THE TURK

The Turk was designed by Hungarian engineer and inventor Baron Wolfgang von Kempelen chief engineer of the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1769. It was billed as a "chess playing automaton" capable of beating even the strongest challengers. During a performance, the showman would open two cabinets to display a large empty space, and then a third cabinet to display an area of tightly packed machinery, presumably the "brains" of the contraption. The secret of this hoax was that a normal sized man could recline within the machine, and remain unseen by the audience by repositioning himself during the initial display of the device's interior.

Its first performance was for the Habsburg Court in Vienna in 1770. It was exhibited thereafter although somewhat intermittently for the next 84 years.

After von Kempelen's death in 1804, the Turk was purchased by Bavarian showman Johann Nepomuk Maelzel. In 1809 during the Wagram campaign Napoleon Bonaparte played against it in Vienna.

Further exhibitions followed but in 1837 both Maelzel and the Turks operator, Schlumberger (who was the tutor of Pierre Charles Fournier de Saint Amant) died from Yellow fever while returning to the USA from Havana. The Turk ended its days in the Chinese Museum in Philadelphia where it was destroyed by a fire in 1854.

Kept secret from 1770 to 1854! Why? It was shown to thousands of paying customers at a time around the world.

Sturmer − The Turk
Pawn and move odds (remove blacks f pawn), 1820
1.e4 e6 2.d4 c6 3.Be3 d5 4.e5 g6 5.Be2 Nh6 Is this Knight well placed? Why did black have to play it there?
6.Bxh6 Should White have played this move? What is a better move and why (Qd2 develops a piece) **6...Bxh6** Strong piece? Who made it strong white or black?
7.g3 White fears ...Qg5 but g3 is weak what is a better move? (Nf3) **7...Qb6** Develops with a threat.
8.b3 c5 9.dxc5 Qxc5 10.f4 Nc6 11.Nf3 0-0 12.c3 a5 13.Nd4 Bd7 14.Bb5? Rac8?? [14...Nxe5 15.Bxd7 Nxd7∓]
15.Qd3? Rf7? 16.Ne2? Nxe5! Finally! Black wins a pawn with discovered attack. This could have happened a few moves ago but as it turns out, now it is far more deadly.
17.fxe5 Bxb5 18.Qc2 Now it is mate in 3− best was Qd4 with a lost game−can you see how to mate?
18...Qf2+ 19.Kd1 Qf1+! 20.Rxf1 Rxf1#