

THE LIFE AND GAMES OF CARLOS TORRE



Second edition 2023 by Thinkers Publishing
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All sales or enquiries should be directed to Thinkers Publishing, 9850 Landegem, Belgium.

Email: info@thinkerspublishing.com

Website: www.thinkerspublishing.com

Managing Editor: Daniël Vanheirzeele

Typesetting: Primož Žerdin, Primož Riegler

Cover Design: Mieke Mertens

Graphic Artist: Philippe Tonnard

Production: BESTinGraphics

ISBN 9789464201727

D/2023/13732/5

THE LIFE AND GAMES OF CARLOS TORRE

BY

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Thinkers Publishing 2023



Key to symbols

!	a good move	±	White has a serious advantage
?	a weak move	∓	Black has a serious advantage
!!	an excellent move	+−	White has a decisive advantage
??	a blunder	−+	Black has a decisive advantage
!?	an interesting move	→	with an attack
?!	a dubious move	↑	with initiative
□	only move	↔	with counterplay
=	equality	Δ	with the idea of
∞	unclear position	▷	better is
≡	with compensation for the sacrificed material	N	novelty
±	White stands slightly better	+	check
∓	Black stands slightly better	#	mate

Frequently Used Abbreviations

ACB: *American Chess Bulletin*

CA: chess association

CB: ChessBase (Mega Database 2017)

CC: chess club

CF: chess federation

Ch: Championship

CL: Chess Life magazine

CM: Candidate Master (a/k/a Expert)

FIDE: Fédération Internationale des Échecs, i.e. the International Chess Federation

GM: Grandmaster

IM: International Master

TN: theoretical novelty, i.e. a new move in the opening

WCh: World Championship

WSZ: Wiener Schachzeitung (Vienna Chess Magazine)

Table of Contents

Preface to the First Edition (2000)	11
Preface to this Second Edition	13
Chapter I	
Biographical Portrait of Carlos Torre	17
Chapter II	
The Games Section	37
Analytical Methodology and Technical Details	37
Louisiana State Championship, 1923	
Labatt-Torre	39
Manhattan Chess Club Championship, 1924	
Torre-Beihoff.....	45
Tenner-Torre	48
Torre-Frink.....	53
Samuels-Torre	59
Torre-Schapiro.....	63
Thematic Tournaments, Manhattan Chess Club, 1924	
Torre-Marshall	66
Marshall-Torre	71
Torre-Bigelow	75
Torre-Smirka.....	78
Exhibition Game, New York, 1924	
Torre-Schapiro.....	82
New York State Championship, Rochester 1924	
Lear-Torre	86
Torre-Adams.....	92
New York State Championship playoff, New York, 1924	
Torre-Jennings	95
Jennings-Torre	101
Torre-Jennings	105

Exhibition Game, New York, 1924

Janowski-Torre.....	106
---------------------	-----

Western Chess Association Championship, Detroit 1924

Torre-Banks.....	110
Scrivener-Torre	115
Torre-Reshevsky	120
Torre-Winter.....	125
Torre-Whitaker	129
Torre-Stolzenberg.....	137
Spero-Torre	142
Ruth-Torre	147
Factor-Torre	152
Erdeky-Torre.....	155

Match with Abraham Kupchik, New York, 1925

Torre-Kupchik	156
Kupchik-Torre	161
Kupchik-Torre	165
Torre-Kupchik	169

Metropolitan Chess League, New York, 1925

Kupchik-Torre	173
---------------------	-----

Games from the International Tournament at Baden-Baden..... 178

Torre-Alekhine	179
te Kolsté-Torre.....	182
Torre-Réti.....	185
Treybal-Torre	192
Torre-Thomas.....	195
Sämisch-Torre	199
Torre-Spielmann.....	201
Rabinovich-Torre.....	207
Torre-Mieses	210
Carls-Torre.....	216
Marshall-Torre	217
Torre-Bogoljubow	218
Rubinstein-Torre	219
Torre-Tartakower	220
Grünfeld-Torre	226
Torre-Colle.....	229

Torre-Yates.....	233
Nimzovich-Torre.....	238
Games from the International Tournament at Marienbad	247
Torre-Opocensky.....	247
Nimzovich-Torre.....	255
Torre-Marshall.....	258
Torre-Grünfeld.....	265
Thomas-Torre.....	273
Torre-Yates.....	275
Rubinstein-Torre.....	280
Torre-Sämisch.....	284
Torre-Tartakower.....	288
Réti-Torre.....	290
Haida-Torre.....	294
Torre-Przepiórka.....	298
Games after Torre's Return from Europe	
Torre & Norwood - Meyer & Schroeder.....	303
Howell-Torre.....	305
Games from the International Tournament at Moscow 1925.....	307
Torre-Dus-Chotimirsky.....	310
Marshall-Torre.....	317
Torre-Levenfish.....	322
Torre-Spielmann.....	329
Zubarev-Torre.....	332
Torre-Sämisch.....	337
Bogoljubow-Torre.....	342
Torre-Gotthilf.....	347
Capablanca-Torre.....	350
Torre-Lasker.....	356
Romanovsky-Torre.....	362
Yates-Torre.....	363
Rabinovich-Torre.....	365
Bohatirchuk-Torre.....	369
Torre-Verlinsky.....	371
Leningrad Quadrangular Tournament	377
Model-Torre.....	377
Rokhlin-Torre.....	380

Carlos Torre's Return to Mexico	384
Simultaneous and Exhibition Games, April-May 1926	
Torre-Bringas.....	385
Torre-Peschard.....	387
Arancegui-Torre	388
Torre-Mont.....	391
The Chess Championship of Mexico	393
Torre-Soto Larrea.....	396
Torre-Araiza.....	398
Torre-Freyria	402
Soto Larrea-Torre.....	405
Araiza-Torre.....	408
Freyria-Torre	411
Other Games in Mexico, July-August 1926	
Torre-Zesati.....	413
Torre-Solís	417
B. Ortiz and A. Nava – Torre.....	420
Torre-Ponce.....	422
Torre-Subikursky.....	424
Allies-Torre.....	425
Carlos Torre Returns to the United States.....	428
Western Chess Association Masters Tournament, Chicago 1926	
Jaffe-Torre.....	429
Torre-Kashdan	436
Factor-Torre	440
Torre-Banks.....	443
Torre-Maróczy.....	452
Showalter-Torre	458
Torre-Marshall	461
Isaacs-Torre	463
Torre-Lasker	474
Odds and Ends.....	484
E.Z. Adams-Torre.....	484
Torre-Adams.....	486
Torre-Fine.....	487
H. Steiner-Torre.....	488

Chapter III

Interviews with Carlos Torre Repetto	491
Anahuac Interview, 1927	491
Interview by Gabriel Velasco, 1977	494

Chapter IV

64 Variaciones Sobre un Tema de Torre	499
Allies (six in consultation) - Torre.....	501
Torre, Cervera, & Solís - Ponce, Rubio, & Solís.....	502
Torre-Allies (4-man team).....	503
Woo-Torre.....	504

Chapter V

Remembrances of Carlos Torre	507
Don Carlos Torre Repetto: A Chess Player Until Death.....	507
Carlos Torre Refused to Return to the United States	510
A Street to Be Named for Carlos Torre Repetto	511
Torre, a Prophet in His Own Land	512

Chapter VI

A Clash of Opposites	515
-----------------------------------	------------

Chapter VII

The Development of Chess Ability	525
Study One	
Labatt-Torre	528
Study Two	
Torre-Jennings	529
Study Three	
Torre-Winter.....	531
Study Four	
Kupchik-Torre	533
Study Five	
Réti-Torre.....	535

Study Six	
Torre-Rokhlin	537
Study Seven	
Torre-Gotthilf	538
Study Eight	
Model-Torre	539
Summary	541

Chapter VIII

Others' Games from the 1926 Mexican Championship	543
Araiza-Freyria	543
Freyria-Soto Larrea.....	545
Araiza-Soto Larrea.....	546
Freyria-Araiza	550
Soto Larrea-Freyria.....	554
Soto Larrea-Araiza.....	557

Chapter IX

The Documentary Film Torre x Torre.....	561
--	------------

Chapter X

A Final Assessment of Torre as a Chess Player	569
--	------------

Index of Players.....	573
Index of Openings by Name	575
Index of Openings by ECO code	576
General Index	577
Bibliography	587

Preface to the First Edition (2000)

In 1993, *Vida y Partidas de Carlos Torre* appeared, published by Incaro. The current work began as a straightforward translation of that work, but the author, working closely with the translator Taylor Kingston, expanded the original manuscript and the result is this English edition. This book is offered to chessplayers and enthusiasts of all Spanish-speaking countries as an homage to one of the greatest Latin American chess players of all time: grandmaster Carlos Torre Repetto, originally from Yucatán, Mexico. In recognition of Torre's formidable accomplishments and triumphs during the years 1924-1926, the Fédération Internationale Des Echecs (FIDE, the International Chess Federation) in 1977 bestowed on Torre the title of International Grandmaster.

The author visited Torre in the town of his birth, Mérida, where he passed away a year later. Though Torre knew the intent of this book, it is sad that he did not live to see it realized. Those who knew Carlos Torre recall him as an unaffected person of noble sentiments. His health was always fragile and he suffered constantly from insomnia. In his book *The Psychology of the Chess Player*, Reuben Fine described some of Torre's eccentricities, as well as the nervous breakdown he suffered in October 1926, which forced him to retire permanently from chess at the age of 21. Fine related that Torre could never sleep more than two hours a day and described some of his strange habits, such as eating 12 pineapple ice cream sundaes in a day and other such extravagances.

In this book we will make no attempt to psychoanalyze Torre, nor will we indulge in theorizing about his untimely and unexpected retirement from chess, in which respect he was similar to some other grandmasters. Our major concern will be to present Torre's great games, his beautiful combinations and his strategic and tactical concepts. The author was able to compile about 170 games of the Yucatan grandmaster, which were narrowed to a selection of 100 of the best, though, in fact, the final total turned out to be 105. We have included four losses and a number of draws, but the great majority of games offered were, logically, won by Torre. Naturally, many trips, letters, and inquiries were necessary to assemble the games.

The author would like to express his gratitude to all those who assisted in the collection of the games, the biographical data, and the tournament tables, including Dale Brandreth, the late Alice N. Loranth, Julieta viuda de Gilberto Repetto Milán, Alejandro Báez and Taylor Kingston. To all these people, my sincere thanks.

Gabriel Velasco León, Guanajuato, Mexico, March 2000

Preface to this Second Edition

Serving as the translator for Gabriel Velasco's *Vida y Partidas de Carlos Torre* was my first big job in chess book writing and editing, and one of my most enjoyable. Besides the interesting work of turning Spanish into English, it introduced me to Carlos Torre as a chess player and as a person.

It has been twenty-three years since the first edition of this book went to press. It was well received critically, and I felt proud of what Dr. Velasco and I had worked hard to produce. Still, over the years, as my skill and experience with chess databases and analytical software increased, I realized it could have been much better. Better for one in its technical aspects, especially game annotations and notation. Also as I continued research into chess history (a lifelong interest), new things related to Torre would turn up, things that would have made worthwhile additions to the book. These kept accumulating in my files.

But they just stayed there until I saw the film *Torre x Torre*, a documentary by Mexican film-makers, released in 2019. It inspired me to think seriously about a new edition. Dr. Velasco was unable to contribute further, and even went so far as to suggest that the new edition should be credited to me as sole author, but there is still enough of his original work here that I could not accept that.

Here is what has been added to this edition:

- ⌘ More accurate and more extensive annotations, computer-assisted. Every game has been examined under Stockfish 14, probably the best analytical engine available for home computers at this time. For the first edition we had only Fritz 4 and 5, which compare to Stockfish like a Model T Ford to a Ferrari, and many games were given no computer examination at all. Thus owners of the first edition will find most annotations here substantially different (and substantially better). However, many general assessments and heuristic notes proved valid and have been retained.
- ⌘ Torre's own annotations to several games have been unearthed and added. These come from several sources: the *American Chess Bulletin*, his book of the 1926 Mexican Championship tournament, and his instructional booklet *Development of Chess Ability*.

- ☒ Several games have been added. Some, frankly, are Torre losses, which are given in the interest of presenting a more complete, balanced picture of his play. The first edition, to some extent, looked at Torre through rose-colored glasses; here the aim is only for untinted clarity. Also added are the six games between players other than Torre that he annotated for the Mexican Championship tournament book (see Chapter VIII).
- ☒ There are many more diagrams and photographs than in the first edition. Also more thumbnail bios of Torre's opponents.
- ☒ More ancillary material about Torre's life and career: pictures, anecdotes, interesting facts, opinions, bits of trivia etc., drawn from the *American Chess Bulletin*, the *Wiener Schachzeitung*, the film *Torre x Torre*, and other sources.
- ☒ A 1927 interview with Torre, published in the Yucatán magazine *Anahuac*, in Chapter III.
- ☒ Chapter IV, excerpts from the book *64 Variaciones Sobre un Tema de Torre* by his friend Germán de la Cruz.
- ☒ Chapter V, "Remembrances of Carlos Torre," which consists of columns and articles from newspapers in his home town of Mérida.
- ☒ Chapter VI, "A Clash of Opposites," an article originally published in the British magazine *Kingpin*, comparing and contrasting Torre with the notorious Norman Tweed Whitaker, whom he played at Detroit 1924.
- ☒ Chapter VII, the full text of Torre's 1926 instructional booklet *Development of Chess Ability*, which has become a very rare collector's item.
- ☒ Chapter IX, a review of *Torre x Torre*, a film by turns fascinating, informative and misleading.
- ☒ A more extensive, more fully informed overall assessment of Torre as a chess player in Chapter X.

I have preserved Dr. Velasco's biographical portrait of Torre much as it was, though with several additions and some minor corrections. Also some of our original game annotations (at least those not overturned by Stockfish!). And the vast majority of the games are the same ones he chose for the first edition. Some are readily available on ChessBase, but others, especially the non-tournament games from Torre's 1926 sojourn in Mexico, are known today only because of his diligent research.

Besides Dr. Velasco, I would like to thank Juan Obregón, co-director of *Torre x Torre*, for sending me various Mexican newspaper articles about Torre, and along with his fellow director Roberto Garza, for providing information about their

film; Edward Winter for two letters about Torre written by E.Z. Adams; Jeremy Spinrad for news reports of Torre's 1926 breakdown; and also Guy van Habberney of Belgium, for providing scans of Torre's book on the 1926 Mexican Championship. Also my junior high school Spanish teacher, the late Felipe Chacón, for all he taught me about that beautiful language so that I could translate those texts. And finally my beloved wife Emily, who is about the most supportive helpmate a chess writer could want, even though she doesn't know the game.

Taylor Kingston, Pas Robles, California, November 2022

Chapter I

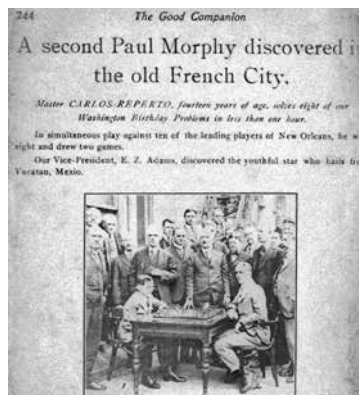
Biographical Portrait of Carlos Torre

Little is known of Carlos Torre's childhood and early adolescence, the years which gave rise to his love for chess. He was born the 29th of November, 1904, in Mérida, Yucatán province, Mexico. Carlos was the sixth of seven siblings (four boys and three girls). It is known that his father, Egidio Torre, taught him to play chess at an early age. According to Carlos, he learned the moves of the pieces at age six, by observing the games between his father and his older brother, Raúl. In 1916, when Carlos was not yet 12, the Torre family moved to the United States, settling in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, birthplace of the legendary Paul Morphy. The reason for choosing this particular city was perhaps merely geographical, as the distance between Mérida and New Orleans is relatively short, even less than that separating Mérida from Mexico City. Of course, in those days it was relatively easy for a Mexican to enter the United States and settle there for short, long or indefinite periods. The problem of undocumented or illegal aliens did not then exist.

Within a few months of his arrival in New Orleans, Carlos quickly learned to read and write English, and he began to frequent that city's chess circles. His first chess books were those of James Mason (*The Art of Chess* and *The Principles of Chess*). In one of those appears a great number of combinational exercises and brilliant games with colorful tactical themes, which undoubtedly influenced the style Torre would eventually acquire. At age 13 his chess talent became apparent to Edwin Z. Adams (1885-1944), a chess organizer well-known in the United States. At that time, Adams served as vice-president of the New Orleans Chess, Checkers and Whist Club and he gladly took on the role of guide and mentor to the talented youth.

It was natural that under such conditions young Torre made very swift progress. At age 14 he was already considered the second best chessplayer in New Orleans, after the veteran Leon Labatt. That year, the magazine *The Good Companion* dedicated an entire page to the Mexican prodigy, along with a photograph

showing the boy Carlos and Edwin Adams at the board, surrounded by the leading players and personalities of the New Orleans chess world. The title ran “A second Paul Morphy discovered in the old French City” (as New Orleans is sometimes called). The article further said “Master Carlos Repetto [*sic*]¹, 14 years of age, solved eight of the most difficult chess problems from the *Washington Birthday Problems* in less than an hour,” and added “In a simultaneous exhibition against 10 of the best chessplayers in New Orleans, he won eight games and drew two. Our vice-president, E.Z. Adams, discovered the young star, who comes from Yucatán, Mexico.”



In a 1920 letter to Hermann Helms, publisher of the magazine *American Chess Bulletin*, Adams wrote about Torre as follows:

I have just received a visit from C. Torre, R., and I have obtained the following information from him. He was born in Merida, Yuc. Mex. 29 November 1904 and came with his parents to this country in 1916. He has been playing chess with his father and brothers for about six years and about two years with all comers. He learned the game from his father and brothers and became so efficient at it that he soon left them far behind. He has played the following with the strongest players to a finish in N.O. but I am sorry to say there is [*sic*] no records kept of the games.

James McDonnell	2 games, he won 1 and lost 1
Prof. Dixon	8 games, he won 5 and lost 3
Chas. Rosen	4 games, he won 2 and lost 1, draw 1
Percy Moise	5 games, he won 4 and lost 1

His simultaneous exhibition at the chess club, he won eight and drew two games. In a lightning game with Mr E. Laker [*sic*; apparently Edward Lasker] of Chicago played in April 1920 the game was given up as a draw.

1 Besides misspelling “Repetto,” the article makes a mistake often seen in English-language publications, of taking the matronymic for the surname. With Spanish names, the mother’s surname, in this case Repetto, is often appended after the father’s surname. This will be seen with many names in this book, e.g. Agustín Garza Galindo and Raúl Ocampo Vargas. English speakers often mistakenly assume the paternal surname is just a middle name, as in, say, Edgar Allan Poe or Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and take the matronymic for the surname.

The little fellow is very modest and unassuming and his success in chess has not given him the swell head. He has a very extensive knowledge of the openings also the end games. He is also a very good problem solver. If he had some professionals to play with, I think in a short time he would be very strong.

Edwin Ziegler Adams was described as “The Sponsor of Carlos Torre” in an article on pages 110-111 of the May-June 1927 *American Chess Bulletin*:

On the second page of Carlos Torre’s *Development of Chess Ability*, reserved for the dedication, appears the name of Edwin Z. Adams of New Orleans quite properly heading the list. We say quite properly because it was due to this Southern gentleman more than to anyone else that the little Mexican, now among the grand-masters of the game, started out upon the great adventure that took him first to New York and then overseas to his European successes.

Further on in the article, Adams looked back on his association with young Carlos:

“My chess career,” Mr Adams modestly wrote us many moons ago, “consists principally of my interest in Carlos. I commenced to study the game about ten years ago. I had a hard time of it, as I had to batter my way along and get whatever pointers I could pick up by watching the others play, and finally I learned the code and played over the games in the books. It was over two months before I was able to win a game from the poorest player I could find at the club (and the only one who would play with me), and it was only by ‘bucking the line’ and being ‘thrown for many losses’ and taking my medicine like a man that I finally learned to play a little.

“About eight years ago I met Carlos. I think he was then about 14 years old. He was a small, dark-skinned, thin little fellow, very polite, quiet and serious for a boy of his age. He had learned to play chess from his father and brothers and soon was able to make short work of them over the chessboard. Dr Ainsley (now deceased) was their family physician, a member of the chess club and also a very good player, well above the average. When visiting the family one day they mentioned to him that they had a small member who could play a good game and asked him to play with the little chap and see if he really could play well. I think Carlos won two out of the three games to the surprise of all. Dr Ainsley then suggested that he play Mr Percy Moise, a very strong player. Carlos showed his strength with him also. Next, I think, he played with Mr C. Rosen, also one of the best here, with the same results.

“Things, however, drifted along until I received a letter from his older brother telling of Carlos’ chess ability, when I arranged to have him come to

the club and show what he could do. None of the old dignitaries with chess reputations wanted to play with the child, so a Dr Sternberg, a visitor, volunteered to play him. The latter had been toppling us all over, and that, I figured, would be a real test. I will never forget that day. As one of the gentlemen remarked, 'You felt more like petting the little fellow than trying to beat him a game of chess'. Carlos electrified the crowd, and Dr Sternberg enjoyed his rout also.

"Next, Carlos gave a peripatetic exhibition, playing six games at once, winning four and drawing two. The chess club was so impressed with his play that they gave him *carte blanche*, and from that time on he visited the rooms very often, until he could not get anyone to play with him, for they were all tired of being beaten. So he had nothing to do but come to my home occasionally, when we would play a few games and go over the openings together. His next feat was to win the city championship in 1923, which he did with ease.

"During all these years he worked and attended night school, so he was driven very hard. After a very severe case of pneumonia he was out of a position, and I suggested that he go to New York, with an introduction to the *American Chess Bulletin*. He also took an interest in problems and endgames and, of course, was excellent in these branches. He won several prizes in *Good Companion* tourneys. This is about all I can give you concerning Carlos. To you, better than to anyone else, is known the rest!."

After winning the city championship of New Orleans, Torre in 1923 won by a wide margin the Louisiana state championship, a double round-robin 8-man tournament. For unknown reasons, this tournament's games were not published by any New Orleans newspaper. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* had had an excellent chess column, but this ceased in 1919. Only one game from the event is known to have survived (Game 1 of this collection, Labatt-Torre), thanks to Torre himself, who included it in his booklet *Development of Chess Ability*. The oldest known game of Torre's dates from 1920, when he was 15 years old, that being the famous loss to Adams in a game featuring an amazing combination with repeated Queen sacrifice offers and threats of back-rank mate. However, there is considerable doubt that such a game was actually played. The score is given as Game 107 of this collection, together with a discussion of its historical validity.

1 The text of this and the previous letter were obtained from Edward Winter's article "Adams v Torre – A Sham?" at <https://www.chesshistory.com/winter/extra/adamstorre.html>. They appear here with his permission.

Here it is pertinent to note a peculiar trait of Torre's character, and of his attitude toward chess, one which partly explains the enigma of his unexpected and premature retirement from competition. This trait was identified by the master Alejandro Báez, who lived with Torre for years and was able to observe many details of his personality. Ironic though it might seem, Torre never cared for the idea of struggle and competition inherent in chess. For Torre there never was "the thrill of victory, the agony of defeat," because for him chess was foremost, perhaps solely, an art form. Torre's pleasure in a game came from its artistic, aesthetic value, independent of whether he had won or lost. In his later years, well after retiring from international competition, he was in the habit of playing offhand games with friends, obtaining a won position, and then surprising his opponent with a draw offer. When Torre won a beautiful game he would still sometimes feel regret, even actual suffering, at having inflicted a defeat on his opponent. Many of the great chess champions, such as Alekhine, Fischer, Tal, Karpov, Kasparov *et al*, have been characterized at the board by a confrontational indomitability, the aggressive attitude of a gladiator. Carlos Torre had a comparable degree of chess talent, but was lacking this competitive malice, often bordering on cruelty, seen in some of the greatest chessplayers. It was not an exaggeration when Boris Spassky said of Anatoly Karpov that he radiated an aura of enmity comparable to a crocodile. No such thing was ever said of Carlos Torre. In contrast to Alekhine, who was known occasionally to falsify game scores and notes to make himself appear stronger, in the 1920 Adams game incident Torre may have changed a game score for the sake of beauty, even if it meant portraying himself as the loser.

In June of 1924, Torre traveled to New York in search of stronger opposition. He soon joined the Marshall Chess Club and took part in its Friday afternoon blitz tournaments. In his first six such tournaments Torre took first place in five (once tied with Smirka, then New York state champion) and second place in the other, behind Tholfsen, then champion of the Marshall Club. The *ACB*, in its July-August 1924 issue, made mention of Torre's strong play and the ease with which he defeated the Marshall's most experienced veterans. Page 156 read:

Carlos Torre, the young Mexican expert who for several years has made his home in New Orleans, where he outranked all others interested in chess, recently came to New York and affiliated himself with the Marshall Chess Club. Like Capablanca, he has shown himself to be almost invincible in rapid transit play¹, although primarily he prefers slow, studious play.

¹ A form of speed chess then popular, played at ten seconds per move.

At that time, the best players then living in New York City were the Cuban José Raúl Capablanca, champion of the world, and the eponymous Frank J. Marshall, for 20 years one of the ten best in the world, but neither took part in club championships. After them, the best players were considered to be Abraham Kupchik and Morris Schapiro, both members of the Manhattan Chess Club. Naturally, after Torre's easy victories over the Marshall's best, curiosity grew about how he would measure up against the Manhattan's strongest players. In July 1924 the club directors organized a closed championship to which Torre was invited. This proved a profitable experience for the young Mexican master; despite losing to Kupchik and Shapiro, he took a noteworthy third place.

1924 Manhattan Chess Club Championship:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	total
1	Kupchik	*	o	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	o	7
2	Shapiro	1	*	1	½	1	1	1	o	1	o	6½
3-4	Torre	o	o	*	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	6
3-4	Frink	o	½	½	*	½	½	1	1	1	1	6
5-7	Beihoff	o	o	o	½	*	1	1	o	o	1	4
5-7	Katz	o	o	½	½	1	*	1	o	o	1	4
5-7	Tenner	o	o	o	1	o	o	*	1	1	1	4
8	Samuels	o	1	o	o	o	1	o	*	½	1	3½
9	Ross	o	o	o	o	½	1	o	½	*	1	3
10	Norwood	1	1	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	*	2

For this book we have selected five of Torre's games from this tournament: wins against Beihoff, Tenner, Frink, and Samuels, and his loss to Schapiro in an interesting pawn ending. Not long after the Manhattan event Torre was to demonstrate his superiority over Kupchik and Shapiro, defeating them brilliantly in exhibition games. From those successes came a growing desire to face Marshall and Capablanca.

In August of 1924, Alrick H. Mann, president of the Marshall Chess Club, announced an attractive prize fund for seven of New York's best chess players, including Torre, Marshall, and the young Anthony Santasiere, to compete in two special invitational double round-robin tournaments. These were thematic events: in the first the Vienna Gambit (1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.f4) was obligatory, and in the second the romantic Ponziani Gambit (1.e4 e5 2.♙c4 ♘f6 3.d4, also known as the Urusov). The purse for the second tournament was donated by Mr. Edwin Dimock, who also chose the thematic opening. Five of the seven

competitors were the same in both events; in the second Norwood and Gustafsson took the place of Santasiere and Fosberg. These two thematic tourneys demonstrated convincingly that Marshall and Torre were in a class by themselves among New York masters (with the exception of Capablanca). In the first they drew their two games against each other, and in the second they won one apiece, oddly each with the black pieces. In both tournaments they left the rest of the field well behind. For this book, we have selected four games from these events.

In August the New York State Championship took place at the Rochester Chess Club. The nine contestants played a round robin. Neither Marshall nor Kupchik took part, but there was still strong competition. The *American Chess Bulletin* reported as follows:

NEW YORK STATE MEETING AT ROCHESTER

With nine competitors in the Championship Tournament and six in Class A of the General Tournament, the New York State Chess Association held a very successful meeting at the rooms of the Rochester Chess Club from August 18 to 22. The championship competition was noteworthy for the participation of Carlos Torre of New Orleans, who made his debut in the North on that occasion. The circumstances that he and Harold E. Jennings of Rochester, State champion in 1916, tied for first place without losing a game, in the face of the fact that an expert of high repute like Roy T. Black of Syracuse was competing, speaks volumes for the ability of these two young men who bid fair to blossom out into the master class. Both made scores of 7-1, leaving the question of the championship undecided. Later, they agreed to meet at the Marshall Chess Club in New York, on September 13 and 14, to play off the tie.

New York State Championship, Rochester 1924:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total
1-2	Torre	*	½	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
1-2	Jennings	½	*	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
3	Black	½	½	*	0	1	1	1	1	1	6
4	Adams	0	0	1	*	0	1	1	1	1	5
5	Lear	0	0	0	1	*	½	1	1	1	4½
6	Searle	0	0	0	0	½	*	1	1	0	2½
7-8	Gluckemus	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	½	1	1½
7-8	Weiss	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	*	1	1½
9	Palmer	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	*	1

The playoff match was indeed held as reported. Torre won by a score of 3-1, making him Champion of the State of New York.

Playoff Match, September 13-19, 1924

	1	2	3	4	total
Torre	0	1	1	1	3
Jennings	1	0	0	0	1

From these we have chosen two games from the tournament (against Lear and E.B. Adams, not the same man as E.Z. Adams of New Orleans), and the last three games of the Jennings match.

In those days, though Marshall would not put his US Champion title at stake except in match play, a tournament sponsored by the Western Chess Association functioned as a *de facto* United States tournament championship, the Western Championship. An invitational event limited to the strongest masters and state champions, in 1924 it took place in Detroit, Michigan, with contestants coming from as far south as Memphis, Tennessee, and as far west as Los Angeles, California. The program called for a tough two-games-per-day schedule, with a time limit of 20 moves per hour.

Carlos Torre attended as the representative of New York, and instead of Jennings another even younger master on the rise was invited: Samuel Reshevsky, then but 12 years old. Though in 1924 Reshevsky had not reached anywhere near the strength and maturity that made him one of the world's best from the mid-1930s to the late 1960s, he still managed to take an honorable 5th place.

The Western Championship resulted in a convincing triumph for Torre, who took clear first 2½ points ahead of the field. With an undefeated 12 wins and four draws in 16 games, Torre showed that, apart from Marshall and Capablanca, no other master then living in the USA could compare with him. The *ACB* wrote:

As was the case in the ever-memorable tournament at New York in 1857, which has gone down in history as the First American Chess Congress, a youth came out of the South, from New Orleans to surprise an unexpectant chess world. Carlos Torre, who had been in New York only three months and was sent to the State meeting at Rochester by the Marshall Chess Club, which he joined, set the pace from the start.

Displaying throughout the sort of invincibility which marked the career of Paul Morphy, he went straight through without losing a game and finished well in the lead as winner of the first prize and the Western championship. He accomplished it with the total score of 14-2, representing 12 wins and 4

drawn games. This astonishing performance unquestionably places the young Mexican in the first ranks of American experts, and, doubtless, he will be heard from again in the not far distant future.

Western Chess Association Championship, Detroit 1924:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
1	Torre	*	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	1	14
2-4	Factor	0	*	1	½	1	½	0	1	0	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	11½
2-4	Hahlbohm	½	0	*	0	0	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11½
2-4	Whitaker	0	½	1	*	1	½	1	1	1	0	½	1	0	1	1	1	1	11½
5	Reshevsky	0	0	1	0	*	1	½	0	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
6	Banks	0	½	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	10½
7	Ruth	½	1	0	0	½	½	*	0	1	½	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
8	Mlotkowski	0	0	½	0	1	½	1	*	½	½	½	1	0	½	1	1	1	9
9-10	Stolzenberg	0	1	0	0	0	½	0	½	*	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	8
9-10	Scrivener	0	0	0	1	0	0	½	½	0	*	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	8
11	Spero	0	½	0	½	½	0	1	½	0	0	*	½	0	½	1	1	1	7
12	Palmer	½	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	0	½	*	0	1	1	1	1	6½
13	Winter	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	*	0	0	0	1	5
14	Margolis	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	0	1	*	1	0	1	4½
15-16	Erdeky	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	*	1	1	4
15-16	Jenkins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	*	1	4
17	Goerlich*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	0

* Goerlich withdrew after losing his first five games. His remaining games were scored as wins for his opponents.

The September-October 1924 issue of the *American Chess Bulletin* was devoted almost completely to articles on Torre, his playing style and triumphs. Hermann Helms and C.S. Howell even compared him to Capablanca, and filled page after page with praise for the young Mexican master. Here is what Howell had to say:

A NEW CHAMPION

When the publisher of the *American Chess Bulletin* asked me to annotate "briefly" several games by Carlos Torre in Rochester and Detroit, it is possible he selected me because Torre is a Mexican and Mr. Helms knows that I have spent years in Latin-American countries and have a very keen realization that much that is good in the Western Hemisphere lies south of the Rio Grande and that the term American is rightly used as far away as Puntas Arenas.

Americans have every reason to be proud of Carlos Torre as they already had reason to be proud of Capablanca. Both of these chessists are American and products of Western Hemisphere progress. They and the Latin Americans who will surely come after them in chess affairs are very welcome, too, especially now when there are no signs whatever of young North Americans coming very far forward in the royal game.

I have played over Torre's games very carefully and with great interest. They show very clearly that he is developing a real chess talent. It is very evident that he has imagination and skill and that he possesses self-confidence and courage of conviction. He lacks technique and for the sake of his chess future, I hope that he will not hasten too much in cultivating it. Acquired naturally and as a result of the experience of play, technique is a valuable asset but the attempt to acquire it before one's ability to combine has been fully developed has stopped permanently the improvement of a good man young players.

At the end of the games annotated by Howell, he wrote "Altogether a study of the Mexican's games leaves one with the impression that he may go far. There is a directness and energy about his play that I have not seen in the games of other young American players for some years and that is very refreshing as a change from the many attempts I have seen the part of other young players to imitate (usually without understanding) the so-called hyper-modern style of play. Evidently Torre has no fetishes and no dogmatic notions. It is to be hoped that he will let the 'Books' alone for a while and go on developing his natural style. The technique will come when he needs it."

Due to the high caliber of Torre's play in the Western Championship, we have chosen ten of his games from that event, games which show the vigorous and artistic style of the young Yucatecan, his impressive imagination and characteristic abundance of ideas. At only 19 years of age, quite young for a chess master of that time, he had reached an extraordinary level of ability and maturity.

In mid-December, an exhibition game between Carlos Torre and Morris Schapiro came about under unusual circumstances. On December 15th it was announced at the Manhattan Chess Club that Torre would give a simultaneous exhibition against all comers. It was expected that there would be 30 or 40 opponents, but when only 10 turned up, the club directors decided to change from a simul to an exhibition game between Torre and Schapiro, who had finished second, ½-point ahead of Torre, in the club championship some months earlier. In retrospect it was a providential decision, as it resulted in an excellent and exciting game in which Torre delighted the spectators with a series of brilliant

combinations culminated by a Queen sacrifice. A true jewel of the art of attack. Even the greatest attacking masters are seldom able to realize a proper Queen sacrifice more than every ten years or so in serious tournament or match games. Nevertheless, Torre would do this with much greater frequency. In the Western Championship, for example, he sacrificed his Queen in two games, against Reshevsky and against N.W. Banks. Even at the highest levels of serious competition he was able to do this, as shown by his brilliancies against Lasker and Verlinsky at Moscow 1925.

Torre's attitude toward exhibition games was to seek, above all, to delight the spectators with an interesting, exciting, yet high-quality game. For Torre, this kind of chess was entertainment. In contrast, his opponents often were more tense and cautious, taking few risks, treating it as they would a decisive tournament game. Oddly, Torre's more light-hearted approach brought out a more agile, fluent style than in his tournament games and he in fact won every exhibition game he ever played, except for two with Reuben Fine in 1934.

Late in December 1924, an exhibition game was arranged between Torre and the Franco-Polish master Dawid Janowski, who had been living in New York since 1915. Janowski had once been one of the top players in the world, even playing a world championship match with Emanuel Lasker in 1910. Though Lasker had defeated him soundly, and his skills had clearly declined since then, Janowski was still an opponent worthy of respect. The exhibition game was held at the Manhattan Chess Club on December 28. Torre had the black pieces and played his favorite variation of the French Defense. The game was adjourned, and resumed the next day. Torre finally prevailed in a hard fight of 62 moves.

The great publicity given to Torre's victories in the *American Chess Bulletin* soon opened a new chapter in his career, as his games and style rapidly became known in Europe. First veteran German grandmaster Siegbert Tarrasch and later, former world champion Emanuel Lasker, commented positively on Torre's style of play. From Berlin, Dr. Lasker sent a lengthy letter to Herman Helms, editor of the *ACB*. The letter, dated October 25, was published in the November 1924 issue. Lasker touched on various matters, responding to some attacks by Capablanca, discussing philosophy, and finally mentioning Torre. He wrote: "C. S. Howell's article on Carlos Torre hits the nail on the head: Carlos Torre's games are interesting, his style is promising, his combinations are chessy."

At the start of 1925 an important international competition was announced, to be held in the German city of Baden-Baden. Dr. Tarrasch, age 62, would serve as tournament organizer and director. It was hoped to bring together for this event all the best chess players of the world. Alekhine, Rubinstein, Nimzovich,

and Spielmann confirmed their participation, but Dr. Lasker announced he would not take part. Invitations were extended to the most eminent New World players: Capablanca, then world champion, and Frank J. Marshall. When Capablanca declined, it was decided to invite in his place either Torre or Kupchik. To make the final choice, a match between the two was organized. In addition to the tournament bid and expenses for travel to Germany, the winner would collect \$500. The match was set at ten games, to begin the 3rd of March, games to be played on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday in two sessions from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM. In the event of adjournment, play was to be resumed the same day, going from 8:00 PM until midnight, if necessary. Naturally, both masters were eager to win the right to attend such a strong tournament. Ironically, this very desire to win, and the unambivalent “either-or” nature of the situation, caused Torre for the first time to think in terms of achieving a definite result and playing with premeditated caution, rather than give free rein to his natural artistic qualities.

This attempt to control his imaginative talents and change his concept of “chess as art” to one of “chess as competitive sport” caused Torre to play in a strange, artificial way against an opponent he would in other circumstances probably defeat with relative ease. Kupchik won the first game and Torre the second. Then came four consecutive draws characterized by positional struggle and great caution on both sides. Then, unexpectedly, on March 13th, as preparations were under way for the seventh game, came a telegram from Dr. Tarrasch saying that two places in the tournament had been reserved, for Marshall and Torre. Naturally these tidings did not please Abraham Kupchik, but he had no choice but to accept the final decision of the Baden-Baden organizers.

Following the suspension of their match, Torre and Kupchik both took part in New York Metropolitan League play, a club team competition. As luck would have it, eight days after the end of the match, they faced each other as first board for their respective clubs. The game excited considerable interest, as it was seen as a sort of unofficial decision to their inconclusive match. This time Torre, free of external pressures, defeated Kupchik in a beautiful game.

At the end of March 1925, Torre and Marshall left for Germany aboard the Cunard liner *Antonia*. During the trip the two became fast friends and played a great many informal games in which each tried out various openings and experimented with unusual systems of attack and defense. In one of these Torre tried out the double-edged line 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 ♗c6!?, which he would later use at Baden-Baden against the German master Sämisch. In one blitz game Marshall tried to refute this strange move outright and lost in nine moves:

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 ♗c6 3.d5 ♗e5 4.b3(?) e6! 5.♙b2 ♙b4+ 6.♗d2?? ♗e4(-+)
7.♙c1 ♗f6 8.♗f3 ♗g4 9.♖b1 ♗exf2, 0-1.

White's Queen is lost in three more moves: 10.♖c2 ♗e3 11.♖b2 ♙c3 12.♖a3 ♗c2+.

The opening ceremonies of the Baden-Baden tournament were held April 15th, 1925. Play was conducted in the lavish salons of the city's casino. The prize fund, in German gold marks, was: 1st place, DM 1,500; 2nd, 1,000; 3rd, 700; 4th 500; and 5th, 300. Also, players would receive 20 marks for every game won and 10 for every draw in addition, of course, to meals and lodging in first-class hotels. The tournament concluded May 15th in an impressive victory for the future world champion, Alexander Alekhine. Carlos Torre played somewhat nervously in his international debut. While attaining a respectable 10th place (out of 21), he clearly was more concerned with not losing rather than trying to win.

Baden-Baden, 17 April to 14 May, 1925:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	total
1	Alekhine	*	½	1	½	½	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	16
2	Rubinstein	½	*	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	14½
3	Sämisch	0	½	*	1	½	0	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	0	½	1	1	1	1	13½
4	Bogoljubow	½	½	0	*	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	½	0	½	1	1	1	1	1	13
5-6	Tartakower	½	1	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	½	1	12½
5-6	Marshall	0	½	1	1	½	*	1	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	1	12½
7	Rabinovich	0	½	½	1	½	0	*	½	0	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	½	½	1	12
8	Grünfeld	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	*	½	0	0	1	½	1	0	1	½	0	1	1	1	11½
9	Nimzovich	0	½	0	0	0	½	1	½	*	½	1	0	½	1	½	½	1	1	1	½	1	11
10	Torre	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	1	½	*	½	0	½	0	1	½	½	½	1	1	1	10½
11-13	Réti	0	½	0	0	½	1	½	1	0	½	*	½	1	1	½	½	½	0	1	0	1	10
11-13	Treybal	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	0	1	1	½	*	½	1	0	½	½	1	1	½	1	10
11-13	Spielmann	½	0	0	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	0	½	*	1	1	0	1	1	½	1	1	10
14	Carls	½	0	½	½	½	½	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	*	0	1	1	½	1	1	1	9
15	Yates	0	0	0	1	0	½	½	1	½	0	½	1	0	1	*	0	0	0	1	0	1	8
16-17	Tarrasch	0	½	1	½	½	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	1	0	1	*	0	½	0	0	½	7½
16-17	Rosselli	½	0	½	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	0	0	1	1	*	1	0	½	½	7½
18	Colle	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	0	½	1	0	0	½	1	½	0	*	0	1	1	7
19	Mieses	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	1	1	*	1	1	6½
20	Thomas	0	0	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	1	½	0	0	1	1	½	0	0	*	½	6
21	te Kolsté	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	*	1½

The Baden-Baden area's newspapers regularly published games and accounts of the tournament, along with interesting facts and opinions about the players. For example, on April 28th, after the ninth round, a local journal discussed Torre in the following terms:

The American prodigy Carlos Torre is without doubt an excellent player of whom we will surely hear much in the future, but he has, nevertheless, an obvious character defect, in that he plays too fearfully and nervously, offering draws just when the game is reaching its decisive point, even in positions of advantage for him. He has now gained 5½ points in the first 9 games. We would hope that with the years he is able to master his nervousness and play with more self-confidence and with greater facility.

Immediately after the Baden-Baden event, many of its players moved on to the Czechoslovakian city of Marienbad (also known as Mariánské Lázně) for another tournament which began only eight days later. Though its luster was somewhat dimmed by the absence of Alekhine, the field was of similar quality, with 11 of Baden-Baden's players also among the 16 at



Marienbad. The tournament ended with Nimzovich and Rubinstein equal 1st. Torre improved greatly to share 3rd and 4th places with Marshall, who had won five games, drawn 10 and lost none, the only undefeated player. Carlos Torre won six, drew eight, and lost one, to Spielmann in the 13th round.

It was gratifying to see Torre return to his natural style of play: more vigorous, bold, and enterprising. Ironically, at Baden-Baden he attempted to play safely and cautiously, and lost four of his 20 games, while at Marienbad he returned to his natural energetic risk-taking style, thereby losing only one of 15 games. As the Mexican saying goes, "When Juan imitates Pedro he is neither Juan nor Pedro."

The Marienbad tournament ended June 8, 1925. Over the next four or five months Carlos Torre was relatively inactive, taking a rest from serious chess. He mostly played exhibition games and simultaneous displays in various parts of the United States, and annotated games for the ACB. Then he and Marshall sailed across the Atlantic again.