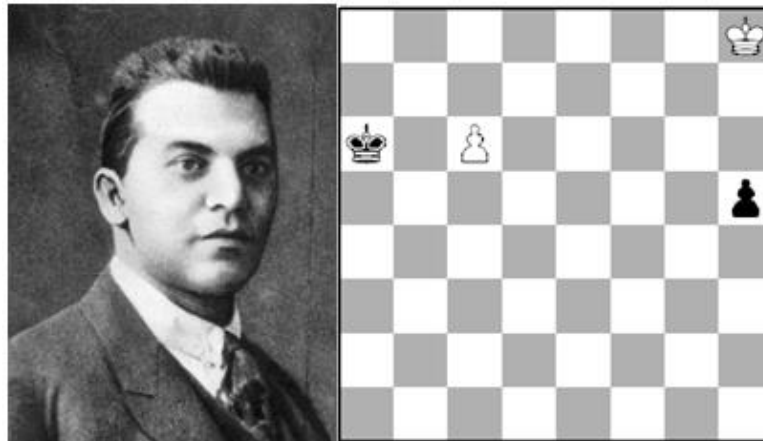


Réti's Study Is 100 Years Old!
(Through the Mazes of the Famous Maneuver)

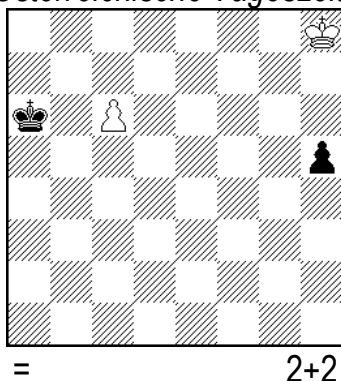


The study by the Czechoslovak Grandmaster Richard Réti is 100 years old! Following its publication in 1921, it gained world fame. It is one of the simplest and most easy-to-understand examples of chess beauty, the visiting card of the pawn study.

"When it appeared, it caused such a sensation and was met everywhere with such admiration which just a few endgame studies had ever known before..." These words belong to Réti's compatriot, his friend and biographer, well-known chess composer Arthur Mandler (1930).

No. 1 R. Réti

Deutsch-Österreichische Tageszeitung, 1921



The black king is two steps away from the enemy pawn, while his own pawn is about to rush forward without hindrance... **1.Kg7!! h4 2.Kf6!** 2.Kf7? Kb6! 3.Ke7 Kxc6, –+. **3...Kb6 3.Ke5!!** This move is the pinnacle of White's strategy! The king continues to move along the "resultant force line," now threatening with 4.Kf4 as well as 4.Kd6. If Black takes action against one

threat, he will not repel the other one. 3...Kxc6 4.Kf4 h3 5.Kg3, =. **3...h3 4.Kd6! h2 5.c7 Kb7 6.Kd7** drawn.

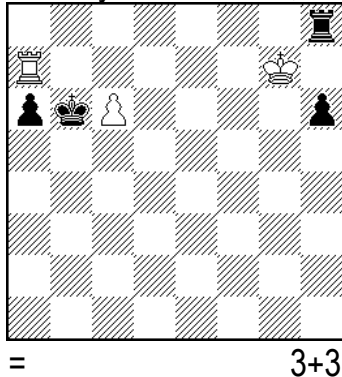
The creative enthusiasm with which endgame study composers reacted to the brilliant find did not subside a bit through the whole century. Numerous studies were created in which Réti's idea was used in one way or another, ranging from direct imitations (Sarychev brothers' 5-piecer, 1928) to completely original works harmoniously combining the classical maneuver with other motifs (G. Costeff, Polish Chess Federation Ty, 2016)...

The simplicity of the initial position could not but prompt study composers to search for a concordant opening and ways to enhance the play based on this prototype position, with its eye-catching arrangement of the four pieces and the classic move Kh8-g7!!

Apart from the author of the idea himself, a bunch of composers tried to cope with that task, but this eventually resulted in just a few studies. Here is one of the first attempts, in which the kings have to move to the original squares a6 and h8.

No. 2 R. Réti

Deutsch-Österreichische Tageszeitung, 1921
(version by H. Adamson, 1922)

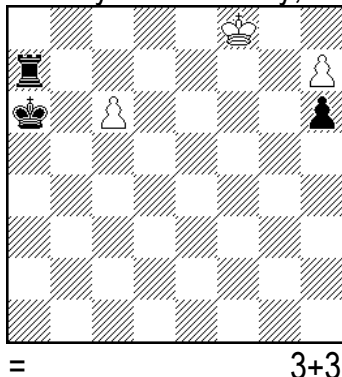


Immediate capture of the black rook is too early, so **1.Rxa6+! Kxa6 2.Kxh8 h5 3.Kg7!!** and we observe the familiar disposition of units...

In the next two versions, the white king moves to the h8-corner in the course of the play, but his black counterpart already occupies the “thematic” square in the diagram position.

No. 3 R. Réti

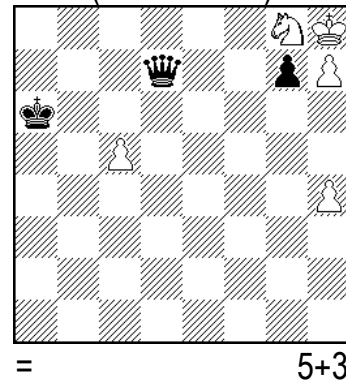
Deutsch-Österreichische Tageszeitung, 1921
(version by V. Palkovsky, 2010)



The starting move suggests itself. **1.h8Q Ra8+ 2.Kg7 Rxh8 3.Kxh8 h5 4.Kg7!!** ...

No. 4 J. Pospisil

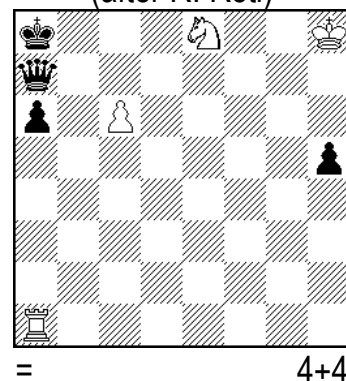
Europa Rochade, 2001, 3rd Prize
(after R. Réti)



Black will have to give up his queen for the h7-passer. Therefore, his main task is to save his g7-pawn. **1.c6! 1.h5? Kb7 2.h6 g5! 3.Ne7 Qxe7 4.c6+ Kc7! -+. 1...Qc7 2.Nh6! 2.Ne7? Qxe7 3.Kg8 g5! 4.c7 Qe8+ 5.Kg7 gxh4, -+. 2...gxh6 3.Kg8 Qd8+ 4.Kg7 Qxh4 5.h8Q Qd4+ 6.Kg8(h7) Qxh8+ 7.Kxh8 h5 8.Kg7!!** ...

No. 5 M. Frak

Polish Chess Federation Ty, 2013
(after R. Réti)

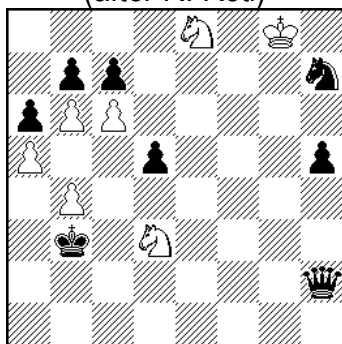


By contrast, in the Polish composer's study the white king is already standing in the corner. **1.Rxa6! Qxa6 2.Nc7+ Ka7 3.Nxa6 Kxa6 4.Kg7!!** ...

I was also tempted to try my hand at finding an introduction to Réti's study. The first version had too many pieces...

No. 6 V. Tarasiuk

Original
(after R. Réti)

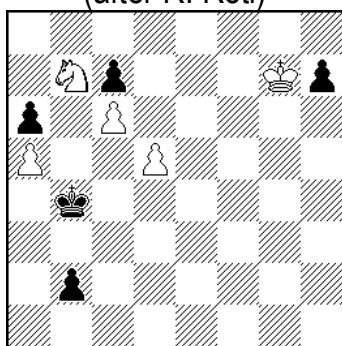


In the tense position, White's chance lies in skillfully using his far advanced pawns.
1.Nc5+! 1.bxc7? Qg3+! 2.Kxh7 Qxd3+ 3.Kh8 Qc3+ 4.Ng7 Qxc6, –+. **1...Kxb4 2.bxc7 Nf6+!** **3.Nxf6 Qg3+!** **4.Kh8!** 4.Kf8? Qd6+ 5.Kg8 Qxc6, –+. **4...Qxc7 5.Nxa6+!** **6.Nxd5+ Kxa5 7.Nxc7 Kb6!** **8.Nxa6! Kxa6 9.Kg7!! ...**

The desire to find a better introduction led me to the next position, in which the total number of pieces was reduced to 10.

No. 7 V. Tarasiuk

Československý šach, 2021
(after R. Réti)



The black pawn cannot be prevented from promoting, but it is too early for White to resign! **1.d6 b1Q** 1...cxd6 2.c7 b1Q 3.c8Q, =. **2.d7!** 2.dxc7? e.g. 2...Qg6+ 3.Kf8 Qxc6, –+. **2...Qg6+!** **3.Kh8!!** 3.Kf8? Qf6+! 4.Kg8 h5, –+. **3...Qd3 3...Qxc6 4.d8Q Qxb7 5.Qd2+ Ka3**

6.Qc3+ Qb3 7.Qxc7 =. **4.d8Q Qxd8+ 5.Nxd8 h5 6.Ne6!** 6.Kg7? Kxa5 7.Ne6 Kb6, –+. **6...Kxa5 7.Nxc7 Kb6 8.Nxa6!** It is ill-considered to play 8.Nd5+? Kxc6 9.Nf4 h4 10.Kg7 a5, –+. **8...Kxa6** The position looks familiar, doesn't it?! **9.Kg7!!** In the finale, White saves the game by playing according to Réti!

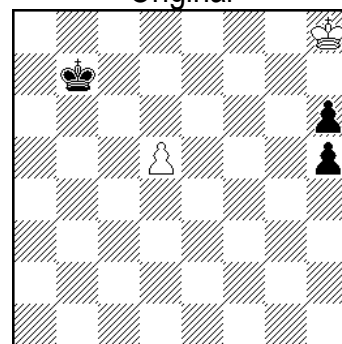
This version of the study was published in Richard Réti's homeland with a dedication to the 100th anniversary of the most famous study by the Czechoslovak grandmaster and composer.

My search related to the classical maneuver also evolved in another direction. The wish to present Réti's idea in a more paradoxical way inspired me to go on with my quest. I aspired to discover something new, hitherto unnoticed in the thoroughly explored well-known maneuver.

And in that search, I had a stroke of luck as I used a well-known technique: in the initial position of Réti's study, I shifted the black king and white pawn to adjacent squares, adding an extra black pawn on h6. Now White can be saved by a non-diagonal maneuver of the king.

No. 8 V. Tarasiuk

Original



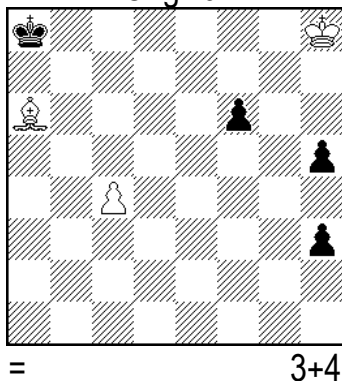
The first move is the one proposed by Réti! **1.Kg7! h4** 1...Kc7 2.Kf6! Kd6 3.Kf5 Kxd5 4.Kf4, =. But the second move is quite unexpected: **2.Kf7!!** Anti-Réti! It would be

erroneous to play 2.Kf6? h3! 3.d6 h2 4.d7 h1Q 5.d8Q Qh4+, -+; **2...h3 3.d6 Kc6! 4.Ke6!** 4.Ke7? h2 5.d7 h1Q 6.d8Q Qh4+, -+. **4...h2 5.d7 h1Q 6.d8Q Qe4+ 7.Kf7 Qf5+ 8.Qf6+!** 8.Kg7? Qg5+! 9.Qxg5 hxg5, -+. **8...Qxf6+ 9.Kxf6** and the pawn is stopped.

The attempt to add harmonious introductory play to the find was not very successful. But when the black pawn was shifted from h6 to f6, there emerged the contours of a future endgame study...

No. 9 V. Tarasiuk

Original

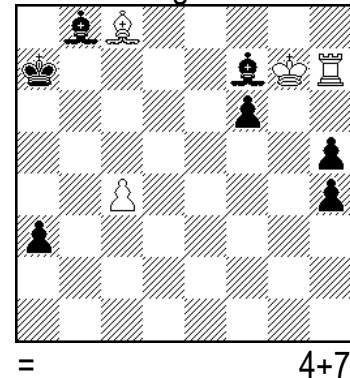


1.Bc8! An erroneous first move was also possible. 1.Bb5? Kb7 2.Bd7 h2, -+. **1...h2 2.Be6 h1Q 3.Bd5+ Qxd5 4.cxd5 Kb7! 5.Kg7! h4 6.Kf7!! 6.Kxf6? h3! 7.d6 h2 8.d7 h1Q 9.d8Q Qh4+, -+. 6...h3 7.d6 h2 8.d7 h1Q 9.d8Q Qh7+ 10.Ke6! 10.Kf8? Qh8+ 11.Ke7 Qxd8+, -+. 10...Qe4+ 11.Kf7! 11.Kd6? Qd4+ 12.Ke7 Qxd8+, -+. 11...Qh7+ 12.Ke6** – now the encounter ends differently: positional draw.

Is it possible to decoy the white king to the corner at the beginning of the play seen in that miniature? It turns out that the answer is yes.

No. 10 V. Tarasiuk

Original



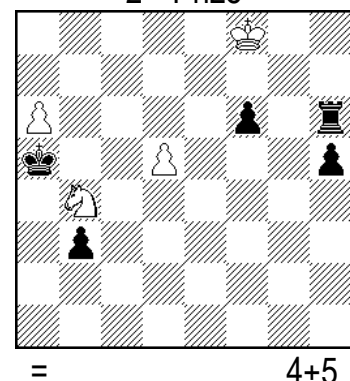
1.Kh8!! The king's move to the corner always looks unexpected and interesting. 1.Kxf7? a2 2.Kg6+ Kb6 3.Rb7+ Kc6, -+. **1...a2 2.Rxf7+ Bc7! 2...Kb6 3.Rxf6+ Kc7 4.Ra6, =. 3.Rxc7+ Kb8 4.Rb7+ Ka8 5.Rb6 a1Q 6.Ra6+ Qxa6 7.Bxa6 h3 8.Bc8!** and then same play as in No. 9.

Certainly, the pile of deadwood pieces leaving the board in the course of the solution is by no means attractive. After a while, a final version presenting the conceived idea was found.

No. 11 V. Tarasiuk

9th FIDE World Cup, 2021

2nd Prize



Black's material advantage is compensated by the white a6-pawn threatening to promote to a queen. **1.Kg7** White king will go on ruling over the upper part of the queenside until the end of the play. **1...Rg6+!** 1...Kb6 2.Nd3 h4 3.Kxh6 h3

4.d6 h2 5.Nf2 b2 6.d7 b1Q 7.d8Q+, =.
2.Kxg6 b2 3.a7 b1Q+ 4.Kg7! 4.Kxf6?
 Qa1(b2)+! -+. **4...Qg1+ 5.Kh8!! 5.Kf8?**
 Qc5+! 6.Kg8 Qc8+! -+. **5...Qxa7 6.Nc6+ Kb6**
7.Nxa7 Kc5! 7...h4 8.Nc8+ Kc7 9.Ne7 h3
 10.Nf5 h2 11.Ng3, =. **8.Nb5! Kxb5 8...Kxd5**
 9.Nc3+ Kd4 10.Ne2+ Ke3 11.Ng3! h4
 12.Nf5+, =. **9.Kg7!** by Réti! 9.Kg8? Kc5! -+.
9...h4 10.Kf7!! Anti-Réti! 10.Kxf6? loses in

view of 10...h3 11.d6 h2 12.d7 h1Q 13.d8Q
 Qh4+, -+. **10...Kc5 11.Ke6 h3 12.d6 h2**
13.d7 h1Q 14.d8Q Qe4+! 15.Kf7! 15.Kxf6?
 Qh4+, -+. **15...Qh7+ 16.Ke6! Qe4+ 17.Kf7**
 positional draw.

Similarly to No. 7, this study also owes
 its creation to the 100th anniversary of
 Richard Réti's study.

It is probably a manifestation of a higher law that the man who invented the paradoxical idea of the white king's pursuit of an unreachable black pawn was one of the founders of hypermodernism in chess (together with A. Nimzowitsch and D. Breuer), author of the book "Die neuen Ideen im Schachspiel" (1922) R. Réti, who was one of the top chess players of the 20th century. That idea became part of the heritage of the world chess culture.



On the way to finding new research!