



# The Modern English

## Volume 2: 1.c4 c5, 1...Nf6, 1...e6

Kiril Georgiev  
Semko Semkov

Chess Stars Publishing  
Current Theory and Practice Series

**The Modern English** Volume 2: 1...c5, 2...f6, 2...e6

Cover design by Kaloyan Nachev, Semko Semkov

Copyright © 2019 by Kiril Georgiev and Semko Semkov

Printed in Bulgaria  
ISBN: 978-619-7188-23-3

# Contents

Bibliography 4

Introduction 5

**Chapter 1.** 1.c4 c5. Symmetrical with ...g6

Main Ideas 7 Step by Step 10 Annotated Games 18

**Chapter 2.** 1.c4 c5 2.♠f3 ♠f6 3.♠c3 e6

Main Ideas 27 Step by Step 30 Annotated Games 43

**Chapter 3.** Symmetrical with ...e6, ...♠xd5

Main Ideas 59 Step by Step 64 Annotated Games 75

**Chapter 4.** Symmetrical with ...b6

Main Ideas 81 Step by Step 84 Annotated Games 91

**Chapter 5.** Maróczy Bind

Main Ideas 99 Step by Step 105 Annotated Games 118

**Chapter 6.** Anti-Grünfeld

Main Ideas 125 Step by Step 127 Annotated Games 139

**Chapter 7.** Anti-Nimzo

Main Ideas 153 Step by Step 156 Annotated Games 165

**Chapter 8.** 1.c4 ♠f6 2.♠c3 e6 3.e4

Main Ideas 173 Step by Step 177 Annotated Games 191

**Chapter 9.** Anti-Slav and Chebanenko

Main Ideas 199 Step by Step 203 Annotated Games 213

**Chapter 10.** Anti-Meran

Main Ideas 217 Step by Step 220 Annotated Games 229

**Chapter 11.** Anti-Queens's Gambit

Main Ideas 235 Step by Step 237 Annotated Games 243

**Chapter 12.** Odds and Ends

Step by Step 245 Annotated Games 249

Index of Variations 252

# Bibliography

## Books

*The Full English Opening*, Carsten Hansen, New in Chess 2018

*The English*, David Cummings, Everyman Chess 2016

*e3 Poison*, Axel Smith, Quality Chess 2016

*Mastering the Chess Openings, Volume 3*, John Watson, Gambit Publications 2008

*The Tarrasch Defence*, Nikolaos Ntirlis and Jacob Aagaard, Quality Chess 2011

*The Hyper Accelerated Dragon*, second extended edition, Raja Panjwani, Thinkers Publishing 2018

*The Modern Reti: An Anti-Slav Repertoire*, Alexander Delchev, Chess Stars 2012

*The Hedgehog vs the English/Reti*, Igor Lysyj/Roman Ovetchkin, Chess Stars 2017

*Beating Minor Openings*, Victor Mikhalevski, Quality Chess 2016

## Periodicals

Chess Informant

New in Chess Yearbook

## Internet resources

Databases

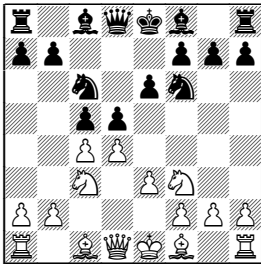
The Week In Chess ([www.theweekinchess.com](http://www.theweekinchess.com))

Chess Publishing ([www.chesspublishing.com](http://www.chesspublishing.com))

# Introduction

Many grandmasters claim that the best answer to 1.c4 is 1...e5. If you consider only the chances this move offers for complex fight for all three results, that may be true. However, for a theoretician, the symmetric answers always present the biggest challenge. They are notoriously not just “balanced”, but often bluntly drawish.

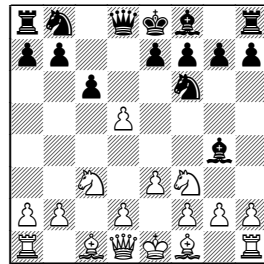
I devoted two thirds of the book on the Symmetrical 1.c4 c5. While plans with further ...g6 or ...b6 generously cede space to White and were fun to explore, the most restraining scheme with 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.e3 e6 5.d4 d5 was the toughest nut to crack.



In Chapter 2 I analyse 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗b5, where we generally learn how to play around an isolated and hanging pawns. In Chapter 3 the roles are reversed – 6...♘xd5 7.♗d3 puts us on the other side of the barricade, but the extra tempo does

matter. White has several ways of obtaining a lasting initiative. The good news is that Black does not have forced draws and should work strenuously to keep the balance.

The other symmetric in spirit system is the Slav. One of the most attractive features of the English Opening is that it assures White of an initiative after 1...c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♗g4 5.cxd5!?



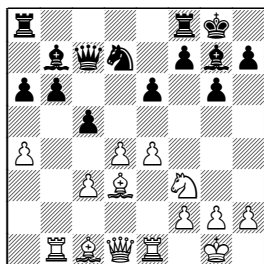
5...♗xf3 6.♙xf3 cxd5 7.♗b5+ ♘c6  
8.♗xc6+ bxc6 – Chapter 9.

White’s task is more complicated in the Meran set-up. Five years ago the plan with g2-g4 inspired big hopes, but today we know that it is effective only against ...b6. That should not sound discouraging, as the quiet development ♗e2 is not deprived of venom.

Our Anti-Grünfeld Chapter 6 offers several very different systems.

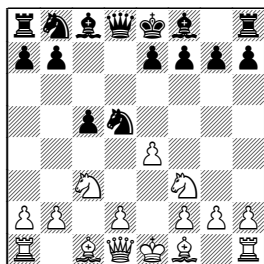
In my youth I was strongly influenced by the instructive game Karpov-Kortchnoi from the world title match in Merano 1981:

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♗c3 d5 3.cxd5 ♜xd5  
 4.♗f3 ♜xc3 5.bxc3 g6 6.d4 ♙g7 7.e3  
 c5 8.♙b5+ ♜d7 9.0-0 0-0 10.a4 a6  
 11.♙d3 b6 12.♞b1 ♙b7 13.e4 ♚c7  
 14.♞e1 e6



15.e5 h6 16.h4 with a nice clear plan. I even followed in Karpov's footsteps 20 years later against Krasenkow. However, since then Black has discovered that he should play ...♙d7 instead of ...♜bd7, with decent chances to equalise.

Therefore, our main dish is the hot line 1.c4 ♖f6 2.♗c3 d5 3.cxd5 ♜xd5 4.♗f3 c5 5.e4!? (instead of the above-mentioned 5.e3 g6 6.♙b5+)



We have discovered several inte-

resting ideas to make Black work hard over the board.

The Anti-Nimzo approach again gives you a choice. If you are a hardcore fan of the Carlsbad structure in the QGD, you should choose 1.c4 ♖f6 2.♗c3 e6 3.e4 – Chapter 8. Although we hide some trumps up our sleeve, I believe that 3...d5 should be balanced.

AlphaZero's choice is 3.♗f3! ♙b4 4.♚c2, and it is the subject of Chapter 7.

You might ask, what about 3...d5? Well, my personal opinion is that the best you can do is to enter the main lines with 4.d4. However, throughout the chapters on the Symmetrical English we often had to deal with e3, followed by a queen's fianchetto. So we added Chapter 11, where we discuss the Anti-QGD approach.

The final chapter called "Odds end Ends" briefly cover our strategy against the King's Indian, the Modern Defence and the Dutch. In short, my advice is: go into the main lines! I only explain how to reach them through the English move order 1.c4 ♖f6 2.♗c3.

When reading the book, please do not skip the "Main Ideas" sections, but always start with them! They often offer examples and explanations which you would not find in the "Step by Step" sections.

*Kiril Georgiev  
 March 2019*