

Stellungnahme zu dem Vorstehenden

Franco Pratesi

I belong to the group of readers who have a great esteem for Murray. I feel that his mathematical education has helped him much in finding the extraordinary structure and the balance of his history.

What changes does it need? I suppose we could leave his approach unaltered and publish the book again with just a few notes. For instance, adding a Chapter XVI, devoted to The Twentieth Century. He – fortunately – was already summarising the recent history so much that, from this point of view, we might easily continue his approach with maybe just 10-20 pages containing a summary of the main chess events/champions in the years 1910-2000. On the other hand, I know that Ken Whyld had begun to compile notes for amending a few statements for which later research has shown that Murray was wrong. This work of updating here and there could be continued with a few more notes. They should not remarkably increase the total number of pages.

Or else one can try and perform a larger revision. In principle, almost each chapter of the History can originate a book, re-written by a specialist. The problem is that we would probably need also another structure and another balance, and this is difficult. You suggest another structure, based on the different subjects connected with chess.

I always think of history as defined in time and space, and first of all by the ‘point of view’. With time I mean we should know beforehand how much space we intend to devote to chess before the middle ages in Europe, how much to, for instance, the 20th century. With space I mean for ex. Iran, Scotland, America, Australia, Siberia, and so on, with their particular chess histories.

Let us consider Chapter VII *Chess in China, Korea, and Japan*. If we compile a history of chess from the European point of view, we only need to add in the last pages that recently some players can be found in Europe who enjoy playing xiangqi or shogi and have founded corresponding associations. In addition to insert a few notes with amendments to the old history, as mentioned before. If, on the other hand, the history is written from a “universal” point of view, then this chapter can

become larger than the large part devoted by Murray to Islam chess (which was precisely the immediate source for the European chess, thus justifying all this attention).

For different reasons, Chapter X, *Chessboards and chessmen*, can easily be extended up to form a much greater section of the whole work. Here again, however, one should fix before writing how many pages to devote to the evolution in different times and countries!

I believe that Murray's history can hardly be substituted by a new history written by a single historian. Having more specialists at work will however need a strong coordination and strict limits to obey. My suggestion is to begin to search an agreement on the number of pages to write in the sections dealing with chess in ancient India, ancient China, Islamic countries, modern China, Japan, USA, Latin-America, France, and so on, and similarly for the many centuries involved.

I fear there will be finally a negative trend to simplify matters by writing not the history of chess but the history of the contributions offered by the historians of chess, many of them amateurs. For the same reason, I am not sure that compiling a bibliography in great detail of the historical research on chess is what is needed the most.

12.05.2001 [Auszug]