) at the young age of 30 (34). He generously left all the money he earned at chess to the Jesuits.

Gioachino Greco stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries, a feat seldom duplicated. David Hooper, in *The Oxford Companion to Chess*, states that Greco probably made up the games in his manuscripts. The question of whether he actually played the games or invented them is rather moot since if he invented them, he was perfectly capable of playing them.

...one of the most important productions in the history of chess

written by Harold James Ruthven Murray in his book, *A History of Chess*, referring to the 1656 publication by Francis Beale of Greco's work under the title, **The royall Game of Chesse-play**

~Batgirl

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bluebikerider



Joined: 26 Dec 2003
Posts: 70

Posted: Tue Mar 23, 2004 7:36 am Post subject: chesse-play



I came across this and I thought I would add it to the forum.



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Batgirl



Joined: 06 Dec 2003
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Location: North Carolina

■ Posted: Tue Mar 23, 2004 4:51 pm Post subject:

 [quote](#)

Thanks, [blue](#),

The picture is that of Charles I of England. He was born in 1600 and was a diligent chess player himself.

His tendency to disregard parliamentary proceedings (mainly by getting rid of the parliaments) eventually led to civil war. Charles was captured, but escaped to the Isle of Wight. There he negotiated with the Scots to help him return to power. It's said that he was playing chess even during these negotiations.

The end result was that Charles lost his head in 1649.

check and mate.

~Batgirl

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Rook4Sale

Posted: Sun Apr 04, 2004 11:20 am Post subject:



Joined: 25 Nov 2003
Posts: 9
Location: redondo beach, ca

Hi Batgirl, this is sort of a tangent, but regarding Charles I and chess, maybe you can shed some light. I seem to remember to reading once that he liked to use his King actively in the game. Supposedly it was symbolic of being the military leader as well as king of England, leading the troops into battle, etc

Whatever success he may have at the chessboard with this tactic was attributed to his opponents being polite (or political) and not taking advantage.

Does that sound familiar?

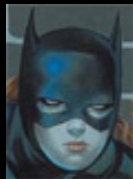
I don't even know for sure that it was Charles I.

Thanks, and I really enjoy your forum.

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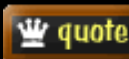


Batgirl



Joined: 06 Dec 2003
Posts: 165
Location: North Carolina

Posted: Sun Apr 04, 2004 3:07 pm Post subject:



A Question!!

Ok... first, I'm not an historian, so what I surmise must be taken with a grain of salt.

I never heard of that statement about Charles I

1. Charles I lived in the first half of the 17th century. Few games back then were recorded and of those few games, most were records kept by masters, not by amateurs.
2. Codification of chess rules was iffy. Some areas had certain rules, some had different rules. It's possible that Charles I played by rules that limited the initial pawn move to 1 square or some other rule that might make bringing the King out less dangerous than it would be today.
3. A lot of what's written is made-up, either on purpose or by false assumption or poor memory. There's a lot of misinformation out there, especially on the web.
4. The great majority of chess players, even many of the celebrated ones, prior to the 19th century were patzers by today's standards.

Now, taking these things into consideration, I don't know of any extant games by

Charles I. It's possible that somewhere in some ancient text, someone might have mentioned Charles' playing style, but it seems rather unlikely to me. If it were true and someone from that time reported it, it probably wasn't as weird back then as we might think it today, given the complete dearth of chess knowledge, the arcane rules and the amateur talent.

I tend to believe, if you read it somewhere, that it was a fabricated story, or a copy of a fabrication... who knows where these things begin?

But.. here's something interesting. While searching Charles I, I came across something I already knew and something I didn't know.

Around the same time frame, playwright, Thomas Middleton wrote a play called, **A Game at Chesse**. It played 9 days (a record run!) but had to be cancelled because it was an allegorical story in which England was the white pieces and Spain was the Black pieces. England was trying to mollify Spain at the time and the play was seen as an insult to Spain.

knew all that..

but what I didn't know was that Thomas Middleton also wrote a play called, **Women beware Women**. In this story, it seems, there is a game of chess also. To quote a site:

Quote:

[the play] which has a scene in which a mother-in-law is distracted by a game of chess while her daughter-in-law is seduced: every move in the chess game represents a move in the seduction.

~Batgirl

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