

Award in Corus-70 composing tourney 2007-2008

By Yochanan Afek

In 40 years of playing, training and composing career I have always witnessed a firm mutual linkage between over the board chess and the fine art of the endgame study. Players of all levels enjoy solving studies for the sake of sheer pleasure but also as an essential tool for developing creativity and imagination, polishing the calculative ability and even acquiring theoretical knowledge. Composers on the other hand, often strong players themselves, have always been inspired by competitive experiences for exposing the hidden treasures of the royal game to the enjoyment of the entire chess public.

Therefore it seemed just natural to me to celebrate 70 years of the world's best chess event with an international composing tourney encouraging the finest creators worldwide to take part. Happily, my idea was enthusiastically welcome by the board of Corus tournament which kindly offered a generous prize fund and a podium to introduce the best of chess art to the whole chess community.

To carry out such a project I could not hope for a better teammate than the world famous expert Harold van der Heijden. Despite of his numerous engagements he fortunately accepted to act as the tourney director and to thoroughly check all entries for both correctness and originality. His detailed report and precious advice were of invaluable assistance in the judging process which proved much harder than usual thanks to the massive and excellent turnout.

In total 151 studies were submitted making the tourney quantitatively already an enormous success. It is exceptional that a tourney has more than 100 entries, and according to Harold, in whole chess history only a handful of tourneys received more than 150 studies. In total 90 composers from 29 countries took part. Among the competitors there are 8 composition title holders (3 GM's) and 10 debutants (no studies in Harold's database) as well as 3 o.t.b. grandmasters. Correctness checking was done using chess playing software (e.g. Deep Fritz 10) armed with all 5 men or less EGTB's and some 6 men EGTB's. If necessary, 6 piece endings were checked in an EGTB available on the internet (<http://www.shredderchess.de/online-schach/online-datenbanken/endspiel-datenbank.html>). In most instances a clear-cut conclusion could be drawn on the study's correctness, but still some suspect studies or doubtful cooks occur.

Obviously, there is no guarantee that all conclusions are correct.

Anticipation checking was done using Harold's own unique database (with more than 72,000 endgame studies), often assisted by the Chess Query Language (CQL) tool developed by Lewis Stiller and Gady Costeff (<http://www.rbn.com/cql/contents.html>). Participants will be later personally informed by the tourney director about unsound or anticipated entries

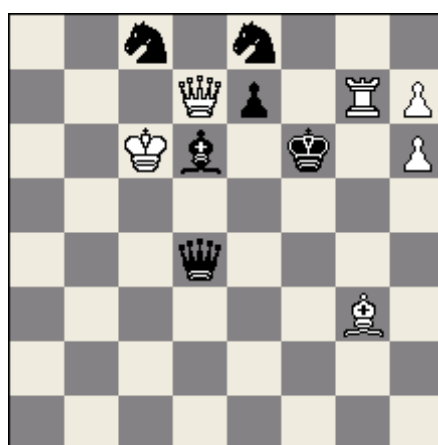
The general level of the survivors was very high which made the judging task even tougher. I received them from Harold in an anonymous file with an additional file of possible anticipations as well as a list of possible cooks. Loyal to my own artistic philosophy I gave priority to originality, clarity and elegance. In

view of the superb standard I decided to add a whole category of special prizes. Furthermore, I am pretty confident that even all the honourable mentions would have been serious candidates for inclusion in the prize list of almost any other event.

Following a considerable "inner struggle" I finally decided on the following ranking:

Prizes

Yuri Bazlov, Russia
1st - 2nd Prize

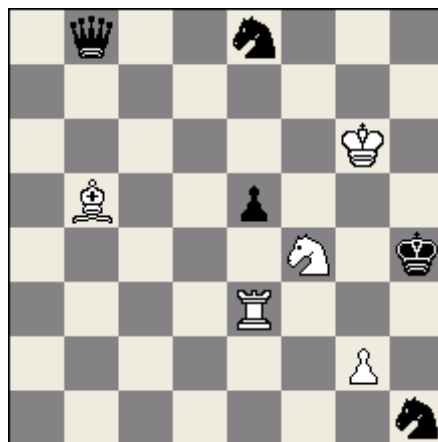


Win

1.Bh4+! (1.Qxc8? Qa4+; 1.Rf7+? Kxf7 2.Qf5+ Sf6 3.h8S+ Kf8 4.Qxc8+ Se8 5.Sg6+ Kf7 6.Qf5+ Qf6) **1...Qxh4 2.Rf7+! Kxf7 3.Qf5+ Qf6 4.Qxf6+ exf6** (4...Sxf6 5.h8Q Bf4 looks promising, but after 6.Qg7+ Ke6 7.h7 Sxh7 8.Qxh7 Sd6 9.Qg6+ Ke5 10.Kd7 the valuable e7-pawn is lost and Black loses) **5.h8Q Bf8! 6.h7** (After 6.Qh7+? Bg7 7.hxg7 Sxg7 8.Qe4 Se7+ Black has a draw position) **6...Se7+ 7.Kd7 Sg7 8.Qg8+! Sxg8 9.h8S mate.**

Fighting to the last pawn! There is just another study (Bor f8e6) that employs 4 active self blocks for a model mate by a newly born knight. However the present realization dramatically upgrades it to a true miracle: The tense foreplay is full of surprising neat sacrifices gradually leading to an ideal mate in which all units take part and every square around the mated king is covered just once. A superb demonstration of clarity, purity and economy!

Sergey Rumiantsev, Russia
1st-2nd Prize

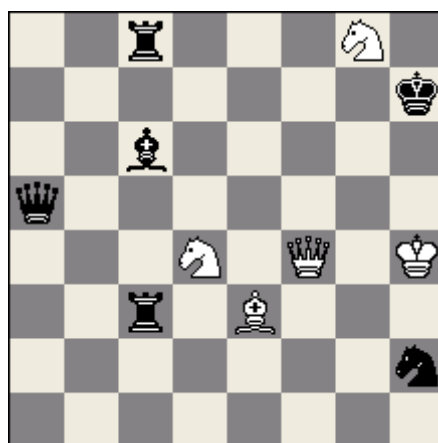


Draw

1.Kh6!! Kg4! (1...Qxb5 2.Sg6+ Kg4 3.Rxe5! and the mate threat on g5 forces Black to give his queen for the rook) **2.Sg6 Sg3! 3.Bd7+ Sf5+ 4.Bxf5+ Kxf5 5.Rxe5+ Kf6 6.g4! Kf7!** (6...Qa8 7.Re1!) **7.g5! Kg8! 8.Se7+ Kf8 9.Sg6+ Kf7! 10.Re2!** (10.Re7+? Kg8 11.Re2 Sg7!) **10...Qa8! 11.Re1! Qc6(8)! 12.Re7+ Kg8 13.Rg7+ Sxg7 stalemate.**

Quite amazingly the presence of an unleashed queen in the open is unable to stop white from committing a whole sequence of quiet moves difficult to spot and even more difficult to meet. The final ideal pin stalemate comes as a complete surprise. Highly original!

Yuri Bazlov, Russia
3rd Prize



Win

1.Qf7+ (After 1.Sf6+? narrowly manages to keep out of a mating net: Kg6 2.Qh6+ Kf7 3.Qh7+ Kxf6 4.Qh6+ Ke7! 5.Qe6+ Kd8 6.Qd6+ Ke8. Thematic try: 1.Se7? Sf3+ 2.Sxf3 Rc4 3.Qxc4 Qh5+ 4.Kxh5 Bxf3+ 5.Qg4 Bxg4+ see move 5) **1...Kh8 2.Se7! Sf3+! 3.Sxf3 Rc4+! 4.Qxc4** (4.Kg3? Qc7+; 4.Bf4? Rxf4+ 5.Qxf4 Kg7 6.Sf5+ Kf7 7.Sg5+ Ke8 8.Qe3+ Be4 9.Qxe4+ Kd7 and the black king escapes) **4...Qh5+!! 5.Kxh5, and now:**

- **5...Be8+ 6.Qf7!!** (6.Kh6? Rxc4 7.Bg5 Rc6+ 8.Sxc6 Bxc6 drawing) **6...Bxf7+ 7.Kh6 Rd8 8.Bf4! Rd5 9.Sg5! wins** as Black loses his rook because of the mate threats, **or:**

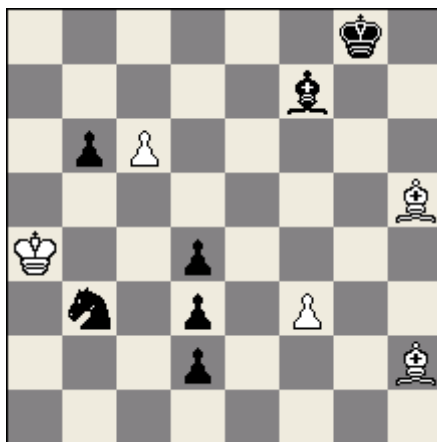
- **5...Bxf3+ 6.Qg4!! Bxg4+** (The difference with the try 1.Se7? is that now the black king is at h8, allowing) **7.Kg6!** White now threatens mate at d4. Here is another deviation:

-- **7...Rg8+ 8.Kh6 Rd8 9.Bf4 Rd5 10.Sxd5 wins**, e.g Kg8 11.Sf6+, **or:**

-- **7...Rc4 8.Bg5 Bf5+** (8...Rc6+ 9.Sxc6 Kg8 10.Bh6) **9.Kh6 Rc6+ 10.Sxc6 Kg8 11.Se7+ wins.**

Philidor has already said that the pawn is the soul of the chess battle but even he would have admitted that this pawnless diamond possesses a huge soul. A series of tactical blows lead to a pair of neat echoing queen sacrifices both ending up in original settings of domination.

Eduard Eilazyan, Ukraine
4th Prize



Draw

1.c7 Be6 2.Bg4 Bc8 3.Bxc8 Sc5+ 4.Kb5 d1Q 5.Be6+ Sxe6 6.c8Q+ Kf7 7.Bd6! (A mistake is 7.Qd7+? Kf6 8.Bd6 Qb3+ 9.Ka6 Sc5+! 10.Bxc5 bxc5 11.Qd8+ Kf5 12.Qh4 Qd5 13.Qh7+ Kg5 14.Qxd3 c4 and wins) **7...Qb3+ 8.Ka6** (Thematic try: 8.Bb4? d2 9.Qd7+ Kf6 10.Qe7+ hoping for 10...Kg6? 11.Qe8+ Kg5 12.Qg8+ Kf4 13.Qg4+ Ke3 14.Qe4+ Kf2 15.Qh4+ Kxf3 16.Qh3+ Ke2 17.Qxb3 drawing, but 10...Ke5! 11.Qd6+ Kf5! And Black wins), **and now:**

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- **8...Qd5 9.Qd7+ Kf6 10.Qe7+!** (Avoids a trap involving a queen sacrifice: 10.Kxb6? Qxd6+! 11.Qxd6 d2 winning) **10...Kg6 11.Kxb6!** (Thematic try: 11.Qe8+? Kh6 12.Qh8+ Kg5 and now 13.Be7+ Kf4 14.Qh4+ Kxf3 15.Qh1+ Ke2 16.Qxd5 Sc7+ 17.Kb7 Sxd5, or 13.Qg8+ Kf6 14.Qh8+ Kf7 15.Qh7+ Sg7 16.Bf4 and Black sacrifices the advanced d-pawn for an easy win: 16...d2 17.Qc2 d1Q 18.Qxd1 Se6 19.Bd2 Qc6 20.Qb3 Ke7 21.Ka7 Qc7+ 22.Ka8 Sc5 23.Qd5 Qd8+ 24.Qxd8+ Kxd8) **11...d2 12.Qe8+ Kh6 13.Qh8+ Kg5 14.Be7+ Kf4 15.Qh6+, and now:**

-- **15...Kg3 16.Qxd2 drawing, or:**

-- **15...Sg5 16.Qh4+ Kxf3 17.Qh1+ Ke2 18.Qxd5 drawing. Or:**

- **8...Qa4+ 9.Kxb6! Qb3+ 10.Ka6! Qa2+ 11.Kb6 d2** (If 11...Qb2+ 12.Ka6 Qe2 13.Qd7+ Kg6 14.Qe8+ Kh6 15.Kb6! d2 White sacrifices a bishop and escapes by perpetual check: 16.Bf4+! Sxf4 17.Qf8+ Kg6 18.Qg8+ Kf6 19.Qf8+ Ke5 20.Qh8+ Kd5 21.Qa8+! Kc4 22.Qa2+) **12.Qd7+ Kf6 13.Qe7+ Kg6 14.Qe8+ Kh6 15.Qh8+ Kg5 16.Bb4!** (A paradoxical logical manoeuvre: forcing Black to carry out his plan to promote the pawn!) **16...d1Q 17.Be7+ Kf4 18.Qh6+, and now:**

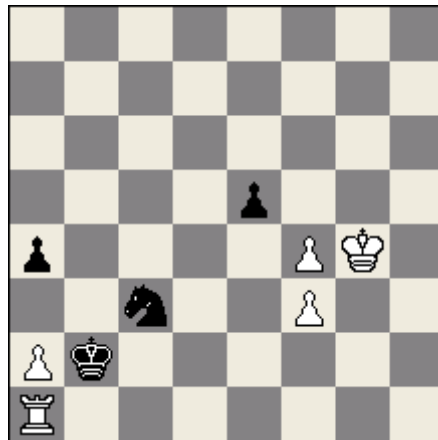
-- **18...Kxf3 19.Qh5+ Ke3 20.Qxd1 drawing, or:**

-- **18...Kg3 19.Bd6+ Kf2 20.Qh2+ Ke3 21.Qxa2 drawing.**

Probably the deepest and most difficult entry in the entire field displaying a unique concept: A direct attempt to create a skewer against the reigning queen fails owing to a counter fork. Instead White deliberately forces Black to carry out his promoting plan in order to operate another skewer, this time against the newborn queen. Highly original!

Alain Pallier, France

5th Prize



Win

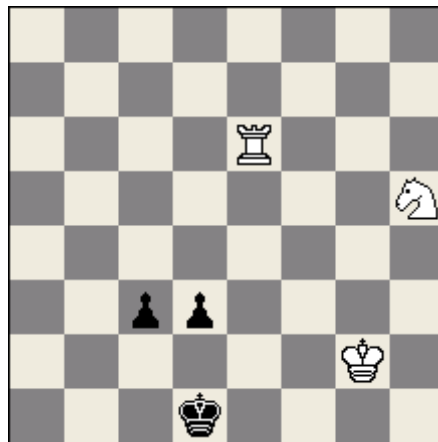
1.Rh1! (Thematic try 1.Rg1? see move 11!) **1...exf4 2.Rh2+! Ka3 3.Kxf4 Sxa2 4.Ke4 Kb3 5.f4 a3 6.f5 Sc3+! 7.Ke5!** (7.Kd4? is a waste of time: Sa4 8.Kd5 Sc3+ 9.Ke5!) **7...Sa4 8.f6 Sc5 9.f7 Sd7+ 10.Kd6! Sf8 11.Rh8!** (In the 1.Rg1?

thematic try Black now has: 11...Sh7!, e.g. 12.Rh8 a2 drawing) **and wins.**

An excellent logical study featuring a subtle difference between try and solution in a natural setting and attractive play. Its only unfortunate shortcoming is that the key move looks more natural than the thematic attempt thus a solver might miss it.

Special Prizes

Alexey Sochnev, Russia
1st-2nd Special Prize



Win

a) Diagram; b) Sh5 to f6; c) Sf6 to g1; d) Sg1 to f7; e) Kg2 to a3.

a) 1.Sf4! d2 2.Rh6 Kc2 3.Sd5 Kb3! 4.Rb6+ Kc4 5.Se3+ Kd4! 6.Re6! (Thematic try: 6.Kf2? d1S+ 7.Sxd1 c2 8.Rc6 cxd1S+ drawing) 6...d1Q 7.Sxd1 c2 8.Rc6! cxd1Q 9.Rd6+ winning.

b) 1.Kf2! d2 (1...c2 2.Re1+ Kd2 3.Se4 mate) **2.Sd5 c2 3.Rb6! Kc1** (3...c1Q 4.Se3 echo-mate) **4.Sb4** (Thematic try 4.Sf4? d1Q 5.Se2+ Qxe2+ 6.Kxe2 stalemate) **4...d1Q 5.Sa2+ Kd2 6.Rd6 mate.**

c) 1.Kf2! (Thematic tries: 1.Se2? dxe2! 2.Kf2 e1Q(B)+! 3.Rxe1+ Kd2 4.Re2+ Kd3 5.Re3+ Kd2 drawing, or 1.Sf3? d2 2.Kf2 c2 3.Sd4 Kc1 4.Rb6 d1Q 5.Se2+ Qxe2+ 6.Kxe2 stalemate) **1...d2 2.Se2 c2 3.Rg6! c1Q 4.Sd4 Qc5 5.Rg1 mate.**

d) 1.Se5! d2 2.Kf2 c2 3.Sc4 Kc1 (3...c1Q 4.Se3 mate) **4.Ra6! d1Q 5.Ra1 mate.**

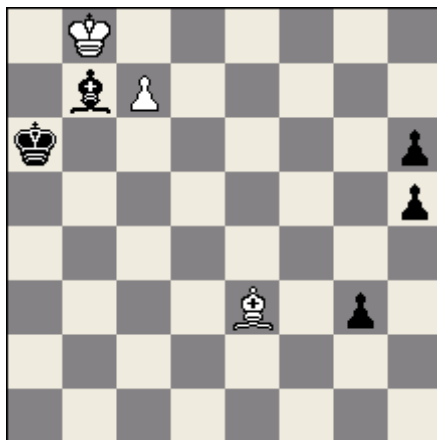
e) 1.Se5! d2 2.Sd3 c2 3.Kb3 c1Q 4.Sf2 mate (But not 4.Sb2+? Qxb2+ 5.Kxb2 stalemate).

Five at the prize of one in a precise super miniature and a variety of mate pictures partly shown before in separate studies. The quintet is remarkably

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*achieved by a single change in each phase and yet in a peaceful and bloodless manner namely with minimal captures and checks along the entire task.
Remarkable technique!*

Nikolay Kralin & Oleg Pervakov, Russia
1st-2nd Special Prize

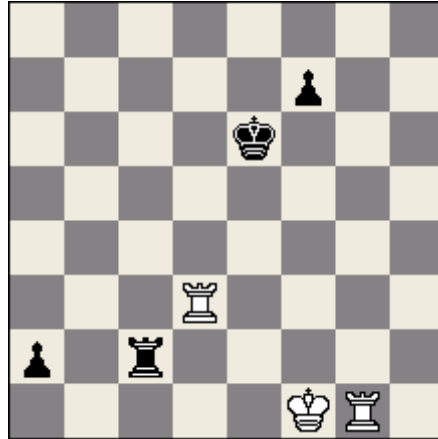


Draw

1.Bf4! (First thematic try: 1.c8Q? Bxc8 2.Kxc8 Kb5 3.Kd7 Kc4 4.Ke6 Kd3 5.Bf4 g2 6.Bh2 Ke4 7.Kf6 Kf3 8.Kf5 h4! 9.Kg6 Kg4! 10.Kxh6 Kh3 11.Bg1 Kg3) **1...g2!**
2.Be3! (White sacrifices two tempo: 2.Bh2? Kb6! 3.c8Q Bxc8 4.Kxc8 Kc6 5.Kd8 Kd5 6.Ke7 Ke4 7.Kf6 Kf3 wins) **2...h4** **3.Bg1!** (Not 3.Bf2? h3 4.Bg1 h5 5.c8Q Bxc8 6.Kc7 Kb5 7.Kd6 Kc4 8.Ke5 Kd3 9.Kf4 h2! 10.Bxh2 Ke2 11.Kg3 Kf1 12.Kh4 Bg4! and wins since the black pawn is at h5. See final position.) **3...h3** (3...h5 4.Bf2 h3 5.Bg1 h4 6.c8Q Bxc8 7.Kxc8 Kb5 8.Kd7 Kc4 9.Ke6 Kd3 10.Kf5 Ke2 11.Kg4 Kf1 12.Bh2 g1Q+ 13.Bxg1 Kg2 14.Kxh4 draws) **4.c8Q! Bxc8** **5.Kc7!!** (Second thematic try: 5.Kxc8? Kb5 6.Kd7 Kc4 7.Ke6 Kd3 8.Kf5 Ke2 9.Kg4 Kf1 10.Bh2 g1Q+ 11.Bxg1 Kg2! 12.Kh4 h5! zugzwang and wins) **5...Kb5** **6.Kd6 Kc4** **7.Ke5 Kd3** **8.Kf4 h2!** (8...Ke2 9.Kg3 Kf1 10.Kh2) **9.Bxh2 Ke2** **10.Kg3 Kf1** **11.Kh4! draws**, as Black cannot prevent 12.Kh5.

Heroic struggle between opposite coloured bishops. The deliberate loss of two tempi and the sacrifice of the only white pawn to gain time are highly instructive.

Richard Becker, USA & Iuri Akobia, Georgia
3rd Special Prize



Win

1.Ra3!, and:

- **1...Kf5 2.Ra4** (or **2.Ke1 Rb2 3.Ra4**) **2...Rb2 3.Ke1 Ke5 4.Rf1 f5 5.Kd1 f4 6.Re1+ Kf5 7.Kc1 Rb1+ 8.Kd2 Rb2+ 9.Kd3 Rb1 10.Ke2 Rb2+ 11.Kf3 wins** (e.g. **11...Rb3+ 12.Kf2 Rb2+ 13.Re2**), **or:**

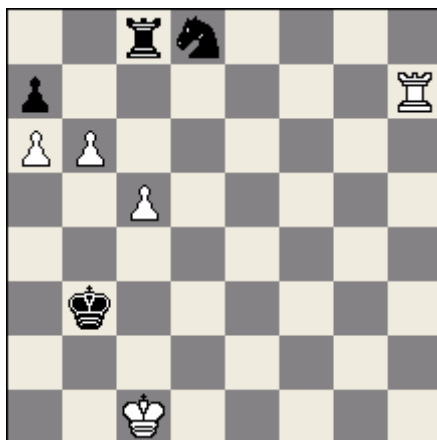
- **1...Rb2 2.Rh1! f6 3.Kg1!** (Thematic try: **3.Ra6+? Ke5 4.Rh5+ f5 5.Ra5+ Ke4 6.Rh4+ f4 7.Ra4+ Kd3 8.Rh3+ Kc2 9.Rha3 Kb1 10.Rxf4 a1Q**) **3...Kd6 4.Ra6+ Ke5 5.Rh5+ f5 6.Ra5+ Ke4 7.Rh4+ f4 8.Ra4+, and now:**

-- **8...Ke3 9.Rh3+ f3 10.Ra3+ Ke4 11.Rh4+ wins, or:**

-- **8...Kd3 9.Rh3+ Kc2 10.Rha3 Kb1 11.Rxf4 a1Q 12.Rf1+ wins.**

Similar rook systematic duels have been already displayed several times; however the synthesis with yet another systematic manoeuvre employing the black pawn looks fresh and very elegant.

Thomas Beuman, *Netherlands*
4th Special Prize

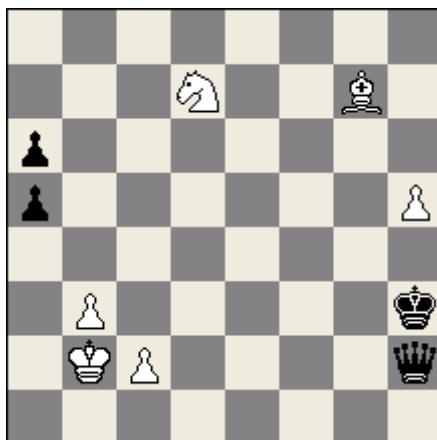


Win

1.Rc7 (1.Rxa7? Rxc5+ 2.Kd2 Rb5 3.b7 Rb6 4.Ra8 Sxb7) **1...Rb8** (1...Ra8 2.Rxa7 Rc8 3.Rc7 Rb8 4.b7 Kc4 5.a7 wins) **2.Rb7!** (2.b7? Ka4 3.Rc8 Sxb7! 4.Rxb8; 2.Rxa7? Kc4 and now 3.Rb7 Sxb7 4.c6 Sc5 5.c7 Sxa6, or 3.Rc7 Kb5 4.a7 Ra8 5.Kd2 Sc6 6.Ke3 Rd8 7.Ke4 Kxc5 8.b7 Kb6 9.a8Q Kxc7, or 3.Rd7 Sc6! 4.a7 Ra8) **2...Sxb7 3.bxa7 Rh8 4.a8Q!** (4.axb7? Kc3!, and 5.Kd1 Kd3 6.Ke1 Ke3 7.Kf1 Kf3 8.Kg1 Rg8+! 9.Kh2 Rh8+ 10.Kg1 Rg8+ 11.Kf1 Rh8! or 5.Kb1 Rh1+ 6.Ka2 Rh2+ 7.Ka3 Rh1! 8.Ka4 Kc4 9.Ka5 Kxc5 10.Ka4 Kc4) **4...Rxa8 5.axb7 Rh8 6.Kd2! Kc4 7.c6 Kd5 8.c7 wins.**

White is forced to give away his trumps in order to secure a surprisingly narrow win. High tension all the way through!

Vladimir Bartosh, Belarus
5th Special Prize



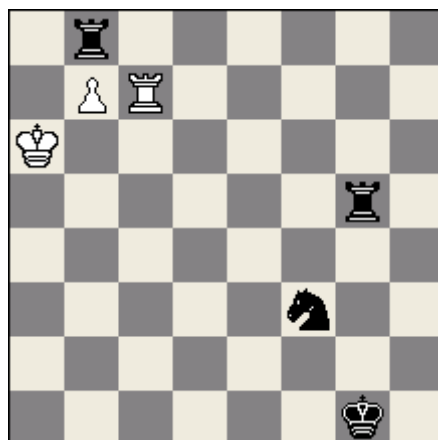
Win

1.h6 Kg2! (1...Qg1 2.Sf8 a4 3.Se6 axb3 4.Bd4! Qg8 5.h7 Qxe6 6.h8Q+, or Qg3 2.Sf8 Kg2 3.Bh8! a4 4.h7, or 1...Qg2 2.Sf8 a4 3.Se6 a3+ 4.Kxa3 Qxc2 5.h7 win)
2.Sf8 Qc7 3.Bh8! (Only this paradoxical move wins. 3.Bc3? a4! 4.h7 a3+ 5.Kxa3 Qxc3)
3...a4 4.h7 a3+ 5.Kb1! Qd6 6.Bb2!! Qd1+ (6...axb2 7.h8Q Qa3 8.Qg7+ wins, by playing to a4: Kf1 9.Qf6+ Ke2 10.Qe6+ Kf2 11.Qf5+ Kg3 12.Qe5+ Kh3 13.Qe3+ Kg2 14.Qe4+ Kg3 15.Qa4 wins)
7.Bc1 Qh1 8.Ka2! Qxc1 9.h8Q Qxc2+ 10.Kxa3 Qc5+ 11.b4! (11.Ka2? Qa5+ 12.Kb2 Qd2+ 13.Kb1 Qe1+ 14.Kc2 Qe2+ 15.Kc3 Qe3+ 16.Kc4 Qe2+ draws)
11...Qe3+ 12.Ka2 Qg5 13.Qb2+! wins (because the black King moved to g2 at the first move).

A lively encounter of two minor pieces vs. a queen to secure promotion after which precision is still required. The repeating long diagonal moves by different pieces all the way from h8 to b2 leave an aesthetic impression.

Honourable Mentions

Valery Vlasenko, Ukraine
1st HM

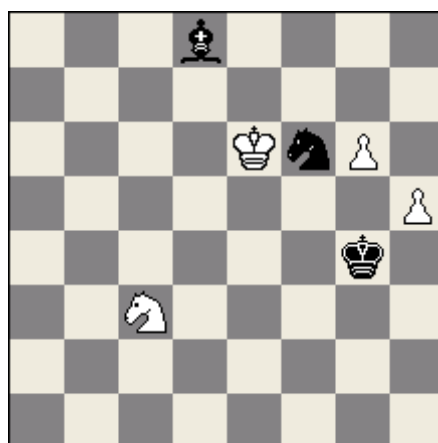


Draw

1.Rc1+! (Thematic try: 1.Rc8? Se5! 2.Rxb8 Sc4! 3.Rg8 Rxc8 4.Ka7 Sa5 5.b8Q Sc6+ wins) **1...Kg2 2.Rc2+! Kg3** (2...Sd2 3.Rxd2+ Kf3 4.Ka7 Rgg8 5.Rb2) **3.Rc8! Se5** (3...Rg8 4.Rxc8+ Rxc8 5.Ka7; 3...Sd4 4.Ka7! Sc6+ 5.Rxc6 Rgg8 6.Rb6) **4.Rxb8 Sc4! 5.Rg8 Rxc8 6.Ka7 Sa5 7.b8Q+ check! Draw.**

An exceptionally economical and natural fashion to demonstrate a logical element which requires a preliminary plan.

Mario Matous, Czech Republic
2nd HM



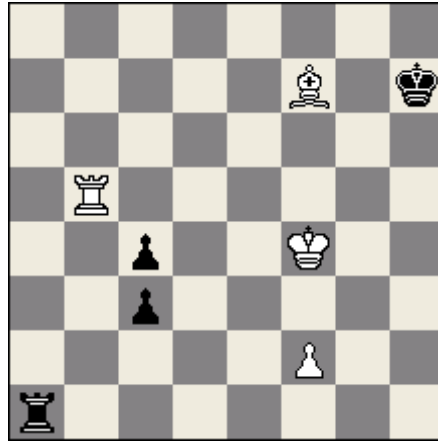
Win

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1.h6 (1.g7? Kxh5 2.Kf7 Sg4(8)) **1...Kg5!** **2.h7** (2.g7? Kxh6 3.Kf7 Kh7 4.Sd5(e4) Sg8) **2...Sxh7** **3.g7!** (3.gxh7? Bf6 4.Se4+ Kg6 5.Sxf6 Kg7) **3...Sf6** **4.Kf7!** **Sg8!** (4...Kf4 5.Sd5+; 4...Kf5 5.Sd5 Sg4 6.Se3+!; 4...Kh5 5.Se4! Sg4 6.Sg3+ Kh4 7.Sf5+; 4...Kh4 5.Se4 Sg4 6.Kg6 Se5+ 7.Kh7) **5.Se4+!** (5.Kxg8? Kg6! and now 6.Sd5 Bg5! 7.Kh8 Kh6! 8.g8Q Bf6+! 9.Sxf6 stalemate, or 6.Se4 Bh4! 7.Kh8 Kh6 8.Kg8 Kg6 9.Kf8 Be7+!, e.g. 10.Kg8 Bh4) **5...Kf5** **6.Kxg8** **Kg6** **7.Kh8!** **Kh6!** **8.Sf2!** **Bf(b)6** **9.Sg4+** wins.

A lovely miniature demonstrating a subtle struggle of minor pieces to secure promotion.

Andrey Popov & Insafy Galeev, Russia
3rd HM

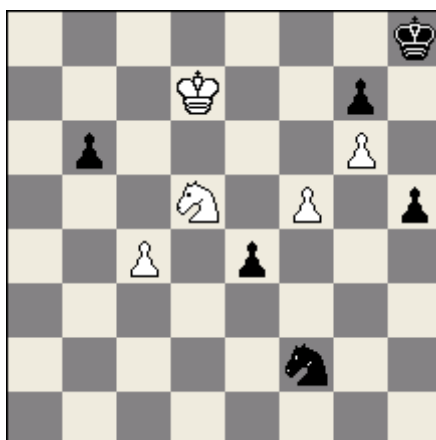


Win

1.Rg5! (Black has dangerous c-pawns. But if 1.Bxc4? Ra4 2.Rc5 c2 3.Ke5 Ra5!) **1...c2!** **2.Bg6+ Kh6** (2...Kh8 3.Bxc2 Ra2 4.Bf5! Rxf2+ 5.Ke5 c3 6.Kf6 c2 7.Rg1 Rf3 8.Re1 Rg3 9.Rh1+ Kg8 10.Be6+ and mate) **3.Bxc2 Ra2** **4.Rg6+ Kh5** (4...Kh7 5.Bf5! Rxf2+ 6.Ke5 Kh8 7.Kf6) **5.Rg2 Rxc2** **6.Kf5 Kh6** **7.Kf6!**, and now:
-- **7...Kh5** **8.Rh2+ Kg4** **9.f3+** wins, or:
-- **7...Kh7** **8.Kf7 Kh6** **9.Rh2+ Kg5** **10.f4+** wins.

This battery of rook and pawn motivated by a royal systematic movement was previously shown by GM Kricheli (d8b8) but here it is doubled using both pawn first move options with a pleasant introductory play.

Guenter Amann, Austria
4th HM

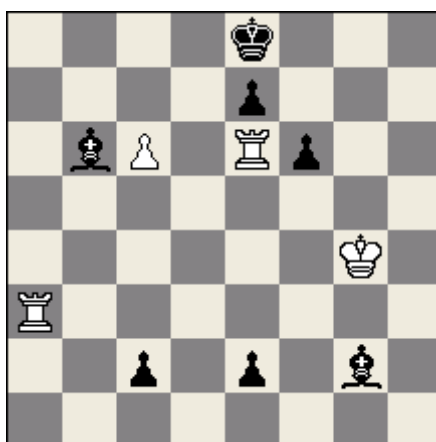


Win

1.c5!! (Thematic try: 1.Ke8? Sg4 2.c5 e3! 3.Sxe3 Sf6+ 4.Kf7 bxc5. If here 2.f6 Sxf6+ 3.Sxf6: see move 7) **1...bxc5 2.Ke8 Sg4 3.f6 Sxf6+** (3...Se5 4.f7 Sxg6 5.Sf4(e7)) **4.Sxf6 e3 5.Kf8 e2 6.Sg8!!** (6.Se4? e1Q 7.Sd6(g5) Qe7(8)+! 8.Kxe7(8) Kg8 draws) **6...e1Q 7.Sh6** (In the thematic try Black would now play 7...Qb4+) **7...Qf1+ (7...gxh6 8.g7+ Kh7 9.g8Q mate) 8.Sf7+ Qxf7+ 9.gxf7 wins.**

Following a strong thematic key an eventful struggle is highlighted by the stunning 6.Sg8!! however the final position is rather familiar.

Oleg Pervakov, Boris Sidorov & Karen Sumbatyan, Russia
5th HM



Draw

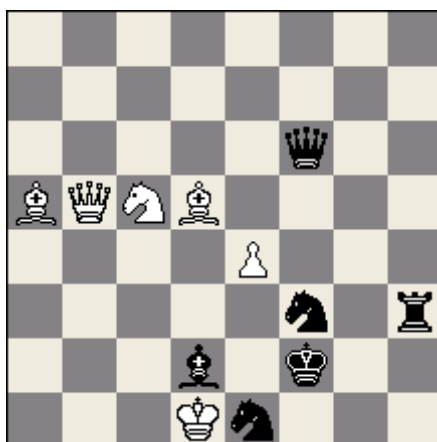
1.Rc3! f5+! 2.Kg5! (Thematic try: 2.Kh5? Be4! 3.c7 Bxc7! 4.Rxc7 Kd8! 5.Rexe7

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Bc6! 6.Kh4 f4! reciprocal zugzwang with White to move) **2...Be4 3.c7 Bxc7** (3...e1Q 4.c8Q+ Bd8 5.Rxe4! Qxe4 6.Qc6+ Qxc6 7.Rxc6 draws) **4.Rxc7 Kd8! 5.Rxe7 Bc6! 6.Kh5!** (This is a reciprocal zugzwang position with Black to move. Not 6.Kxf5? c1Q 7.Red7+ Bxd7+!, or 6.Kf6? c1Q 7.Red7+ Bxd7 8.Rxc1 f4, or 6.Kh4? f4!) **6...f4 7.Kh4!** (And the reciprocal zugzwang position we have seen before in the thematic try but now with Black to move) **7...f3 8.Kg3 c1Q 9.Red7+! Ke8 10.Re7+ Kf8 11.Rf7+ Kg8 12.Rg7+ Kh8 13.Rh7+ Kg8 14.Rhg7+ Kf8 15.Rgf7+ Ke8 16.Rfe7+ Kd8 17.Red7+ perpetual check.**

A logical study with a thematic try based on reciprocal ZZ. The play achieving it is however not equally appealing.

Luis Miguel Gonzalez, Spain
Special Hon. Mention



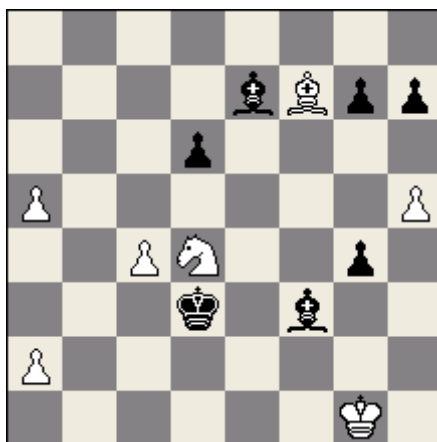
Draw

1.e5! Qxe5 2.Se4+ Kg1! 3.Sxd2! Sxd2 4.Bb6+! Kh2 5.Qe2+! Qxe2+ 6.Kxe2 Sef3 7.Bc7+! (7.Be3? Kg3 8.Bxd2 Rh2+; 7.Kf2? Rh5 8.Bc7+ Kh3 9.Be6+ Kh4 10.Bd8+ Sg5) **7...Kg2!** (7...Kg1 8.Bf4! Sb3 9.Be3+ Kg2 10.Bxb3) **8.Bf4 Rh5** (8...Sb3 9.Be3 Sa1 10.Bc5 Sc2 11.Be4 Sce1 12.Bf2; 8...Sb1 9.Be5 Sa3 10.Bc3 Sb5 11.Be5 Sa7 12.Bd4 Sc8 13.Bc5) **9.Bc6!** (9.Ba8? Rh8 10.Bc6 Rc8 11.Bb7 Re8+) **9...Rc5 10.Bb7! Rb5! 11.Ba8!** (11.Bc6? Rb6 12.Bd5 Rb2 13.Bxd2 Rxd2+) **11...Ra5! 12.Bc6! Ra6 13.Bd5! Ra5 14.Bc6 Rc5 15.Bb7 Rb5 16.Ba8 Rb2 17.Bxd2! Rxd2+ 18.Ke3 Rf2 19.Kf4 draws.**

This study would have possibly been ranked higher had the bombastic foreplay significantly shrunk. I see little point in overloading the board with massive exchanges of extras which have not too much to do with the very core of the study. Nevertheless, the contents starting from move 7 are sufficiently rich and original.

Commendations

Jan Timman, *Netherlands*
1st Commendation

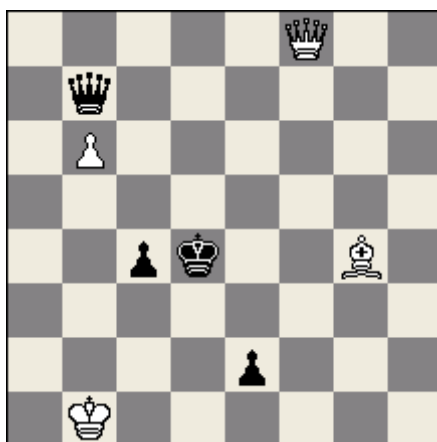


Win

1.h6! (1.Sxf3? gxf3 2.Kf2 (2.h6 Ke2!) 2...Bd8 3.a6 Bb6+ 4.Kxf3 Kd4 5.Kf4 Kc5 6.Bd5 Ba7 7.Kf5 g6+! 8.Ke6 gxh5 9.Kd7 Kb6!) **1...gxh6** (1...Bf6 2.Sxf3! gxf3 3.Kf1 g5 4.c5 g4 5.Bh5! Bd4 6.c6; 1...g5 2.Bd5! Bd8 3.Sc6) **2.Sxf3 gxf3 3.c5! dxc5** (3...d5 4.c6 Ke2 5.Bh5! which is the reason that White played 1.h6!) **4.Bc4+! Kxc4 5.a6 Kd3 6.Kf1 c4 7.a7 c3 8.a8Q c2 9.Qxf3+ Kd4 10.Qf2+!** (waste of time duals are possible from now on) **10...Kd3 11.Qe2+ Kc3 12.Qe3+ Kb2 13.Qb3+ wins.**

A seemingly new beautiful element (3.c5! dxc5 4.Bc4+!!) highlights the struggle to secure promotion. It is nevertheless a pity that both black bishops fail to make even one single move along the main line.

Stanislav Nosek, Czech Republic
2nd Commendation

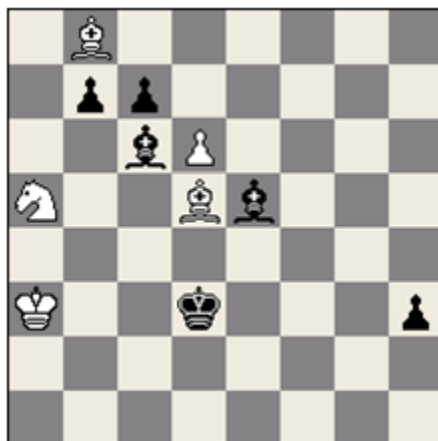


Win

1.Qf2+! (1.Qd6+? Kc3 2.Bxe2 Qe4+ 3.Bd3 Qh1+ 4.Ka2 Qa8+ 5.Qa3+ Qxa3+ 6.Kxa3 cxd3; 1.Qf4+? Kc5 2.Qe3+ Kb5; 1.Qf6+? Kc5 2.Qf2+ Kb5) **1...Kc3** (1...Ke5 2.Qxe2+ Kd6 3.Qh2+! Kc5 4.Qc7+ Qc6 5.Bf3) **2.Bxe2!** (2.Qe1+? Kb3! 3.Qxe2 Kb4 4.Qb2+ Kc5 5.Qf2+ Kb5; 2.Qe3+? Kb4 3.Bxe2 Kb5! 4.Qb3+ Kc5 5.Qxc4+ Kxb6) **2...Qe4+!** (2...Qh7+ 3.Ka1! Qh1+ 4.Bf1 Qa8+ 5.Qa2 Qb7 6.Qb2 mate) **3.Bd3!!** (3.Ka1? Qa8+ 4.Kb1 Qe4+), **and now:**
- **3...Qxd3+ 4.Kc1!** (4.Ka2? Qd5! 5.Qb2+ Kd3 6.Qb1+ Kd2 7.Qb4+ c3+ 8.Ka3 Qa8+, or here 5.Qe1+ Kc2 6.Qb1+ Kd2 7.b7 c3+ draw) **4...Kb3** (4...Qd5(e4) 5.Qb2+ Kd3 6.Qd(c)2+; 4...Qh3 5.Qd2+ Kb3 6.b7 Qh1+ 7.Qd1+ wins) **5.Qb2+** (5.b7? Qc3+ 6.Kd1 Qd3+ 7.Ke1 Qe4+) **5...Ka4 6.Qc2+ Kb5 7.Qxd3 cxd3 8.b7 wins, or:**
- **3...cxd3 4.Qb2+!** (4.Qc5+? Kb3 5.Qb5+ Ka3! 6.Qb2+ Ka4 7.Qa2+) **4...Kc4 5.b7 d2+** (5...Kd5 6.Qb3+ Kd4 7.Qb4+; 5...Qe1+ 6.Qc1+) **6.Qc2+ Kd4(5) 7.Qxe4+ Kxe4 8.Kc2 wins.**

A unique example of an unprotected Bishop interfering with a check threat on a square that is hit by 3 different enemy pieces.

Andrzej Jasik, Poland
3rd commendation

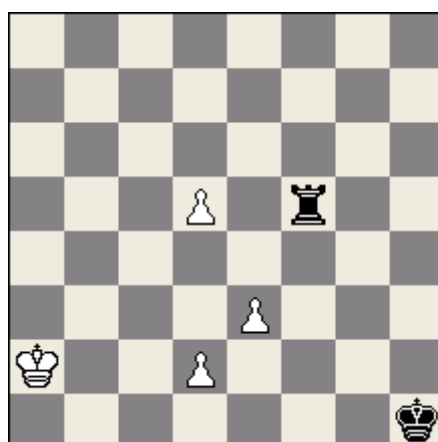


Win

1.dxc7 Bd6+! 2.Kb2 Be5+ 3.Kc1! (3.Kb1? Bxc7! 4.Bc4+ Kc3 5.Bxc7 h2 6.Bxh2 Be4+!) **3...Bf4+ 4.Kd1! Bxc7! 5.Bc4+ Kc3 6.Bxc7 h2! 7.Bxh2 Ba4+ 8.Ke2 b6 9.Be5+ Kb4 10.Kd3!** , and:
- **10...Kxa5 11.Bc3 mate, or:**
- **10...bxa5 11.Bd6 mate.**

A pair of ideal mates following a pair of active self blocks.

József Csengeri , Serbia
4th commendation



Draw

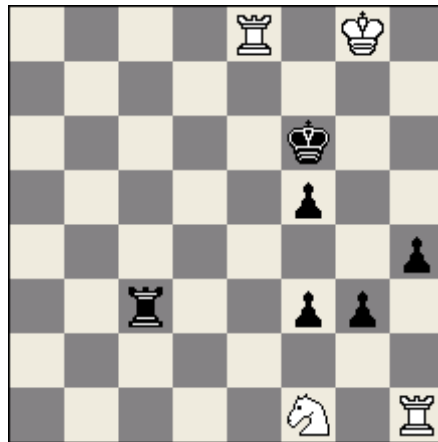
1.Kb3! (1.d4? Kg2! 2.Kb3 Kf3!; 1.e4? Rf3! 2.e5 Rd3!) **1...Rxd5 2.d4 Kg2 3.Kc4 Rh5** (3...Rd8 4.d5! Kf3 5.Kd4 Kg4 6.Ke5! Re8+ 7.Kf6!) **4.d5! Kf3 5.Kd4! Kg4**

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(5...Rh4+ 6.Ke5!) **6.d6!** (6.e4? Kg5! 7.Ke5 Kg6+ 8.Ke6 Kg7 9.d6 Kf8) **6...Kf5**
7.d7 Rh1 (7...Rh8 8.Kd5 Kf6 9.Kd6 Kf7 10.e4! Ra8 11.e5!) **8.e4+! Ke6 9.d8S+!**
draws.

A subtle duel of practical added value between pawns and a rook ends up in an underpromotion.

John Nunn, England
5th Commendation

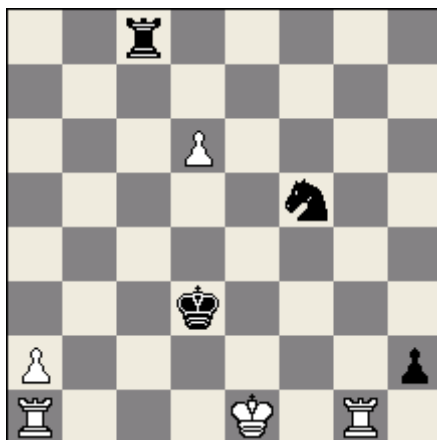


Draw

1.Rf8+! (1.Sh2? g2 2.Ra1 f2 3.Sg4+ fxc4 4.Rf8+ Ke5 5.Rxf2 Rg3 and the pawns will win in the end 6.Re1+ Kd4 7.Rd2+ Kc3 8.Rdd1 h3 9.Kg7 h2 10.Rc1+ Kd4 11.Rcd1+ Rd3 12.Ra1 g1Q 13.Rxg1 hxc1Q 14.Rxg1 g3 15.Kg6 Ke4 16.Kg5 Kf3 wins; 1.Sxc3? hxc3 2.Rf8+ Kg5 3.Kf7 f2 4.Rg8+ Kf4 5.Ke6 Kf3, or 1.Ra8? g2 2.Ra6+ Kg5 3.Rg1 h3 4.Ra2 Rc1 5.Rf2 Kf4 6.Kf7 Rxf1 7.Rxf1 gxf1Q 8.Rxf1 h2)
1...Kg6 2.Rxh4 g2 3.Sg3 f2! (3...g1Q 4.Rh7! Qb6 5.Rg7+ Kh6 6.Rh7+ Kg6 7.Rg7+) **4.Rh7! Rxg3 5.Rg7+ Kh5 6.Rxg3 g1Q** (6...f1Q 7.Rf7 Kh4 8.Rfg7) **7.Rxf5+ Kh4 8.Rg7! f1Q 9.Rxf1 Qxf1 10.Rh7+ draws.**

A desperate struggle against a dangerous pair of advanced pawns fails to prevent the eventual promotion but still rewarded by a perpetual check.

David Gurgendidze & Iuri Akobia, Georgia
Special Commendation



Win

1.Rh1 Rc2 2.Rxh2 Rxh2 3.0-0-0+! (3.d7? Re2+ 4.Kf1 Se3+ 5.Kg1 Rg2+ 6.Kh1 Rg8) **3...Kc3 4.d7 Rc2+** (4...Se3 5.Rd3+! Kxd3 6.d8Q+ Ke4 7.Qe7+; 4...Rxa2 5.Kb1 Rb2+ 6.Ka1 Rb8 7.Rc1+ Kd2 8.Rc8 win) **5.Kb1 Rb2+ 6.Ka1 Sd4! 7.Rxd4! Rb8 8.d8S!** (8.d8Q? Rb1+ 9.Kxb1 stalemate) **8...Kxd4 9.Sc6+ wins.**

Two thirds of the Valladao task economically displayed. Castling and underpromotion are shown in one line of play while the complementary en-passant awaits a more complex scheme.

Finally I would like to thank all participants for their contribution to the remarkable success of the tourney. The provisional award will be open to claims, appeals and comments for the usual 3 months period after which the prizes will be sent to the awarded composers.

Yochanan Afek, International Judge
Amsterdam, December 2007