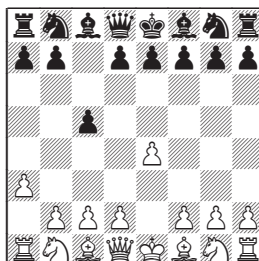
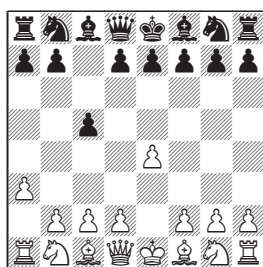


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**Introduction****1.e4 c5 2.a3!**

One might ask “Why is White wasting time and in such strange way at that? My answer to that question is: “This waste of time is in fact an illusion! White is preparing the double-edged pawn-strike b2-b4! It is far from being harmless for Black. White attacks the c5-pawn, the bishop on c1 is ready to spring into action and the queen’s rook will soon be activated too!”

This modest or maybe in fact not so modest move is capable of causing turmoil for your opponent psychics. He will surely be surprised and maybe even amazed. He might feel something like “How is it possible that I, being such a strong player, am presently treated like a beginner with such weak and even ridiculous moves?” He might lose his composure and get confused. He might like to have spent some more time studying that move at home. It is not so important what your adversary would think after all You are go-

ing to gain plenty of time on the clock before he makes up his mind what move to play! Meanwhile it would be quite probable that his choice might turn out to be wrong after all!

You are going to be convinced, after you have studied that book, how difficult it is to find a defensive scheme for Black that will provide for him complete safety.

The move 2.a3 – is the beginning of a new purposeful and quite logical system of development! I am not going to assert that the idea is superior to the main lines of the Sicilian Defence for White. No, not at all! I am only saying that the system must no doubt be assured of a place under the sun!

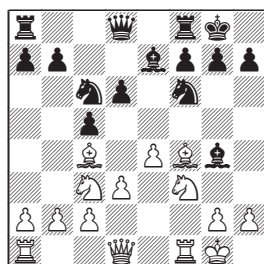
White’s tactical resources guarantee for him a quite non-standard aggressive play. I would not be surprised if the interest towards the 2.a3 system increases dramatically in the nearest future thanks to the appearance of this book.

**Chapter 1 1.e4 c5 2.a3 e5**

This is not Black's most popular move

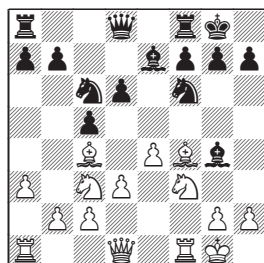
...

There is a line of the Sicilian Defence that has become incredibly popular lately: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♙c4. Have a look for example at the game **Anand – Van Wely**, Monaco 2003: 4...♙e7 5.d3 d6 6.0–0 ♗f6 7.♗g5 0–0 8.f4 ♙g4 9.♗f3 exf4 10.♙xf4



You might ask: “What is all this about?” Just be patient and you will understand everything quite soon.

The game Kroshek – Shasha, Internet 2004 followed with: 1.e4 c5 2.a3 e5 3.♗c3 ♘c6 4.♙c4 d6 5.d3 ♙e7 6.f4 exf4 7.♙xf4 ♗f6 8.♗f3 0–0 9.0–0 ♙g4

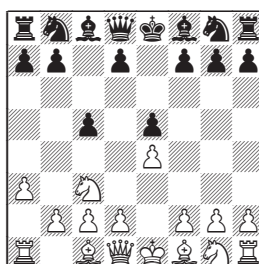


Can you notice the differences between the two positions? This is not a very difficult task, of course, but my opinion is that White has a couple of definite advantages in the position on the second diagram in comparison to the first i.e.:

- 1.It is White to play and not Black!
- 2.White's pawn is already on a3 (and not on a2). The plan with b7-b5 for Black that Van Wely used later can be countered easily by White with the retreat of the bishop to a2.

Therefore we now see a convincing proof of the usefulness of the early a2-a3 move. I can add jokingly “In case you wish to get a better position with White than Anand, you only need to play 2.a3!”

Having seen a couple of instructive examples of the games of some of the greatest players of our times we should now go back to our games and analyses.

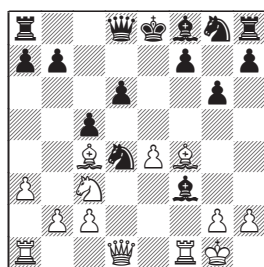


Let us check now what is going to happen if Black is not in a hurry to develop his king's knight

a) 3...♘c6. Later we will deal with the move b) 3...♘f6.

a) 3...♘c6 4.♙c4 d6

...



10.♙xf3!!

This exchange sacrifice is the fastest way to emphasize the defects of Black's position. 10... ♘xf3+ (10...♙h6 11.♘b5 ♙xf4 12.♙xf4 ♘xb5 13.♗d5 ♖c7 14.♙xf7 ♘e7 15.♙xb5+ ♔d8 16.♗e6 c4 17.♙d1 ♗b6+ 18.♔h1+-) 11. ♗xf3 ♙g7 12.e5+- . 12.♘b5+- wins for White as well. We will consider for now the move 5.f4 to have been analysed sufficiently, so we will try to cover the other possibilities for White too.

---

**Chapter 6** 1.e4 c5 2.a3 d5

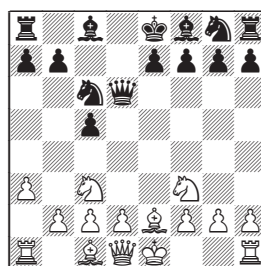
This counterstrike in the centre seems to be the natural reaction. It is quite probable that Black might play just like that! Here however, contrary to the 2.c3 system, White can attack the black queen immediately and gain some tempi in the process. He has excellent chances to get the advantage because of that.

3.exd5

This capture is necessary. Black should simply take back the pawn in order to avoid the worst. Nevertheless besides the natural move a) 3...♗xd5, we are going to have a look at the rare gambit line b) 3...♘f6.

a) 3...♗xd5

...



7.b4! cxb4 8.axb4 ♘xb4 9.♙a3!

Black's king will hardly be able to escape from the centre of the board after that move, which is definitely the best right now. White can effectively exploit the a3-f8 diagonal as well as the "b" file.

...

---

**Chapter 7** 1.e4 c5 2.a3 ♘f6

The position on the board resembles some other opening, does it not? We have now a situation quite similar to the Alekhine Defence (1.e4 ♘f6) after Black's last interesting and quite acceptable move. There is some essential difference, though... Black can fight for the centre more effectively with

the presence of his pawn on c5, but White has the possibility to play b2-b4, which is just unthinkable for the Alekhine Defence. The development of the game is going to be quite original and unpredictable, just like in the rest of the lines of the 1.e4 c5 2.a3 system.

### 3.e5

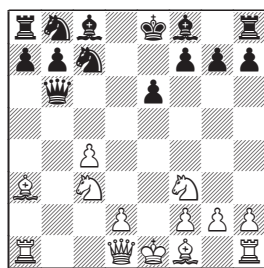
White should play like that, of course. After 3.♘c3 ♘c6, or 3...d6, or even 3...d5 it will only turn out that White has just presented Black with an extra tempo with his move two.

### 3...♘d5

After 3...♘d5 White has three moves that promise him good prospects: **a) 4.♘f3**, **b) 4.c4** and **c) 4.d4**.

### ... 5.b4!

...



**11.c5! ♙xc5** (11...♚a5 12.♘e5 ♙xc5 13.♘c4 ♙xf2+ 14.♔xf2 ♚f5+ 15.♔e1+-) **12.♘a4 ♙xf2+ 13.♔e2 ♚a5 14.♔xf2 b5 15.♘b2 ♚b6+** (Black has no chances to trap the bishop after: 15...b4 16.♘c4 ♚c5+ 17.d4+-) **16.d4 a5 17.♙c5±.**

## Chapter 10 1.e4 c5 2.a3 e6 3.b4!

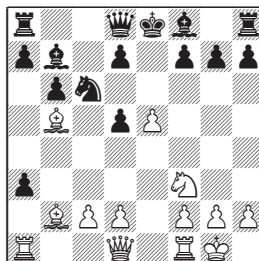
This pawn sacrifice is quite logical and promises White a good compensation. The relative weakness of the g7-square is one of the main motives of White's play. Some more tentative players would naturally decline the gambit and quite justifiably so.

Black's basic replies are: **3...b6** – and that move is dealt with in this chapter, while **3...cxb4** – is the subject of the next chapter.

### b) 4.♙b2 ♙b7 5.♘c3!

White has other possibilities to fight for the initiative but I think this is the most appropriate. White must be ready to sacrifice the b4-pawn although it is a bit risky for him.

### ... 10.0-0! bxa3



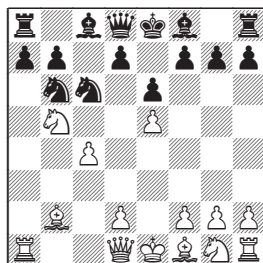
### 11.♙xa3!

This is the right decision! White's dark-squared bishop proves to be more valuable than a rook in many lines of the 2...e6 defensive system. In general we should consider this positional exchange sacrifice as typical for the 2...e6 variation.

**Chapter 11 1.e4 c5 2.a3 e6  
3.b4 cxb4 4. axb4**

Naturally Black's most logical reply is to accept the sacrificed pawn **b) 4...♙xb4**. We will also analyse in details the move **a) 4...d5 ...**

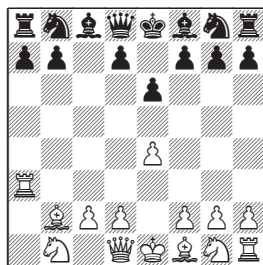
...



**10.♖a3!**

...

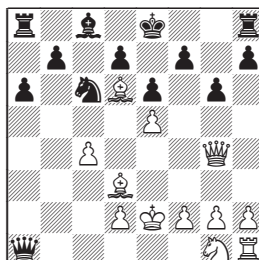
**b1c) 6.♖a3!!**



This move is the product of my latest analyses and it is the essential motive on which White bases his initiative.

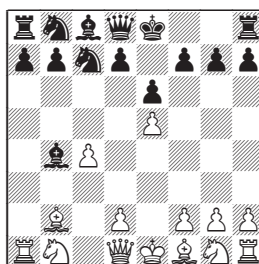
We will deal now with: **b1c1) 6...♙xa3?!**, **b1c2) 6...♘f6**, **b1c3) 6...d6** and **b1c4) 6...d5**.

...



**17.♘f3!! ... 23.♘d2+-**

**b2b) 7...♘c7**

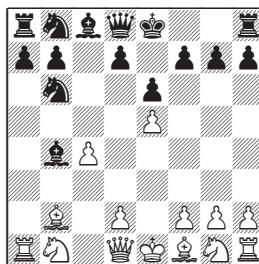


**8.♖a3!!**

The same idea will also be effective after the retreat of the knight to b6.

...

**b2c) 7...♘b6**



**8.♖a3!!**

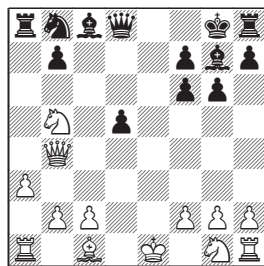
This is a fantastic resource ...

On May 31, 2004 the thematic rapid-tournament took place in Saint Petersburg. Some of the participants of the 57<sup>th</sup> Russian Championship decided to give it a test and you can see the results: 1.GM Shaposhnikov (2559) – 6 (out of 7), 2. GM Landa (2550) – 5.5, 3. IM V.Orlov (2427) – 4.5 ...

It is far too difficult for Black to find his way over the board in this new opening and I would like to illustrate that with some exemplary games from that tournament.

**IM Karasev (2412) –  
IM Blechzin (2511)**

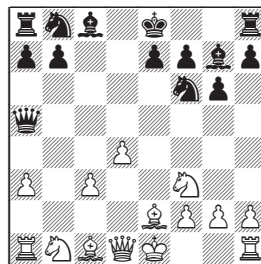
**1.e4 c5 2.a3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♟f6 5. ♘b5!? a6 (5... ♗g7 6.e5 ♟g8 7. ♟f3 ♟c6 8. ♗xc6 bxc6 9.0-0 f6 10. ♗f4± Karasev – Silivanov, S.Petersburg 2004) 6.e5 axb5 7.exf6 exf6 8. ♟c3 ♗g7 9. ♖e4+ ♟f8 10. ♟xb5 (10. ♗f4!?↑) 10...d5 11. ♖b4+ ♟g8**



and now after the simple 12. ♟e2, Black's position was not to be envied at all.

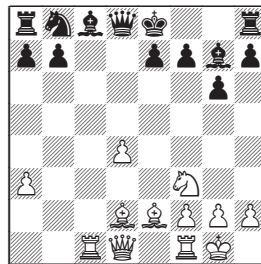
**Golovchenko (2356) –  
IM Soloviov (2414)**  
**1.e4 c5 2.a3 g6 3.b4 ♗g7 4.c3**

**d5 5.exd5 ♖xd5 6.bxc5 ♖xc5 7.d4 ♖a5 8. ♟f3 ♟f6 9. ♗e2**



White has lost plenty of time and it is high time that he was punished!

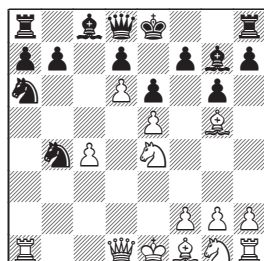
**9... ♟e4 10.0-0! ♟xc3 11. ♟xc3 ♖xc3 12. ♗d2 ♖c7 13. ♗c1 ♖d8**



This activity by Black was too premature and after **14. ♗a5! b6 15. ♟e5! ♗b7 16. ♗f3!** White had a great advantage.

**IM Soloviov (2414) –  
IM Karasev (2412)**

**1.e4 c5 2.a3 ♟f6 3.e5 ♟d5 4.c4 ♟c7 5.b4 cxb4 6.axb4 ♟c6 7.d4! ♟xb4 8.d5 e6?! 9.d6 ♟ca6 10. ♟c3 g6 11. ♟e4 ♗g7 12. ♗g5**



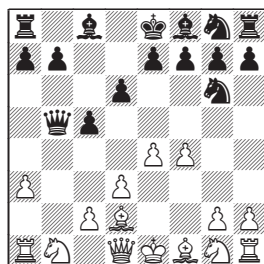
Black's position is just ridiculously pathetic...

The young GM Evgenij Shaposhnikov is an excellent tactician and blitz-player and he likes to confuse his opponents right in the opening. He could have remained without a piece in this game as early as move 7! You can see now what it means to be playing a completely unfamiliar position. By the way, nowadays hardly anyone knows how to counter 2.a3!

**IM Orlov (2427) –**

**GM Shaposhnikov (2559)**

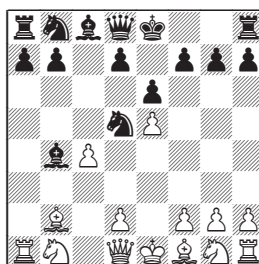
**1.e4 c5 2.a3 d6 3.b4 ♘c6 4.b5 ♗e5 5.f4 ♗g6 6.d3 ♕a5+ 7.♗d2 ♕xb5?**



White could have won outright with 8.f5! ♗e5 9. d4 ♗c4 10.a4 ♕a6 11.♗a3+-.

So, what do you think of this opening? Did you like it? You can find in GM Bezgodov's book a detailed analysis of ALL POSSIBLE reasonable defences for Black as well as recommendations how to play with White.

What to do with White, for example after 2...♗c6? Sacrifice a pawn! 3.b4! cb 4.ab ♗b4 and Black has so many problems that you wouldn't believe. What to do after 2...e6? Yes, of course, sacrifice a pawn! 3.b4 cb 4.ab ♗b4 5.♗b2 ♗f6 6.e5 ♗d5 7.c4



and after the retreat of the knight to b6 or c7, White follows with a fantastic move that even the most sophisticated chess-playing programs might overlook! After the other retreat 7...♗e7 White has a powerful attack almost for free.