

Variant Chess

Journal of the Chess Variants Society

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Vinciperdi

Two Games from the AISE 15th Losing Chess Championship

annotated by Laurent Bartholdi & Fabrice Liardet

(with assistance from IZNOGOUd)

We report on the first win of the first author's computer program, 'IZNOGOUd' in the 15th AISE Losing Chess Championship. IZNOGOUd had White against Roberto Salvadori (ranked 2245 ELO in the AISE bulletin).

The program ran on a Pentium/133 operated by Linux, a popular UNIX for PCs. Moves were entered manually and the machine was allowed to compute 24 hours per move. No human decisions were taken in the course of the game, except for the first two moves, which were chosen according to a compilation of 317 games, referred to as the *Losing Chess Informant*, or *LCI*, distributed by the tournament organiser, and interruption of the program when it obviously had only one move in mind.

A peculiarity of the program is that it has two computing modules, one conventional and one optimised to find deep tactical lines. The latter works as follows: it looks for moves leaving the least possible choice of moves to either opponent, thus finding winning moves and detecting lost positions at the same time. This technique is called 'p-n search' and was developed by the Dutchman Victor Allis in his PhD thesis.

In the report of this game, all variations were obtained by consulting IZNOGOUd and have only been edited to suppress obvious winning variations or repetitions. The second game, the nearest to a positional win he has so far achieved is mainly analysed by Liardet, playing White, whose score in the tournament at 18 November was 9:0, IZNOGOUd's was 7:0.

Let us recall that in this tournament, played by Italian rules, as opposed to 'International rules' (which Liardet recommends), a stalemate position draws (and does not win to the player being stalemated). Thus great care must be taken to get rid of all one's pawns.

[The symbol ']' is used to mean there is only one capture, and '□' marks a terminal position — the authors used different signs. The Allis 'p-n search' is reminiscent of Warnsdorf's method (1823) for knight's tours. GPJ]

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IZNOGOU V R. Salvadori

1. e2-e3

This is the only central pawn move White may play without immediate loss. It is considered best because it allows White to rid itself of a bishop. This in itself is one of the goals of the opening play.

1. ... b7-b5

The most common opening, with 1. ... e6. After the latter move White has many dangerous possibilities of complicating the position. Now after the forced 2. Bxb5 Black will have the extremely sharp line 2. ... Bb7?! which spawns tremendous complications.

2. Bf1xb5 c7-c6?!

A very unusual move. Black usually plays 2. ... e6 3. Bxd7 Nxd7 4. b4 or 2. ... Ba6 to get rid of one of its bishops. Here Black gives up this goal in favour of opening a line for its queen and developing a knight. He threatens 4. ... Nd4 5. exd4 e5 6. dxe5 Bd6, but White seems to get the advantage after the next two moves.

There are only six games with this opening in the *Losing Chess Informant*, with a score of five to one in favour of White. Among these one closely resembled this game, 2 were instant losses to a blunder (3...dxc6).

3. Bb5xc6 Nb8xc6

The only move. After 3. ... dxc6 4. Qg4! white clearly gives everything up. Finding one such winning move is a matter of milliseconds for IZNOGOU.

4. b2-b4

Better than 4. d4 Nxd4 5. Qxd4 Qa5! spawning a queen duet of unfathomable result (even for a computer).

4. ... Nc6xb4 5. a2-a4!

Otherwise 5. ... Nxa2 6. Rxa2 Ba6 and Black, getting rid of its bishop, equalises.

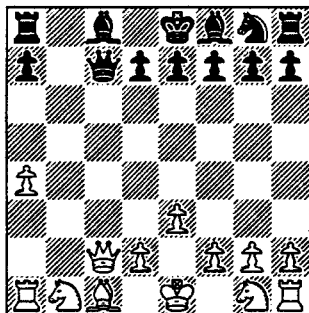
5. ... Nb4xc2 6. Qd1xc2

This is the variation's critical position. Now unless Black plays one of the less-than-engaging moves 6. ... h6 or 6. ... h5 his c8 bishop may well stay in its tomb till the end of the game.

♦ The computer, in this position, would have favoured 6. ... Qa5, but after 7. Qxh7 Qxa4 (or Rxh7 8. Na3 Qxd2 9. Bxd2! Rxh2 10.Rxh2 if then 10. ... Ba6 W has a forced win after Kf1. But he can play 10. ...Nh6! 11. Rxh6 gxh6, although 12. Ba5 looks good. Maybe best is 10. ... f6, PCW.) 8. Rxa4 Rxh7 9. Rxa7 Rxa7 10. Ba3 Rxa3 11. Nxa3 White has a definite edge. 6. ... g6 7. Qxg6 fxg6 may be the lesser evil. Note that in all these variations after 7. Qxc8 Black must recapture with his queen and not rook; then IZNOGOU finds no forced win.

Black's next move does nothing to help his position; quite the opposite.

6. ... Qd8-c7??

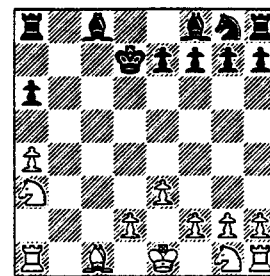


This move seems aggressive, but it loses outright. Finding the win took a mere five minutes for IZNOGOU. Incidentally the position was reached in game 116 of the *LCI*, Scovero - Madurini, which was aborted by Black's retirement from the tournament.

7. Qc2xc7 Ra8-b8?

♦ In view of the threat 8. Qxa7 Rxa7 9. Na3 Rxa4 10. Nb5 Rxa1 11. Ke2 Rxc1 12. Nh3 Rxh1 (13. f4 Rxh2 14. Ng1 Rxg2 15. Nf3 Rxe2 16.d4 Rxe3 17.d5 Rxg3 18.f5 Rxg5 19. Na3 Rxd5 20. Nb5 □ GPJ) Black has only two options: 7. ... Rb8 (as played) and
♦ 7. ... a6. the latter move is the best defence, but White can still claim a forced win with 8. Qxd7 Kxd7 (8. ... Bxd7 would only make things worse: 9. Na3 Bxa4 10. Kd1 | 11. Ne2 | 12.Rd1 |13. g4 |14. f3 | 15. e4 | 16. d3 | 17. Nc2 | 18. Rxa6 | 19. Ba3 | 20. h3). Do note that 8. Qxc8 does not win, or at least not tactically. After 9. Na3 [diagram] White threatens the deadly 10. Nb5 leaving Black little choice but 9. ... a5, 9. ... Rb8 or 9. ... Kc6. Indeed after for instance 9. ... Ke6 White follows by 10. Nb5 axb5

11. axb5 Rxa1 12. Ke2 Nh3 quite similar to the line above. We review these three moves one at a time:



Black to play loses

♦ If 9. ... Kc6 there is the simple 10. g4 (but not 10. Nb5?? Kxb5+) Bxg4 11. Kd1 Bxd1 12. Rb1 Bxa4 13. Rb8 Rxb8 14. Bb2 and the Black rook cleans the second and third row.

♦ If 9. ... Rb8 10. Bb2 Rxb2 11. Kf1 Rxd2 12. a5! Rxf2 13. Kxf2 and again White threatens 14. Nb5 axb5 15. Ra4 bxa4 16. a6 Bxa6 17. Kf1 with Black's bishop capturing everything. After 13. ... Kc6 14. Nb5 Kxb5 15. Rd1 Kxa5 16. g4 Bxg4 17. Kf1 Bxd1 18. Nf3 or 13. ... Bb7 14. Ke2 Bxg2 15. h4 Bxh1 16. Nb5 |17. Ra4 White wins nevertheless.

♦ If 9. ... a5! 10. Nc2. Now Black has to cope with the threat 11. Nb4 axb4 12. Rb1 Rxa4 13. Rxb4 Rxb4 14. e4 Rxe4 15. Bb2! Rxe1 16. Bxg7 Rxg1 (or Bxg7 17. Nh3) 17. Rxg1 Bxg7 18. Ra1 Bxa1 19. d4 and thus has to enter either of the lines 10. ... Rb8 11. Bb2 Rxb2 12. Ke2 Rxc2 13. Kf3 Rxd2 14. Ke4 Rxf2 15. Nh3 Rxg2 16. Rbh1 Rxh2 17. Ra3 Rxh3 18. Kf3 Rxf3 19. Rb5 Rxe3 20. Rxa5 Rxa3 21. Rb5 Rxa4 2. Ra5 □ and 10. ... f6! 11. f4! any (or Rb8 12. Bb2 Rxb2 13. Kf2) 12. Nb4 axb4 13. Rb1 Rxa4 14. Rxb4 Rxb4 15. e4 Rxe4 16. Kf2 Rxf4 17. Ne2 Rxf2 18. h4 | 19. d4.

It is quite remarkable that in this last variation no capture occurred between moves 8 and 12; IZNOGOU thus found a line containing many 'quiet' moves.

Now back to the moves played:

8. Qc7xd7! Rb8xb1

9. Ra1xb1 Ke8xd7

Here 9. ... Bxd7 10. Rb3 Bxa4 11. Bb2 Bxb3 12. Bxg7 | 13. Kd1 | 14. Ne2 | 15. Ra1 | 16. d3 | 17. e4 | 18. h3 | 19. f4 | 20. f5 is no better.

10. Rb1-b7

And Black resigns in view of 10. ... Bxb7 11. Ke2 Bxg2 12. Bb2 Bxh1 13. Bg7 | 14. e4 | 15. d4 | 16. Kd2 Bxf2 17. Nf3 | 18. Kd1 | 19. h3 Bxa4 20. h4.

F. Liardet v A. Mori

1. b3

White gets no opening advantage with this move. As an alternative to the normal 1. e3 one would better play 1. g3 (forbidding 1. ... e6), although after 1. ... b6 2. b3 g6 it is then difficult to find a useful move. First moves other than 1. e3, 1. b3, 1. b4, 1. g3, 1. g4 and perhaps 1. Na3 and 1. Nh3 hardly come into consideration in Losing Chess, because the opening battle focuses on getting rid of the bishops.

1. ... e6!

Now it would be pointless to play 2. b4. White has only three moves which can justify 1. b3, namely 2. e3, 2. Ba3 and the text move. None of them seems to give him an advantage.

2. Na3!?

This happened in no game of the AISE *Informator*, after 2 moves we are already in unknown terrain!

2. ... Bxa3 3. Bxa3

In Losing Chess, great care must always be taken when one of your bishops comes out. For example, if the Bf1 was not here, Black would win by 3. ... c5 4. Bxc5 Qg5! 5. Bxa7 Qxg2 6. Bxb8 Rxa2 7. Rxa2 Qxf2 8. Kxf2 e5 followed by the usual clean-up by the White bishop. But with the bishop on f1 White of course refutes this line by 6. Bxg2; after 3. ... c5 4. Bxc5 Black has other queen moves, none of which manage to annoy White.

On the other hand, White's plan is to give away the a3 bishop, and then to play e3 freeing the other bishop. Having few useful moves, Black decides to force a simplification which leads to an unbalanced, but completely even position; 3 ...b5! was an interesting alternative.

3. ... c5 4. Bxc5 Qa5

5. Bxa7 Qxa2 6. Rxa2

(6. Bxb8 loses to 6. ... Rxb8 7. Rxa2 Ra8)

6. ... Rxa7 7. Rxa7 b6 (7...b5!?)

8. Rxd7 Nxd7

The position has changed completely after these last 5 moves!

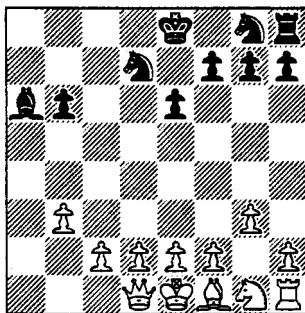
Let us try to summarise what is new: Black has lost his queen, which is a useful piece until the ending, where it is too powerful. In this position White's queen gives him the possibility of dangerous intermediate moves (as we will see). On the other hand, White's position is still completely undeveloped and a bit cramped. As a result, no side can claim an advantage here - 9.e3?? b5 being of course impossible, White must develop slowly.

9. g3

This is a semi-waiting move; it is never bad to give some air to a bishop. Now Black cannot play actively 9. ... Ne5?? (or 9. ... Nh6??), which would be punished by the white queen: 10. g4 Nxg4 11. Qa1! Nxh2 (11. ... Nxf2 12. Qxg7 Nxh1 13. Qxh7) 12. Qxg7 Nxf1 13. Rxh7 Nxd2 (13. ... Rxh7 14. Kxf1) 14. Kxd2 Rxh7 15. Qxf7 Kxf7 16. Nh3 Rxh3 17. c4 Rxb3 18. Kc3 Rxc3 19. f4 Rxc4 20. f5 exf5 21. e4 □.

9. ... Ba6?

How is it possible that this move is a mistake? It gets rid of a bishop, and this is reinforced by the fact that 10. e4 Bxf1 11. Kxf1 e5! is not very pleasant for White. In fact the right move is 9. ... Ne7!, and only then 10. ... Ba6 =.



10. Bg2! Bxc2 11. Nxe2

This is the key of the game! The bishop which seemed to be in prison only three moves ago now masters completely the long diagonal, depriving the Black knights of their mobility because of the control on the c6 square. Such a strong bishop is most unusual in Losing Chess, where bishops tend to be very bad pieces. This is not the case here because Black has no more pawns threatening

to come on this diagonal, except the e6 pawn which Ne2 can deflect on d4 if (as in the game) it moves to e5.

Let us recall here that this game is played with the AISE rules, where stalemate is counted as a draw. The result of this is that the defensive resources are enormous; for example it is very difficult for the side with the advantage to get rid of his blocked pawns. In this position, however huge White's positional advantage may be, the draw border is far from being overstepped, as we will see.

What can Black play now? Impossible is 11. ... Nc5?? because of 12. Qa1! Nxb3 13. Qxg7 Nxd2 14. Kxd2 (threatening 15. Qxg8 or 15. Qxh7) Nf6 15. Qxf7 Kxf7 16. g4. The natural plan would be to neutralise the Bg2 by playing 11. ... Kd8 with the idea Kc7; White would then play 12. b4!, because then 12. ... Kc7? would be countered by 13. Bc6 Kxc6 14. b5 Kxb5 15. c4 Kxc4 16. Nd4 Kxd4 17. Qh5 winning (IZNOGOD). No better would be 12. ... Nc5? 13. bxc5 bxc5 14. Bd5 exd5 15. c4 dxc4 16. Nd4 cxd4 17. Qh5 followed by d3, Ke2, Rf1; or 12. ... Kc8 threatening nothing, so that White still has a clear edge. Possible also are 11. ... Nh6! and 11. ... g5 12. d3 g4!?, but White has the initiative here too.

11. ... e5

This seemingly dubious move takes profit of the AISE rules by blocking some pawns, which usually increases the drawing chances. Despite the fact that Black is going to lose the game, this appears as a good move!

12. Nd4 exd4 13. d3

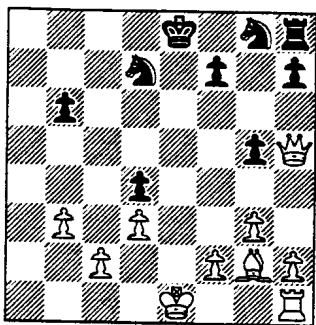
The same position played in a game with the international rules (stalemate = loss) would be a clear win for White, with the possibility of giving away the queen and then forcing the d4 pawn to promote. On the other hand, following this strategy under the AISE rules, White would at least remain with a blocked b-pawn, which would mean a draw.

13. ... g5!

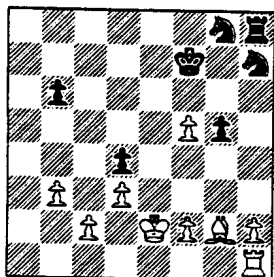
There are few other moves: a move like 13. ... Nc5?? is again refuted by 14. Qa1!. The idea of the

text move is 14. ... g4 15. Qxg4 Ngf6 16. Qxd7 Nxd7 and Black has nothing more to fear, so that White is pushed to:

14. Qh5



- ◆ This threatens 15. Qxh7, against which Black has only two sensible ways to defend, as 15. ... Ngf6 and 15. ... Ndf6 both lose to 16. Qxf7 Kxf7 17. c3 dxc3 18. Bd5 Nxd5 19. b4.
- ◆ The most secure move seems to be 14. ... Nf8?!, but it leads Black to a completely cramped position after 15. Qxh7 Nxh7 16. g4 (16. Ke2!?) f5 (White threatened 17. f4 gxf4 18. g5; to the same positions leads 16. ... f6 17. Be4! f5 18. gxf5 Kf7 19. Bb7) 17. gxf5 Kf7 (or Ke7; White threatened 18. f6) 18. Ke2



- ◆ This is the position that Black would have to defend as a consequence of 14. ... Nf8?!. One can see that the only Black pieces allowed to move are the king on the e7-g7 squares, the b- and the g-pawn (giving away the King on e6 or g6 loses). Nevertheless, Black will play b5-b4 blocking the b3 pawn and White will have to be very precise if he does not want to allow the knights to move.
- ◆ A possibility is 18. ... b5 19. Bb7 b4 20. Ra1, where White intends to play Kf3, Kg3 and then f4 (gxf4) Kxf4 winning. A fine variation by IZNOGUD is 20. ... Kf6?? 21. Kd2! Kxf5 22. h4 gxf4 23. f4 Kxf4 24. Bf3 Kxf3 25. Ke2 Kxe2 26. Rh1! Kxd3 27. Rxb4 Kxc2 28. Rxd4 Kxb3 29. Rxb4 □.

However, it is still quite possible that Black can defend successfully. It is like this with the AISE rules: a win

by only positional means is very difficult to achieve; you may be better off waiting for a blunder by your opponent (this is going to be the case in this game, although the blunder is not a completely trivial one).

14. ... Nh6!

At first glance this seems losing because of White's three next moves, but Black can still defend successfully. His position hangs by a thread, but if he manages to find the only non-losing moves, he will equalise!

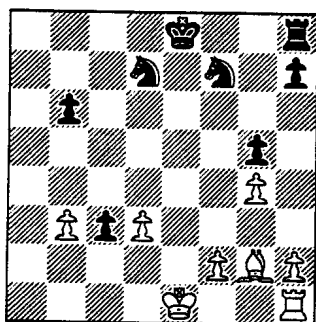
15. Qxf7 Nxf7

15. ... Kxf7 loses to 16. c3 dxc3 17. Kd2 cxd2 18. g4 Nxg4 19. Ra1

16. c3!

This is the most dangerous move: if 16. g4 at once then 16. ... Nfe5! and Black is saved.

16. ... dxc3 17. g4



Now the threat is 18. f4 gxf4 19. g5 Nxg5 20. Bh3 Nxh3 21. Kf2 Nxh2 22. Rg1! Nxd3 23. b4 Nxh4 24. Rg6 hxg6 25. h4 □, against which Black can defend in no less than eight different ways, all losing but one: 17. ... Nd8?, 17. ... Nh6? (or 17. ... Nf6?), 17. ... Nfe5? (or 17. ... Nde5?), 17. ... Nc5?, and 17. ... Rg8?, are easy to solve, 17. ... h5? requires a bit more precision from White, and 17. ... Nd6? is the text move.

The only move is 17. ... h6!!, after which IZNOGUD finds no forced win for White. For instance he wins neither by 18. f4 gxf4 19. g5 because of 19. ... hxg5! and White stays at least with his b-pawn, nor by 18. Kd2 cxd2 19. f4 gxf4 20. g5 Nxg5! 21. Bh3 Nxh3 and White has nothing more to play on f2.

After 18. Ke2 the threat is renewed, but Black plays 18. ... Rf8!, after which his position is stabilised, and he will equalise either by 19. ... c2 or by activating his king.

So the whole variation beginning with 11. ... e5 is justified for Black!

17. ... Nd6?

Now the knight controls the b5 square, which allows

18. Kd2! cxd2 19. Re1

All five promotions (do not forget the king!) are now losing; 19. ... dxe1=Q and 19. ... dxe1=N are simple, 19. ... dxe1=K 20. Bh1 Kxf2 21. Bf3 Kxf3 22. b4 Kxg4 23. h3 Kxh3 24. b5 Nxh5 25. d4 □ and 19. ... dxe1=R 20. f4 gxf4 21. Bh1 Rxh1 22. h4 Rxb4 23. b4 Rxb4 24. b5 Nxh5 25. d4 □ are not too complicated, and in the game White still needs a little finesse:

19. ... dxe1=B 20. Bd5!

and Black resigns: 1-0. There follows 20. ... Bxf2 21. d4 Bxd4 22. Bg8 Rxb8 23. h4 gxf4 24. b4 Rxb4 25. b5 □. Up to the end the White bishop has been the hero of this game.

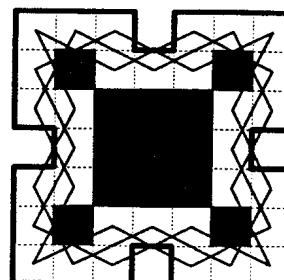
Puzzle Corner

by George Jelliss

The number of octonary knight's tours on the 7x7 area is eight. Using the numbering shown below the tours are 1.7.4.2, 3.8.7.4.2, 3.4.7.8.2 and 3.8.7.4.9 (three shapes). Each formula represents two tours, since, on this and any larger areas (oddxodd), the moves 4.7 can be taken either across a diagonal (which I write 4;7 or across a median, 4:7).

9	8	7	6	7	8	9
8	5	4	3	4	5	8
7	4	2	1	2	4	7
6	3	1	0	1	3	6
7	4	2	1	2	4	7
8	5	4	3	4	5	8
9	8	7	6	7	8	9

The example on p.22 of the last issue was 3.8.7;4.9. The corresponding 3.8.7:4.9 is shown here. **Puzzle for solution: construct an octonary tour of maximum length on a 9x9 area.**

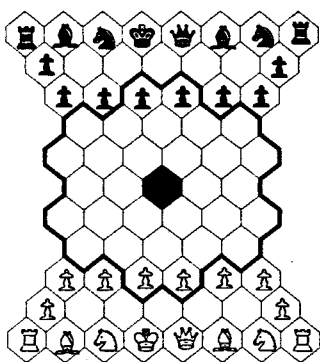


GAMES GALORE !

by David Pritchard

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SHAOLIN SOVEREIGN CHESS This hexagonal variant (three variants I suppose, since the game is adapted for two, three or six players) was developed over a twelve-year period. Invented by R. D. Planesi, the game is played with the usual men arrayed at the start of a two-player game on a board of 69 regular hexagons (similar to our redrawn illustration).



Notice that the positions of king and queen are reversed in relation to their orthochess positions and the bishop and knight on the (new) king's side are transposed. (With the superior IQ of a VC reader, you will be able to work out why.) Because there are only two bishops a side, they can only cover two-thirds of the board, hence the introduction of a third bishop (the Sovereign Bishop) during the game — see below.

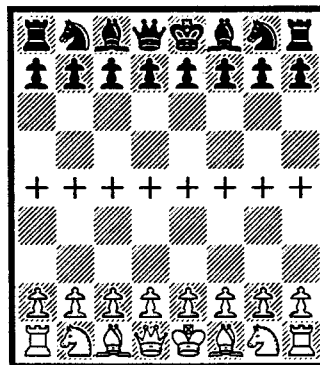
When they are within the central area of 31 cells the Pawns move one cell rookwise, and capture one step bishopwise in any direction within the area, but when they are outside this area they can only move forward. Thus in the initial position the pawns immediately adjacent to the rooks, known as Sovereign Rook's Pawns, have only one direction of capture, while the two pawns at either end of the third rank have two, and the two central pawns have three. All pawns have the option of moving two cells forward (rookwise) on their first move, but this is subject to e.p. capture by opposing pawns and pieces.

The central hex is dark and there is a ring of 18 shaded hexes around it (only the outer border of these is shown in our diagram). The perimeter of the shaded hexagons is known as the Sovereignty Line. Once a pawn crosses the SL (two have done so at start of play) it may not return to its own territory. Similarly when a pawn enters the opponent's territory (beyond the SL) it must move towards the promotion line and cannot move sideways or backwards.

A pawn that occupies the central hex (known as an 'attainment') permits the player to enter a Sovereign (third) Bishop on the king's cell (if vacant). A player may only have one Sovereign Bishop on the board at any one time. Once lost, a Sovereign Bishop may be replaced by a pawn achieving an attainment. Promotion is effected on the opponent's back rank. Promotion is to any piece other than a king. Promotion of a pawn to a Sovereign Bishop can only occur if the pawn moves to the hex occupied by the opponent's king at the start of a game. (This seems an unnecessary restriction: a player would opt for a SB rather than a Queen in about one game in a million, assuming that number are ever played?) Is that all clear?

By contrast, piece movement is standard (see VC18 p.157 or VC8 p.97), for example a knight on the central hex attacks the 12 outer shaded hexes. After that, you'll be relieved to hear that check, checkmate and stalemate are orthodox. Castling however has an original twist: the rook as well as the king must not be under attack at the time, nor must it pass over a square that is under attack. This game is known as Freedom2. The three-player game, known as Freedom3 is played with three sets of orthodox men on a 94-cell board whilst the six-player game (Freedom6) is played on a 271-cell board. Interested readers should write to R. D. Planesi, 1008-10th Street, No. 707, Sacramento CA 95814, U.S.A.

SECTION CHESS This variant is the invention of Janos Tury who has also invented other games. It cannot be said to be popular as only one set exists and the board for that (which has been patented) cost nearly £1,000.



Usual men but the board (with reversed chequering from usual) has an additional rank of blank squares, initially across the middle of the board. All the black and white squares can be slid backwards or forwards (not sideways) into a space, but only if occupied. The rules of chess apply except that no man, except a knight, may cross a blank square. All other men who desire to cross move first to the square immediately behind a blank square. The knight also retains this option, considerably increasing its powers. The next time the piece or pawn moves it advances into the blank square together with the square it stands on (thereby creating a space behind it). It may now move off as part of its move. As an example, if the WQ moves to d4. Assuming d5 is blank, the queen

would now be threatening h9 etc. (After this move the blank in the d-file is at d4.) A retreating piece would be similarly constrained on reaching a blank square. Notice that bishops can change square colour. Once the row of blanks across the centre has been broken up it may be possible for pieces to pass through in places without hindrance. As the inventor remarks, "the game complexity increases to innumerable variations and challenges even the most experienced player."

THE GAME OF ISIS This handsome game was described in *Games & Puzzles* as a chess variant so I'm giving it the benefit of the doubt. Invented by Adam Godfroy in 1993, Isis is an abstract game played on a 12x12 chequerboard. In each half of the board there are eight marked squares, symmetrically sited, designated as energy zones, two each coloured blue, green, red and yellow. The players (White and Black) have eight pieces, two each of Dolphin Wave (blue; moves as rook), Gaia (green; moves as bishop), Dance of Energy (red; moves as wazir), Moon Pyramid (yellow; moves as fers). The pieces are made of melamine (or something similar) and occupy in the array the energy squares corresponding to their colours. A piece entering an energy zone of the same colour can change direction ('bounce') as part of the same move. Capturing, which is allowed under certain conditions, is by displacement. The game ends when one player has moved all his (remaining) pieces into the corresponding target (opponent's) energy zones or is annihilated. There is a scoring system to determine the winner. The rules helpfully include a whole page on strategy. The quality of production is only slightly short of superb, an added pleasure. What is the significance of the names? Isis of course is the Egyptian goddess but an explanation of the symbolism represented by the various pieces regrettably exceeds the space available here.

The price is £49.95 post free anywhere. Write to the inventor: Adam Godfroy, 90 Hunny Hill, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5HN, England.

DAKINI CHAKRA This Chakra variant was invented by Gianluca Vecchi (for rules of Chakra, see VC13 pp 65-6). Board 8x8; each side has 1 x King, Queen, Rook, Bishop; 2 x Knight, Gauri, Chakra; 6 x Pawn. The K & Q are orthodox; the R and B move as their promoted counterparts in Shogi (i.e., B can also move one square orthogonally, R one square diagonally). The N moves as a Squirrel (as N, or two squares as Q, leaping intervening square). The Gauri moves as a K but with extra powers. If a Q-move away from a friendly Chakra, with no intervening men, it has two additional options: it may move any number of squares along that line (and may leap the C if desired). Alternatively, it can move to the C, transfer to the other C, and then move off with the same power (i.e., as B or R) in the one turn. A P moves one square forward, straight or diagonally, retaining initial two-square option; promotes on end rank

to a captured piece (if none, move is illegal). A Chakra has additional powers: any unit of either colour, other than another C, may move on top of a C. Until the C is occupied it cannot move. A man occupying a C may be captured. If a man, other than a K, occupies a friendly C, it may move directly to the other C provided it is vacant or is occupied by an enemy man, which is captured. Any man may pass over a friendly C. The object of the game is to capture the enemy K or leave the opponent without a move. There is no checking or castling. The array is (a1-h1/h8-a8) NGBQKRGN (a2-h2/h7-a7) CPPPPPPC. Chakras start with squares face up.

HERALDIC CHESS GAMES The third word of the title is important as it makes clear that this commercial set is not in itself a game. Rather it is a basis for a variety of games involving chance, the players being invited, in effect, to make their own rules from a number of suggestions offered.

The sturdy box contains a set of wooden chessmen each identified by a band of colour (so all the eight pawns have different colour bands). In addition, there are 64 good-quality playing cards, four cards matching in colour and piece symbol each of the 16 men. Thus the knights, both white and black, are colour-banded respectively red and green and so are represented by four red and four green knight cards. There are also eight heraldic cards which serve as jokers. Finally, there are three cubic dice the 18 faces of which correspond to the 16 men, again identified by colour, and two jokers.

The games suggested use either the cards or the dice to determine the man to be moved. (There is surely an imbalance in favour of pawn moves?) The rules are in Spanish and English. Alas, the English translation can only be described as atrocious: it is stilted, at times near-incomprehensible, and liberally scattered with typos. It is a more-or-less literal translation of the Spanish; thus the Spanish word 'modalidades' meaning, roughly, 'characteristics', is rendered as 'modalities'. A section headed "Variations into pieces' way" (really!) puts forward new pieces, or if you like new powers for old pieces. The K becomes a Battler King which moves and captures as a Q but is reduced to a K move when checked. Bs and Rs become 'Manoeuvring Bishops and Castles' with the additional powers of moving, but not capturing, one square orthogonally and one square diagonally respectively. To avoid blocked positions, it is suggested that pawns be allowed to move additionally one square diagonally forward and, as a further, alternative extension to move one square in any direction, but capturing diagonally only; no promotion. The N has its powers increased to include that of Q but without right of capture. Again there is no guidance: players are free to adapt any or all of these changes. Heraldic Chess can be ordered from the inventor: Modest Solans, Dr. Oliva 9, 18500 Guadix, Grenada, Spain.

ISOLATED**DAWNS**

by David Pritchard

40. NECROMANCER This game was described in VC21. Since there is no provision for extra pieces, a Thrall that transmutes (promotes) when both Wizards or Crusaders are still on the board is replaced by one of these. (There can be considerable advantage in getting a Wizard on the grey diagonals in the early stages or a Crusader on the back rank.) The inventor, Kevin Cullen, has done considerable research into the opening and endgame which has led to the present array and rules. Because of the game's symmetry, Black can usually imitate White's moves and only depart from them when advantageous to do so. White on the other hand can only break the symmetry by checking the Necromancer. Cullen notes interestingly that the ending N v N is usually decisive because of the influence of the Demons. Here is a short game: 1. Wg1-h2 We7-d6 2. Til-h3 Tc7-d5 3. Th3-g5+ Nf7-g6 4. Wel-f2 mate, although I am not sure why (answers on a postcard please).

41. DOUBLE SKAK Here are two recent correspondence games (rules in VC21). Comments based on those by the winner.

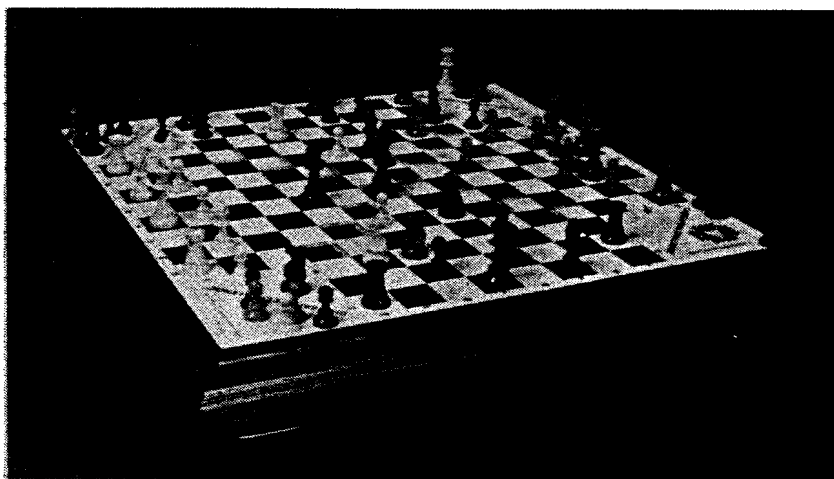
(1) **White** Soren Kirk **Black** Jens Baek Nielsen White (hl) starts, then counter-clockwise. 1.e2 ff6 a5 a4 2. Be3 Ng5 d8 Nc3 3. B:g5? h:g5 Bc6 dl! (both Black forces now attack White's Q-force - an effective strategy) 4.d2 Q:h3 Rb7 Nb5 5.Qgl (White could have played g4 to cover c8) Qf5 Kb8!? Nd4 6.Qe3 g4 (White's Ns are badly placed) b5 N:c6+ 7.Rf2 Qd7 N:c6 e! (again a double attack) 8.Rf4 Q:c6 resigns.

(2) **White** Jens Baek Nielsen **Black** Soren Kirk 1.ff3 ff6 Nb5 Nb4 2.f4 Bc4! (Black already has strong pressure) Ka7 Ka2? (Nxa6!) 3.Be3 f5 Nd6 Nc6+ 4.R:c2

(desperation?) R:c7 Ka8 b:c2 5.g4 Re7 N:c4 N:b8 (Black seems to have lost his way) 6.Qd5 Qg7 N:a3+ resigns (if K:a3 7.Bc5+; if Kal 7.Qa5).

42. CHESSapeak CHALLENGE

This game, described in VC18, appears to be going from strength to strength. The Tourney model, which I described, is now on the market at C\$ 54.99 and there is also a crafted Masters model (photo) at C\$ 174.95.



The original CHESSapeak Challenge set remains at C\$ 34.99, postage and packing extra for all sets.

The inventor has reached agreement with the people who took on Trivial Pursuit in 1985 so the future looks quite bright, almost unheard of for a chess variant. Write to J. Bruce Jones, 71 Birch Hill Lane, Oakville, Ontario L6K 2P1 Canada.

43. GRAND CHESS Christiaan Freeling's Grand Chess (see VC19 pp 181-2) is gaining adherents thanks to the Internet. Yerevan has proved a success: no less than 21 chess masters are engaged in a tournament; none have played the game previously. Vardan Melkonyan of Armenia leads with 7/7. The site is at www.cyberco.m.nl/~freeling/GRANDCHESS/GrandChess.html. (Full stop to end the paragraph, otherwise ignore!)

44. FISCHERANDOM I was a guest speaker at the annual dinner of The Staunton Society at Simpsons-in-the-Strand recently and gave a short talk on Fischerandom (described in VC18 as Bobby-Fischer Chess, what's in a name?). Afterwards a few members tried their hand at the game. From all I've heard the much-heralded launch of the game in Brazil was a flop, Fischer promptly returning to Europe not noticeably poorer.

FISCHERANDOM

Further Notes by Peter Wood

Bobby Fischer's version of Randomised Chess has generated much publicity, but no games. The well publicised match between Eugene Torre and Pablo Ricardi, due to take place last July in La Plata in Argentina, was cancelled: 'the sponsors did not come through' (*Chess Monthly*).

Fischer is quoted as saying that computers would be at a considerable disadvantage in Fischerandom because, as I understand it, they would have no access to their huge opening databases. But I believe they would still put up a good show, as they should be able to orientate themselves quicker than humans in the tactics of unusual opening formations. It is surprising that there have not been computer championships in randomised chess. They would be easy enough to set up.

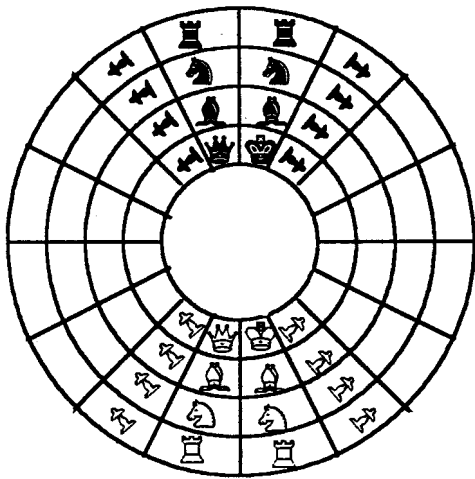
Hans Bodlaender has organised the 1st WW Progressive Fischerandom Chess Tournament on the Internet - Scottish Chess rules. The closing date was 15th November, unfortunately this magazine learnt of the event too late to give it advance publicity.

Cylinder Chess

by George Jelliss

The earliest type of bent-board chess is a game described by the Arab historian al-Masudi (died 956 AD) in his *Muruj adh-dhahab (Fields of Gold)* 947 AD and described in more detail in several later manuscripts.

The board and opening position in this game, usually called **Byzantine Round Chess** (though it was played at other times and places, e.g. by Ala'addin, chess adviser to Timur in Samarkand circa 1400 AD) can be regarded as formed from the usual opening position by splitting the board down the middle (between the king and queen sides) and joining the short ends of the two halves, thus making a board of 16 radial 'ranks' and 4 circular 'files'.



The pieces denoted here by queen and bishop symbols are of course the Fers and Alfil of mediaeval chess. The K and F(Q) of one colour were usually interchanged so that the two fers moved on the same set of cells. There was no pawn promotion; if two pawns met head-on the opponent removed them. (It is not strictly correct to call this game 'Byzantine Chess'; this would be the normal form of chess played in Byzantium, which would have been Shatranj, known locally under the Greek name of Zatrikion.)

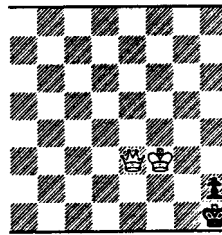
Numerous forms of **Modern Round Chess** have been proposed, played with the modern forces. I suggest the new rules that a blocked pawn may make a diagonal move (like a phantom capture), and that a pawn promotes on making a complete circuit of the board. The pawns would then need to be marked with eyes to show which way they are travelling! In the above diagram it is assumed that pawns move head-first (in our other diagrams White pawns move head-first and Black pawns feet-first).

The modern form of **Cylinder Chess** is in fact played on a normal board, but the right and left edges of the board are imagined to be joined in such a way that a piece can move off one edge and reappear at the opposite edge, moving in the same or a parallel line. The practical difficulties of playing on an actual cylinder (such as

seeing the whole position and stopping pieces falling off!) could no doubt be overcome with a little ingenuity, but chess variants are really about changes in the rules, not the equipment. The same game can also be played on a circular board, with Black's side of the board contracted to a point, or to a small circular hole, in the centre, and White's side as the circumference. However, the outer cells are then eight times as wide as the innermost cells. Teodoro Ciccolini, Marchese di Guardigliere, gave such a board diagram in his book *Del Cavallo degli Scacchi* 1836 (but the knight's tour he gives on it is ordinary, not including any move across the line of the join).

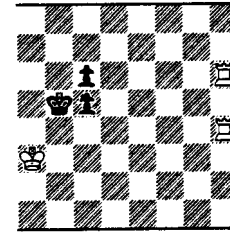
The earliest cylinder chess problem may be (A) and the earliest example to show a complete circle move (sent to me by J. C. Dumont) may be (B).

(A) A. Piccinini
Revista Scacchistica
Italia 1907 (version)



Mate in 2
1. Qa3 Kg1 2. Qc1†

(B) A. W. Mongredien
Bulletin de la FFE
No.19, 1926



Mate in 2
1. Rh4-h4 any 2. Rh4-h5†

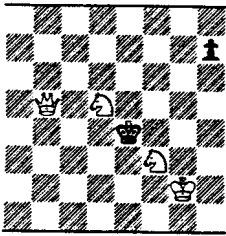
T. R. Dawson wrote about Cylinder Chess in the *Problemist Fairy Chess Supplement* December 1931 p.50: "One or two readers have objected to the idea that in cylinder chess a rook (say) may move from b5 round the cylinder and back to b5, on the ground that this is merely picking a man up and putting it down on the same square. I cannot agree with this limitation of cylinder play, for the circular return move is really the most interesting novelty of cylinder play, is in fact 'real cylinder' play, and its study is worth attention quite as much as any other geometrical feature of the cylinder board." Since then many other forms of 'null move' have become almost commonplace.

W. Roesse (in *Die Norag* 12 Feb 1926) gave a position (WKe1, Rd8; BKe3, Qe4) in which he mischievously claimed that White could draw by making an 'infinite' rook move round the top rank. Hence the need to play Cylinder Chess with a time limit on moves!

C. S. Kipping in *The Problemist* 1934 commented: "Some of the great Bohemian composers, including Havel and Mach, have published several hundreds of cylinder problems in recent years."

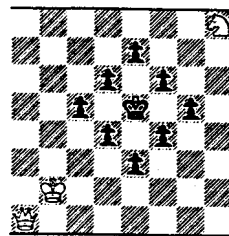
Another prominent feature of cylinder play is the convergence of two diagonal lines from one piece onto the same square, its antipode, a (4, 4) leap away, thus making possible double checks from a single piece, and double pins and other effects.

(C) A. Mandler
Prager Presse
1928



Mate in 2
1. Qb7 K-d3/f5/P-
2. Q-h7/b1/a8†

(D) P. Frey
Fairy Chess Review
1938

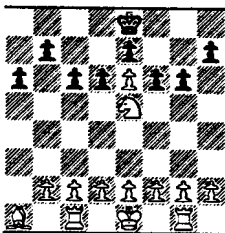


Mate in 2
1. Nf7 K-d5/e4/6/f5
2. Q-h1/a8/a2/b1 (1.Ng6? Ke4!)

It may be noted that in setting a problem composers often rotate the board to a position where the moves are the most difficult to see, so it often helps to rotate the position to see more clearly what is going on. The retro-analysis expert Luigi Ceriani composed a number of ingenious problems like (E) in which the board has been rotated and you are required to identify which is the a-file!

An effect of the cylinder on castling, shown in (F), only seems to have been realised much later.

(E) L. Ceriani
Die Schwalbe
1933

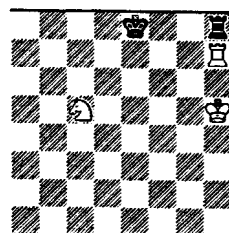


Which is the a-file?
(ignore chequering)

In (E) 'a1' must be either c1 or f1 since the bishop has not moved. The WP on the 7th rank came from 'a2' by four captures on the same colour cells. The BB 'a8' was captured at home, so one of the four captures must have been of a rook. The only way a rook could have got out is if there were a pair of captures by the black pawns (e.g. 'c7'x'd6' and 'd7'x'c6'). The other WB was taken at home. So WQ must have come out to be captured. Thus 'a1' cannot be f1 since the WQ is then trapped between K and QR, preventing castling. But with 'a1' at c1 the Q can get out via c2. So the real a-file is the current 'g-file'.

In (F) the set play is 1. ... Na6 2. 0-0 Rg7† or 2. '0-0-0' Rc7†. The solutions are 1. 0-0 Na6 2.Rf7 Rh8† and 1.'0-0-0' Ne6 2. Rb8 Rc7† Where '0-0-0' denotes queen-side castling with the king's rook! Also feasible is '0-0', king-side castling with the queen's rook.

(F) K. Hannemann
Thema Danicum
1976



Helpmate in 2, 2 ways
with set play (2 var)

Progressive Cylinder Chess is a crazy game recently introduced into the AISE competitions. It combines Cylinder Chess with Progressive Chess in which the number of moves increases by one at each turn. I thought I would try it out. The following are my games in the 1995 Grand Prix event. I enjoyed the games but scored only 4/12. First some awful examples of what can go wrong:

Fabio Forzoni v GPJ: 1. g4 2. b5, d5 3. Nc3xb5xc7† (double check, the second from Bf1) 1-0.

GPJ v Gabrielle Cornacchini: 1. Na3 2. c6, g6 3. b4, h4, Nf3 4. Qxh4, Ba5, ..., Qxf2† 0-1.

GPJ v Michele de Giglio: 1. g4 2. g6, b5 3. Bxb5-a4, Nf3 4. c6, Qg3, Ba5, Qxf2† 0-1.

The Italian Progressive rule that every sequence has to have the full complement of moves leads to some very odd 'Italian mates' that I find difficult to see:

GPJ v F.Forzoni: 1. Na3 2. e5, d5 3. b4, Nh3, g4 4. Ac5, Qh4, ..., Qxf2† (not Nxf2 since Bf1 checks) 0-1.

GPJ v Vito Rallo: 1. Na3 2. d5, e5 3. Ng4, b4, Bxd8 4. f6, Nc6xb4xc2† (not Qxc2 since it checks BK) 0-1.

Now three slightly longer games; in the last two the mating sequences begin with 'real cylinder' rook captures.

Aldo Kustrin v GPJ: 1. c3 2. b5, Bh5 3. Qxh5-c8xd8† 4. Kxd8, Pb4xc3-c2 5. Ph4-h5-h6xg7xf8 =Q† 1-0.

GPJ v Tiziano Sala: 1.g4 2. g6, b5 3. Bxb5, h4, Nh3 4. e5, Qxh4xh3xh1† 5. R(a1)xh1, b3, Nc3-d5xc7† (Bc1 guards e7, d8) 1-0.

T. Sala v GPJ: 1. c3 2. c6, g6 3. b4, Bh4xd8 4. Kxd8, b5, Bh5xd1 (not N-f6-e4, A-a5xf2 as Ad8xf2!) 5. P-a4xb5, Rxa7xa8xb8† 6. R(h8)xb8-a8-a2-c2-c1, Bc2† A nice rook journey. 0-1.

Finally some longer games, including some nice mate positions and final sequences:

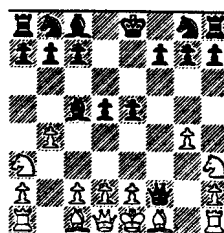
GPJ v A. Kustrin: 1. g4, 2. c6, d5 3. b4 Bh4xd8 4. Kxd8, Bxg4xe2xd1 5. P-b5xc6xb7xa8=Q, Qxh8 6. Bf3, Kc7, Na6-b4, a5, Nxc2† 0-1.

M. De Giglio v GPJ: 1.c3 2. Nh6, e6 3. b4, Bxd8, Nh3 4. Ng4xf2xd1, Kxd8 5. b4-b5-b6xa7xh8=Q, Qxa8 6. b6, Nc6-d4xe2-d4-c2† (pinned Bc8 guards e2, d1) 0-1.

V. Rallo v GPJ: 1. g4 2. g5, Bxd2† (shock tactics) 3. Qxd2, e4, Nf3 4. Nf6xe4xd2xf3† 5. Ke2xf3, Bxg5xe7xd8 6. Kxd8, Re8, R(a8)-g8xg4, b5, Bb7† (Pb5 shuts off Bf1 and the Bb7 checks WK and guards Rg4) 0-1.

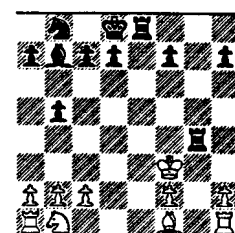
G. Cornacchini v GPJ: 1. g4 2. g5, Bxd2† 3. Bxd2, B(f1)-a4xf7† 4. Kxf7, Nf6-e4xd2 5. Qxd2xd7xc8xd8, Kd2 6. h7-h5xg4-g3xf2xg1=Q, Rxd8† 7. Kc3, Na3-b5xc7, R(a1)xg1xg5, Rf1† 1-0.

GPJ v FF



Italian mate! (NxQ?)

VR v GPJ



Mate! (KxR?)



PROBLEM PAGES

conducted by **Ronald Turnbull**
 Highland Cottage, Gatelawbridge, Thornhill
 Dumfriesshire DG3 5EA



INTRODUCTION

Allow me to introduce myself — see Problem (A). Neither side may give check, unless checkmate. If White tries to open the battery by 1:Kc2†, Black can't reply 1... B×d1, check to White, but has 1... Bd2. Whereas if 1:Kc3† not 1... Bd2†?? but 1... B×d1. So these WK moves, check but not mate, are both illegal.

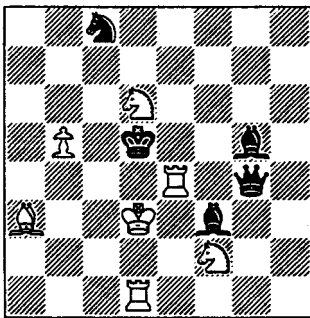
And therefore which are, by the normal human brain, soluble. I do not regard difficulty as a merit in a fairy problem. Often, it's only too easy to make up a fiendishly difficult — and dreary — problem in fairy form. Try, for instance, Madrasi or Imitator. Problem (B), now, is what I call nasty. Easy to compose but not to solve, and not all that exciting even if you managed to do so.

Since (B) is my own I can be as rude about it as I like. It has economy but no theme. Since Black is heavily restricted with Imitator, why couldn't it be a direct mate? It's not even truly minimal: White can mate with bare king in Imitator. And a helpmate in 3 — well it's just about OK to have one solution but two would be better. But mostly what's wrong with it is, it's too damned hard. (Prove me wrong. Solve the horrid thing without looking at the end of the article. An even greater challenge: enjoy doing so!)

(Alternatively the knights at the back — a8, b8 — can be replaced by rooks. In a fairy problem, promoted force is less relevant — how did that Imitator get onto the board? — and the composer preferred to minimise the number of different sorts of force in the diagram.) Note the Bh8 is there to meet 1:Kb6† (1h3) with 1... Bf6 (1f1).

A principle of Economy of Effort suggests that a problem should be no harder than it needs to be to express the idea within it. Problem (D) — which I applaud — shows a difficult idea, and is correspondingly difficult.

(A) Ronald TURNBULL
Diagrammes 1994



Checkless Chess, Mate in 2

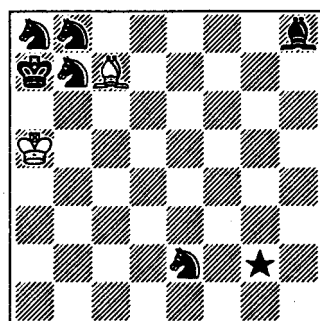
My prejudices are in favour of problems I enjoy — and I enjoy economy, pointedness and surprise. I enjoy frivolity. Most of all, I enjoy a problem I've managed to solve as against one I've simply read the solution of. (So, for your greater pleasure, the solution to (A) is at the end of the article.) Heavy, serious work would normally be submitted to *The Problemist*, or to one of the main French or German magazines. For this column I'm hoping for problems which are enjoyable to solve.

(B) Ronald TURNBULL
 Original



Imitator h1, Helpmate in 3

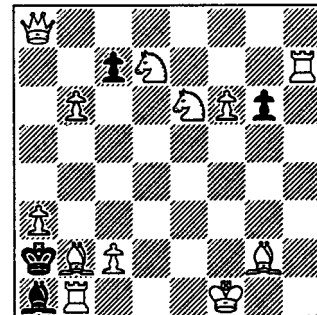
(C) John BEASLEY
 (after Jack CREED)
The Problemist 1989



Imitator g2, Mate in 2

Whereas problem (C), while probably tough to compose, is reasonably easy to solve. Problem (C) gives me pleasure each time I contemplate it. Set it up and solve it; please do. You say you don't have four black knights? Come now — you've surely got a couple of pepperpots in your house.

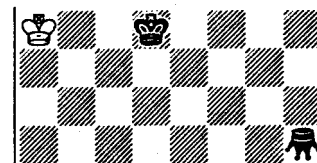
(D) Klaus WENDA
 1st Prize *The Problemist* 1986



Madrasi Chess, Proca Retractor
 Retract 8 and Selfmate in 1

In a Proca Retractor: each side retracts in turn, not co-operating, striving for a position with forward selfmate in one. I'll happily publish the likes of (D) — if I'm lucky enough to get offered them — though probably with hints for solving.

(E) G. UMNOV
 3rd Prize, Minimanner
 of the Year Tourney, 1979
 (diagram rotated +90°)

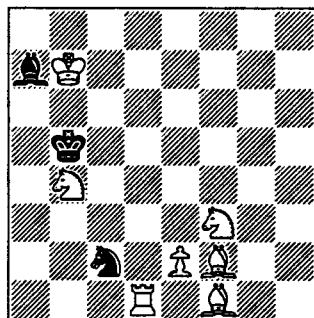


Grasshopper a1
 Helpstalemate in 5
 (b) ♖d4→e5

I regard each fairy piece or stipulation as equivalent to 4 extra units. So a Grasshopper problem with 3 units, like Problem (E), runs level with an orthodox miniature.

A problem with two fairy pieces / stipulations and ten units is already a 'heavy' setting, as in Problem (F), (Here the usual Circe and Madrasi rules apply to kings also. So kings may paralyse one another: an attacked king isn't in check unless his rebirth square is blocked.)

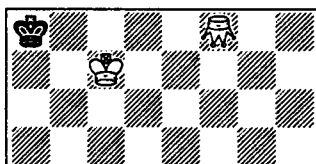
(F) Mark RIDLEY
The Problemist 1986



King Circe + King Madrasi
Reflexmate in 2

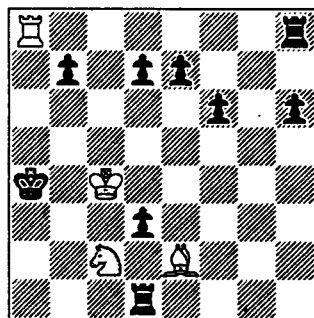
However, perhaps it's harsh to condemn the delightful Problem (G) as having 'eleven units'. (A Royal Wazir is a king without the power of diagonal movement. So 1: Wb7 stalemates.)

(G) Erich BARTEL
Problem Kiste 1984
(diagram rotated +90°)



Royal Wazirs, Grasshopper f8
Mate in 29

(H) Colin VAUGHAN
& Norman MACLEOD
Bournemouth Fairies 1989



Circe + Madrasi
Helpmate in 2, 2 solutions

Problem (H), again, shows an effect only possible where these two stipulations combine. It's no prize-winner, but shows a pleasing lightness of touch. The two solutions harmonise neatly, and it's not too hard. Problems with three (or more!) fairy stipulations will have to be very, very good for me to like them.

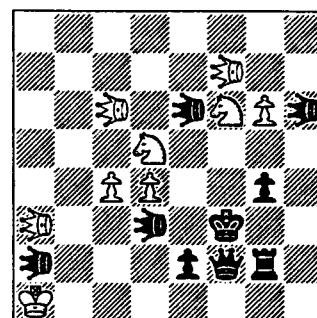
A word of apology to my silicon-based readers. *Variant Chess* is still primarily addressed to human beings: if a problem has been composed by computers for the appreciation of other computers, don't submit it here. Humans: where you have been assisted by a non-sentient colleague, please indicate. My mistrust of the more siliceous sort of problem is outweighed by my relief at not having to bother looking for cooks.

Where my own silicon assistants discover a problem to be cooked, it will be returned - once - for correction. It's not part of my function to run a computer-testing service for problemists. I suggest that a purely-protoplasmic problem should be left to lie for one month after composition to allow cooks to rise to the surface.

Many of VC's readers are wiser and more established chess deviants than myself. (To them I say, don't wait till it's been rejected elsewhere before sending it here!) Others may like some ideas on how to compose wonderful stuff. Well, I've already said avoid the long single-line helpmate. As well as being intrinsically nasty, it's also intrinsically prone to cooks - indeed, I bet problem (B) adds cookery to its other faults. I've quoted mostly two-movers (direct, help, self and reflex, and maybe leading to stalemate as well as mate). Almost any good idea is presentable as a good two-move idea.

Cram in lots of fairy effect. Just look how much locust-play Fougaxis has managed to get into Problem (J). (A locust moves only to capture, which it does by leaping over its victim, on queen-lines, to the vacant square immediately beyond; e.g. black Lo a2-a4 captures white Lo a3.)

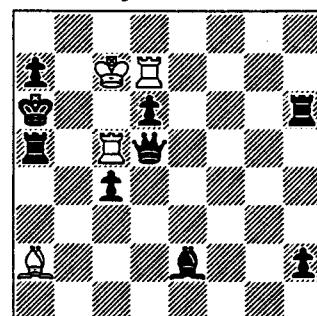
(J) H. FOUGAXIS
1st Prize, *The Problemist* 1991



Locusts, Helpmate in 2, 2 solutions

A surprising fairy mate can carry a problem on its own - but better if the surprise is repeated in a second variation. Problem (K) shows an idea not possible in orthodox chessplay. As did Problem (A), where the black queen managed to obstruct her own bishops.

(K) H-P. REICH
& M. RITTIRSCH
1st Pr, *Europa-Rochade* 1986-7



Madrasi
Helpmate in 2, 2 solutions

Much the same considerations apply to any articles you may be obliging enough to submit. I am more interested than most in fairy chess, but I don't like articles that exhaust a subject. They tend to exhaust me first. Articles should entertain. They should be not unnecessarily long. They should be illustrated with problems that are fun to solve. They should be in English, French or German and if in either of the latter should be prepared to submit to idiosyncratic translation.

That's enough from me. Now let's hear from you.

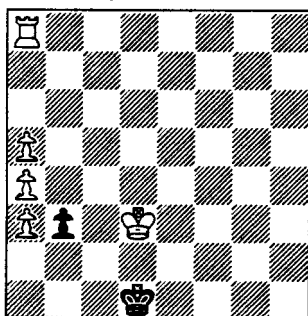
[Solutions to these introductory problems are on page 37]

**Original Problems
To Solve**

To Composers: If you have submitted original problems to the previous column editor, then they appear here, OR I have just written to you about them (if neither, please resubmit!). Several of the problems here are just the sort of small treasure I had hoped to find when I opened the heavy brass-bound box that arrived all the way from Bologna on the shoulders of a groaning slave. (Actually, the slave had little reason to groan; with this issue I have almost emptied the box. *More originals please!*)

To Solvers: Problem 143 will not detain experienced solvers for long. Players of progressive chess: do have a go at this one. Black plays 9 legal moves (as in Progressive, but without Italianate complications) after which White can mate in one.

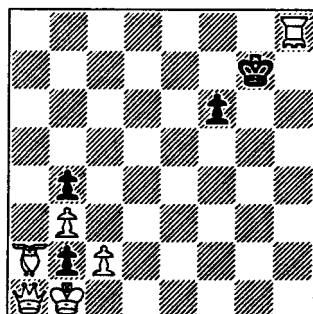
(143) Sergei TKACHENKO



Serieshelpmate in 9

In 144 the Princess combines moves of knight and bishop, the Empress of knight and rook

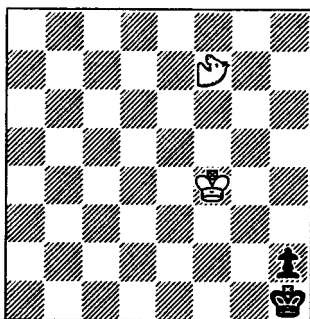
(144) Erich BARTEL



Empress h8, Princess a2
Mate in 3

In 145 the Root-50 leaper makes a knight-like leap of either (1,7) or (5,5) squares. Since such units are considered to arise from promotion, a root-50 leaper on g7 would be in an illegal position, since it could not have got there from any cell on the 8th rank; but the one at f7 could have got there via a2, h3 and c8.

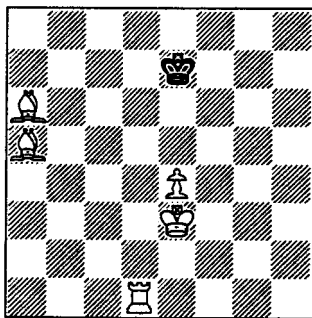
(145) Erich BARTEL



Circe Chess. Root-50 leaper f7.
Serieshelpstalemate in 8

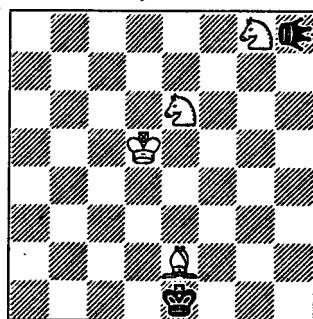
One can argue as to whether orthodox chess counts as a 'variant'. Problem 146 is an early work by a regular reader, from whom, having seen work in progress, I expect to gain future solving pleasure.

(146) Ian RICHARDSON



Helpmate in 2½, (b) ♖a5→d4

(147) Nikolay VASYUCHKO

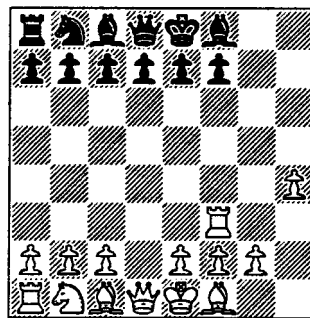


Kangaroo h8
Serieshelpmate in 46

The Kangaroo is a sort of large grasshopper, in chess if not in zoology. It moves on queen lines over two intervening units to the square immediately beyond. So, in 147, if e1 were a kangaroo it could move to e7 only.

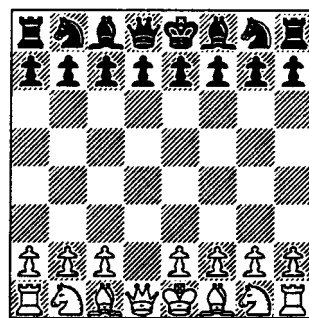
In **Andernach Chess** a unit that captures changes colour. I apologise to Peter Fayers for the fact that a problem inspired by 148 appeared in VC21 on page 15. (*The general editor must accept some responsibility for this, having put the problem in as a last minute filler without consulting the composers. GPJ.*) That problem must be considered as being 'After Fayers'. Peter kindly accepts the apology, but less kindly points out a cook in the earlier problem and amends it as 149.

(148) Peter FAYERS



Andernach Chess
Position after Black's 7th.
Game Score?

(149) R. TURNBULL, S. EMERSON
& P. FAYERS



Andernach Chess, Zeroposition
(a) - ♖a8, (b) - ♜b8, (c) - ♝f8
Position after White's 4th.
Game Score?

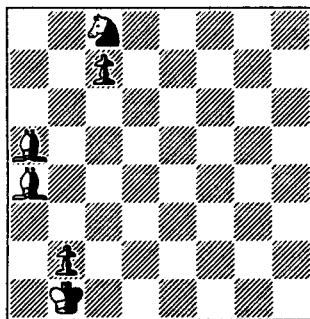
In a 'zeroposition' multiplet, you do not solve from the diagram but modify it first, here by removals.

Only part (c) of 149 counts for Ladder points since solutions to (a) and (b) have already been given.

In the next two problems all the men are neutral, including the kings! (Problem 150 is a correction, by the composer, of 125 in *The Games and Puzzles Journal*, a cook having been reported by Yves Cheylan in making the award, as reported in VC21.)

A Neutral may be considered White or Black by the player who has the move. Note that most checks to a neutral king by a neutral unit are also self-checks and so illegal. Antircirce (used in 151) offers a way round this.

(150) A. W. INGLETON

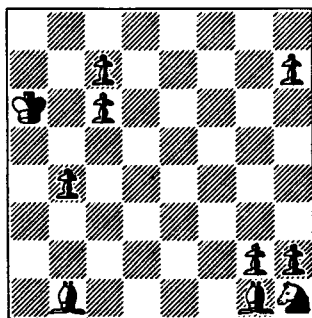


Circe Chess, All men Neutral
Helpmate in 5

In Antircirce Chess a unit that captures is reborn, while the one captured disappears. Thus when ♖b1×♜b8, the ♜ vanishes and the ♖ is reborn on a1. If the rebirth square is occupied, the capture is illegal. This applies to kings also.

In 151 a unit may not capture on its own rebirth square (considered as occupied) though problems with the opposite convention have been composed.

(151) Yves CHEYLAN

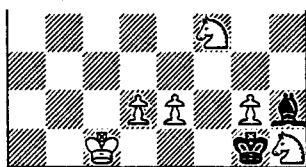


Antircirce Chess, All men Neutral
Helpmate in 2

Antircirce is a fruitful and only partly explored field that I commend to composers.

A reader asked for more of the "Abominable Problems" as described in my article in *The Problemist* (July 1994). I don't name the reader, in case he should receive a share of the opprobrium that 152 may attract. At the start of a game of **Pocket Bishop Chess** each player has a bishop in his pocket and in the course of the game may deploy it onto any vacant square in stead of one normal move.

(152) Ronald TURNBULL



Pocket Bishop Chess.
Add a White unit for Mate
in fewest moves.

Solutions to the
Introductory
Problems

(A) 1: Se8 (threat 2: Sc7) 1... Qf4 2: Kc2 (2... B×d1†, Qd2† illegal) 1... Qg3 2: Kc3 1... Qd7 Re5 (K×e5†??)

(B) 1: Ke2 (Ih2) Sd5 (Ig4) 2: Sg2 (Ih2) Kg3 (Ig1) 3: Kf3 (Ih2) K×g2 (Ih1). Could be worse — I could have made it H†3½ with Ks d1, h5, Ig2.

(C) 1: Bb6 (If1) not check, but now only moves of BS avoid self-check. 1... Sd4 (Ie3) 2: B×d4 (Ig1) a piquant retreat. 1... Sc3 (Id2) 2: Kb4 (Ie1) else † from BS. 1... Sf4 (Ig3) 2: Kb5 (Ih3) WK must keep guarding a6. 1... Sg3 (Ih2) 2: Ka4 (Ih1) imitator prevents others.

(D) In Proca-retractor, uncapture en passant (denoted +P e.p.) is permitted without special justification (as is uncastling). We have thematic pre-play: 1: fg5 (+P e.p.) f7 2: Qf3 g7 3: ba5 (+P e.p.) b7. Now no WP has promoted and any black uncaptures must be of pawns. 4: Qe3 (+P) and this pawn can only have reached this file by capture en passant ... fe4 (+P e.p.) 5: f2 e5 (NB hence not 1: fe5 by White) 6: Qc1 (+P) ed4 (+P e.p.) 7: e2 d5 8: Qe3 (+R) (Black's previous move must have been 8... d6, hence not 3: bc5 by White). Now selfmate 1 by Qb3†.

(E) (a) 1: Kc3 Kb5 2: Kb2 Kc6 3: Gb7 Kc5 4: Gb1 Kb4 5: Ka1 Ka3.
and (b) 1: Kf6 Kb5 2: Kg7 Kc6 3: Gb7 Kd6 4: Gh7 Ke7 5: Kh8 Kf8.

Play in (a) and (b) too similar — but let's not be small-minded about this big little problem.

(F) In normal K-Madrasi, kings once touching are fused forever. But not if we add K-Circe. 1: Kb6 (no threat) 1... B×b6 (WKe1) 2: Sd2 K×b4 for a nice smothered mate where WK does the job of blocking e1 himself. 1... Bb8 2: Se1 Ba7, with e1 blocked by a paralysed WS.

Of course it'd be nice also to have a capture of BK. But this is an unambitious little problem which says what it wants to say, then shuts up.

(G) 1: Wc8 Wa7 2: Wb8 Wa6 — 7: Wb3 Wa1 8: Wa3 Wb1 9: Wa2 Wc1 — 14: Wf2 Wh1 15: Gf1 Wh2 / (i) 16: Gf3 Wh3 / (ii) 17: Wg2 — 21... Wh8 22: Wh6 Wg8 23: Wh7 — 28... Wa8 29: Wb7† (i) 15... Wg1 16: Gf3 Wh1 17: Wg2† (ii) 16... Wh1 17: Wg2†

(H) 1: de (Wb1) Se3 2: efB S×f1 (BBc8) (2: efS? paralyses WS) and 1: dc (WSb1) Bd3 2: cbS B×b1 (BSg8).

(J) Knights being in general rather more useful than locusts, we solve by taking the two knights right out of action.

1: Qg3 Se7 2: Lo d3×g6 Sfg8.

1: Rg3 Sd7 2: Lo d3×c4 S5b6.

(K) 1: Rh3 B×c4 2: Qh5 R×d6 (3: Rd3??) 1: Bg4 R×d6 2: Qf3 B×c4 (3: Be6??).

Solutions to the
Originals in VC21

129. R. Turnbull 1: Ba3 (+P) †?? illegal — no legal way to retract this check under orthodox rules. 1: Bf3 (+P) Ke8 (+P) 2: Bh5 and 1... Kd6 (+P) 2: Ba3 (+P) — legal under orthodox, for retract b×c5 e.p.†; c7-c5; b4-b5†. A lovely problem [Ian Richardson]. Business with the e.p. retraction is well known, and the three Bishops regrettable [Composer].

130. U. Hammarstrom 1... Kh2 (h5) 2: Kg3 (g4)† Kg1 (f3) 3: Kh3 (g3) Kf2 (f4) 4: f4 (f3) Kg3 (g4) — rundlauf by WK. Only E. Bartel finds this, but A. Ingleton finds instead 1... Kh2 (h5) 2: Kh5 (h6) Sc6 (f7) 3: Kg4 (e6) Kh3 (e7)† 4: h5 (e5) † Se7 (g6) — a sound second solution, on which he comments: Neat rundlauf by I, but slight pity W has only one legal first move. Will UH and AI permit relabelling as a two-solution joint composition?

131. **A. Chistyakov** 1: Bg7 2: Rh8 and now either 3: Kh7 4: Sg8 5: Bxc3 6: Bg7 9: c1B 10: cBh6 Bd3† or 3: Sh7 4: Bxc3 5: Bg7 8: c1B 9: Ba3 10: aBf8 Bc4† Tricky puzzle leading to echo mates; enjoyable solving [M. Ridley]. Straight-forward but pleasing [AI].

132. **N. Vasyuchko** 1: g1R 2: R×g6 3: Re6 6: g3 7: gh 8: h1R 9: R×h4 10: Re4 14: h1R 15: Rb1 16: R×b5 17: Rc5 22: b1R 23: Rb6 24: Rd6 29: b1R 31: Rc6 fe† Neat packing by 5 promoted rooks [AI]; Five R-promotions in 'kindergarten' (Ps only) shape; well done [EB].

133. **P. Moutecedis** Set 1... Qg1† 2: Lb1† Q×g1† Play 1: Lh8 Qg1† 2: Kb2 Qa7 3: La1 Qg1 4: Lh1 Qa7 5: Ka1 Qg1† 6: Lb1†. Enjoyable lion-wander [RT]

134. **S. Pantazis** 1: Lh1 Qg1† (2: Lb1†? Qg6!) 2: Kb2 Qa7 3: Kc2 Qg1 4: Lb1 Qa7 5: Ld3† Kg8 6: Lb1 Qg1 7: L×f5 Qa7 8: Lb1 Qg1 9: Kb2 Qa7 10: Lb6 Qh7 11: Ka1. I give Stefanos best; it just won't go for me [AI]. Indeed, went for EB alone.

135. **M. Dragoun** 1: Qxc3 (Ra1) Rh1 2: Qe5† B×e5 (Qd8) 1: Q×h2 (Bc1) Bb2 2: Qh3 R×h3 (Qd8). Two triple-checks achieved with minimal setting [AI]. Good battery building [MR]. Very fine analogy [EB]

136. **V. Nebotov** 1: Rg8 c8Q 2: R×c8 (Qd1) Q×f1 1: S×g3 (Bc1) c8R 2: Q×c8 (Rh1) hg (Sb8) 1: Bd3 c8B 2: Q×c8 (Bf1) K×d3 1: S×f3 cB8 (Qd8) 2: Q×b8 (Sg1) K×f3 (Sg8). AUW with first Black move in S, B and R variations vacating the square the mate comes from [MR]

137. **E. Holladay** 1: f8A† Kd6 2: Ad7† K×d7 3: e8A† K×e8 4: Ka8 Kd8 5: Ac7† K×c7= Tries 1: Ad3† Ke6! 2: Ka8 Kf6! and 1: f8S† Kd6! lead to three similar stalemates where Black doesn't do the ! move. Self-immolatory amazons [AI]. Asymmetry with ideal stalemates [EH].

138. **A. Shvichenko** 1: Sc5 Se8 2: R×e8 (WR) Re6 3: Rc4 Rd6† 1: Sf2 Bc3† 2: Ke3 Sg4† 3: R×g4 (WR) Rg3†. Superbly constructed; I found this the hardest of the bunch [IR]. Echo models reflected round b1-h7 diagonal [S.Pantazis].

139. **A. Pankratiev & D. Muller** Set 1... Be2 / eS×f3 (Qd1) 2: Q×g2 (g7) / R×g2 (g7) Try 1: Kf7 (repeats set play) but 1... dS×f3 (Qd1)! Play 1: Qe2 B×e2 (Qd1) / eSf3 2: R×g2 (g7) / Q×g2 (g7) and 1... dS~ / de 2: Q×f1 (Bc8) / Q×e3. IR and RT both identified 1: Q×g2† as the thematic try. Irrelevant for scoring purposes, and in fact it's the set play that counts here. Reciprocal change of W replies to Be2, eSf3 is always a pleasure; mechanism involving rebirth of WQ is slightly crude, but the setting has lots of nice empty board [RT]

140. **Y. Cheylan** 1: R×d3 (d7) for 2: Rd1. 1... S×d3† / B×d3 (both WRh1) 2: Kd2 / 0-0 (not Kd2? B×h7!) also 1... Ka1 2: Ra3. Pleasingly sharp reminder that, under Circe, reborn rooks can castle [RT].

141. **Y. Cheylan** 1: Sd5 (2: Rd1†). 1... Bf4 2: 0-0-0 and 1... Be5 (2: 0-0-0? Bd4!) 2: R×f2 also 1... Sc1,b4 2: Ra5, 1... Ba6 2: e7. Two subtle castling mates by Cheylan. [AI]. Solvers are confused about Patrol Chess: a unit may capture only if observed (guarded) by friendly unit at its departure square. So 1: S×e4 is legal, but is not check from either WS or WB. White can't 0-0-0 in diagram as guarded BS attacks d1. As castling involves retro-spection, illegality of position is relevant here, and while we may argue "position illegal, therefore may take as having been plonked down onto board as it stands, therefore WR, WK haven't moved and castling legal", I'd prefer a legal setting [RT].

142. **L. Vitale** 1: Sa5 Sh6 2: Kf2 K×a5 3: Ke3 S×d5† 4: Kd4 S×f5† 5: Kc5 dSe3=. Easy in principle, but difficult (in composition as well as solution I guess) to get the detail right [IR].

LADDER SCORES

Maximum	215 (193 +22) +15
A.Ettinger	129 (129 + 0)
E.Bartel	128 (116 +12) +11
I.G.Richardson	126 (111 +15) +10
M.A.Ridley	86 (74 +12) +2
V.Krivenko	82 (68 +14)
V.Crisan	77 (77 + 0)
M.Olausson	70 (63 + 7)
R.Casano	17 (17 + 0)
P.Fayers	17 (9 + 8)
H.Bodlaender	15 (0 +15)
A.W.Ingleton*	12 (155 +17) +11
P.Raican*	11 (146 +15)
G.Vecchi	9 (9 + 0)

The asterisk * indicates that Aubrey Ingleton and Paul Raican have each made a ladder ascent of 150 points, so they slide down the snake and begin again on the bottom rungs.

Numbers to the right not added in are scores so far received for VC21.

Scoring: 1 point each. 1 point for cook (cook + intention 2 points).

Half-point for keymove, or for all-but-one lines in helpmate. Scores rounded down to nearest full point. (e.g. IR scored 10½ so gets 10).

Send solutions & originals to:
**Ronald Turnbull, Highland Cottage,
 Gatelawbridge, Thornhill,
 Dumfriesshire DG3 5EA, Scotland.**

Cooks & Corrections

125. **A. Ingleton (GPJ10)**. Composer corrects by moving WKa2 to b1. (This is offered for solution as 150 in this issue).

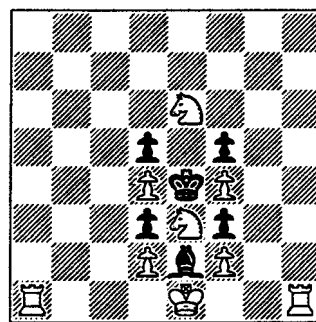
127. **P. Fayers (VC20)**. Peter points out that Augsburg has sometimes been interpreted as including pawns, sometimes not (e.g. in *The Problemist*). The definition in VC20 did say "pieces of the same side combine..." and the word 'pieces' (as against 'units') usually means 'not pawns'. So I take 127 to be sound, though I'd be pleased to see it reset — the more inclusive version of a fairy stipulation is generally to be preferred. Mark Ridley retains his ladder point for the attractive and ingenious arguable-cook.



Tourney Announcements

The Nederlandse Bond van Schaakprobleemvrienden announces a **Hans Burbach 75-year Jubilee Tournament** for chess problems of any length in which CASTLING plays in any way the leading part in the solution, tries or even as the objective. Modified rules, like Circe or Madrasi, are permitted, but not fairy pieces or boards. (*Retroanalysis is also prohibited — somewhat unusual in a castling tourney. GPJ.*) Entries before 1 September 1977 to **Henk le Grand, Heimanslaan 5, NL 6705 AD, Wageningen, The Netherlands**. The following problem is given as an example of castling as objective.

J. J. Burbach *Problemkiste* 1991



White Castles in 4 moves

1. Sd1 Bf1 2. Sb2 Be2 3. Sa4 Bd1 4. 0-0 or 3. ... Bf1 4. 0-0-0

(Try: 1. Sf1 Bd1 2. Sh2 Be2 3. ???)



The closing date for the tournament (VC21, p.24), for 2 and 3 move problems in Xiangqi, and 2 move problems in Avalanche Chess, has been extended to the 31st March 1997. Send 2 copies of compositions to: **Romano Bellucci, Castello 5449, 30122 Venezia, Italy.**

Xiangqi Miscellany

XIANGQI - EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

By Peter Wood

This took place over the weekend of 21/22 September at the Oslo Commercial Centre in the Chinatown area of the 13th *arrondissement* in Paris. Apart from a disorganised hour's delay before the start, caused mainly by the need to process last-minute entries, the organisers, led ably by the non-stop Kim Laurent, should be congratulated for their efficiency in dealing with 7 two-hour games in two days. Dang Thanh Trung of France won the Championship with 6 points, ahead on tie break of 2nd placed Woo Wei Cheung of France. 3rd was Cao Quoc Chi, also of France, with 5½ points - he lost his important last round game against Woo. C.K.Lai was the leading UK competitor with 4½ points, taking 12th place. This was a good result in a strongly competitive field. Released from his organising cares this was his best result for some time. Kwok Wai Leung came 24th with 4 points, although this included 2 walkovers. Paul Byway came 35th with 3 points, while Peter Wood came 46th with 2½ points (only 1 walkover!). There were 56 competitors.

All the non-Chinese prizes were taken by the 'German Panzers', to use a phrase of Kim Laurent. Michael Naegler, with a black bristling beard, had an aggressive edge to his play and deservedly won the non-Chinese first prize with 4 points (16th overall) — in fact he bristled so much that one wondered at times whether he likes Chinese people at all! Players who met Carlo Veronesi, the leading Italian player, three years ago in Exmouth, will be interested to learn that he now sports a dashing 'artistic' beard and is now an actor.

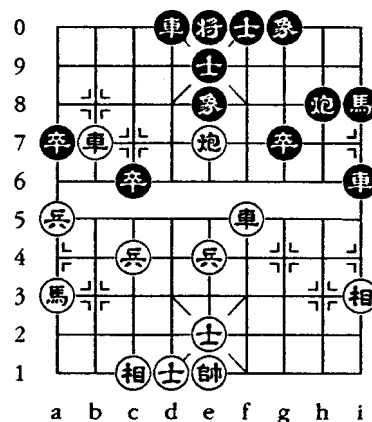
The tournament concluded with a sumptuous 8-course meal at the roomy Asia Palace restaurant (which heavily sponsored the event). For

close on four hours there was non-stop prize-giving, Chinese karaoke, and raffles. The latter had lavish prizes — Kwok Wai Leung won both a computer games machine and 200 US dollars.

To coincide with the event there was a week-long visit to Paris by 6 leading grandmasters, three from China, three from Taiwan. A four-game match was held with the two strongest of these: Lu Qin and Xu Yinchuan. Lu Qin won this contest by 2 wins to 1, with 1 game drawn. The last game of this match took place during the last afternoon of the Championship. The moves of this were relayed (bellowed!) by hand microphone from a person sitting at the side of the players to the person tending the demonstration board — a method not conducive to assist concentration. Here is the last game.

Lu Qin - Xu Yinchuan

1.Che3 Nc8 2.Ng3 Chf8 3.g5 Ri9 4.Rh1 Ni8 5.Na3 Rd9 6.Cbc3 Rd5 7.Rb1 Rb0 8.Rb7 Bce8 9.Gfe2 R:g5 10.Bi3 Rg6 11.Rh5 Gde9 12.Nf5 c6 13.N:e7 N:e7 14.C:e7 Rd0 15.Rf5 Nh0 16.a5 Ch8 17.Rh5 Ni8 18.i5 i6 19.i:i6 R:i6 20.Cg3 Cg8 21.C:g8 C:g8 22.Rf5 Ch8



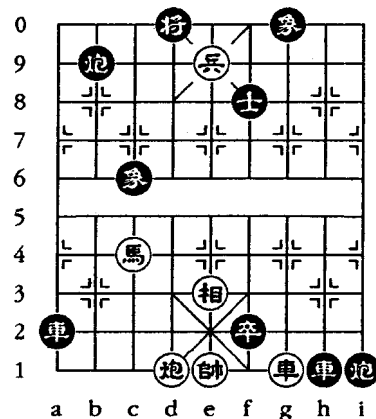
(From this position Lu Qin clinched victory rather nicely.) 23.Kf1 Ch0 24.Rb9 Rc0 25.R:f0+ C:f0 26.R:e9+ Kd0 27.Re0+ Kd9 28.R:c0 Re6 29.Cb7 Re7 30.Cb3 Cf7 31.Ce3 Rb7 32.Rc9+ Kd0 33.Rh9 g6 34.Rh7 Cg7 35.e5 Ng9 36.Rh4 Ce7 37.Cd3 Ci7 38.e6 Rh7

39.d6 Ke0 40.Ce3+ Resigns. (If 40....Kd0, 41.Rd4.)

SOLUTIONS

Here are solutions to the two XQ mate in 3 problems in VC21 p.21. (1) 1.Cie9+ B(either)e8 2.d0+ K:d0 3.Cd3# (2) 1.Re9+ Kf0 2.Rf9+ K:f9 3.Cf7#

Below is another mate in 3 from the 'Fuzzy Collection'. "This puzzle is based on a classic study", says the book.



THE HASTINGS CONQUEST

by C.K.Lai

This latest softback from 'CK' is an account of the 2nd Shanghai Xiangqi Tournament held in Hastings during August of this year. An account of the tournament was in VC21. The scores of 15 games are in Chinese, while the annotations and commentary are in English. The notes are chatty and fun to read, and the book is interspersed with diagrams. Unfortunately most of the games are by the weaker players in the tournament; there are for example no games at all by the winner, C.W.Sung of Northampton. The book captures well the atmosphere of the event, but apart from that it is of slight interest. Price: £5.99. The book can be obtained from: C.K.Lai — his address is at the foot of this page.

DAVID WOO

Publication of his book *The First Book of Chinese Chess*, which was scheduled for summer 1996, has now been put back till early 1997.

XIANGQI EVENTS

28 December — Tournament at Jarvenpaa, Finland. Phone: Raimo Lindroos (358) 90-286255.

Sunday 8th March 1997 — 3rd 'Shanghai' Tournament at Hastings. Write to: C.K.Lai, 12 Lagan House, Sumner Road, London SE15 5RB.

Xiangqi Views

David Woo (Editor of *XiangQi Review*, Chinese Chess Institute) wrote on 30 September. The following are his personal thoughts related to the article *Where to, Xiangqi?* [in VC21].

1. Malcolm Horne: my personal view of him

Let me start this out by saying that Mr Horne and myself don't agree on all issues. For one, I favour Chinese descriptive and Malcolm chooses algebraic. For another, I urged others to adopt the AXF rules [as the better choice, or lesser of the evils], but Malcolm was hesitant, and decided to hang on to the UKCCA instead. But, we have respect for each other's views and concerns. Our disagreements are results from open and honest exchanges. And he has always been honest. Nowadays, in view of all these empty promises, hollow slogans, complimentary speeches and self-patting on their own backs from folks in the AXF and WXF circles, I find his views refreshing. To really promote the game, we need honest opinions and feedback from all those concerned, whether they're to your liking or not; it's that simple.

I regard Malcolm as a genuine promoter of Chinese Chess. [Which means, by the way, he promotes XiangQi too!] He published introductory materials for free distribution and he was among the first [if not *the first*] of Western enthusiasts to organise tournaments in the UK. To me, Mr Horne has done more for the game [whether one chooses to call it Chinese Chess or XiangQi] for Western fans than most of the other so-called 'promoters' or 'authorities', including those from the AXF and WXF. While we have our difference in opinions, I would be first to testify his motive is pure, and he always has had the game's best interests in mind [more than I can say for some others, whose primary goal is either to project an 'authority' image to satisfy their own egos, or to make a few quick bucks, or both]. Malcolm's recent decision to drop out is what I would consider the game's failure to keep one of its pioneer promoters.

2. On rules

The topic Malcolm and I talked about most was rules. Malcolm was frustrated with the complexity and ambiguities of these Asian rules, and the lack of help from Asian main organisers. He reluctantly went along with the

'simplified' UKCCA rules, but I think he knows that UKCCA rules are at the most just transitional. Understandably, he might be looking for help in this area on a title that came out recently, from someone who talked like an insider of WXF, and claimed that the book was written with WXF blessing. And apparently Malcolm was disappointed. So he 'expected too much'. But I think his real 'mistake' was that he might have believed the advanced hype put up with that title, namely that it will replace all existing English literature on the subject and even kill the need for anyone else to work on another book. Nowadays, few things can ever live up to their advanced billings. Claiming ties with the WXF doesn't mean that person is knowledgeable on rules. In fact, I know plenty of AXF, WXF officers who don't know their own rules. So I would agree that he should not have raised his hope that high.

On the other hand, it's a pretty well known fact that Mr Horne did not 'invent' the UKCCA rules [If I'm not mistaken, that honour or credit should go to Mr C. K. Lai], so the questioning of Mr Horne's 'motive' with the UKCCA rules is, shall I say, 'barking up the wrong tree'.

3. Is the term *Chinese Chess* that bad, that we should stop using it?

What's in a name? To me, Chinese Chess and XiangQi mean the same thing, just like Go is the same thing as WeiQi, and yuan is a Chinese dollar. You can also say that 'two bits' and 'tuppence', even though with a slight difference in real monetary value, mean the same thing, literarily. Certainly I don't see anything wrong with using the terms interchangeably. I am amused that someone would make a federal case out of this. I think this is exactly what the author of the article laments: "dwelling on minor issues that are unlikely to mean anything". We at the CCI are standing by the term 'Chinese Chess', as our name indicates.

I would also like to add another reason [besides the one already pointed out by Mr Jelliss] for some promoters, including myself, at times preferring to use 'Chinese Chess' over the equivalent name 'XiangQi'. I have been involved in pushing Chinese Chess in the US since I arrived in Florida 1966. All these years [and even now], the typical response I get with most people is a blank look when I mention 'XiangQi', whereas on hearing 'Chinese Chess' they would give out signs of a more positive connection. So in

this sense you can say I use the term because of convenience, and for better communication. I don't know about others; I would consider communicating the first step of promoting anything.

To draw another parallel, the game of Chess is still commonly called in Chinese as 'XiYang XiangQi' — you guessed it, 'Western XiangQi'. It is also a federal offence now?? Actually, all these talks about dropping the term 'Chinese Chess' and one should not use it, is absurd. Here's another simple case in point: the title of the very book that sparked the exchange actually has the term 'Chinese Chess' in it! So it seems that the author of that article did not even "see fit to read" the very front cover of his own 'work' before he 'belittles' other people and all other books on the game out there.

There's another thing that puzzles me. I thought a book's quality is judged by its contents. Now I get the impression that a simple term, a name, in the book title is the deciding factor whether we should read it or not. So it's back to 'judge a book (by a portion) of its cover' now? What a regression!

4. The piece names have been 'formally' changed [again] by the WXF. Really??

The person very much quoted in the 'Where to, Xiangqi?' article was none other than C. K. Lai. Since Mr Lai is the vice-chair of WXF's Studies Committee, so his work and action should be a good indication, or at least a good common ground, for discussion. I can't help but notice the following from the introduction to his own *Dim and Fuzzy Collection*:

"there are seven kind[s] of pieces in Xiangqi (Chinese Chess) ... these pieces are known as the King, the Guard, the Bishop, the Cannon, the Rook and the Pawn. In some places, these are called General, Assistant, Elephant, Horse, Gunner, Chariot and Soldier. Different names, but same substance. There is no need to make a big issue of it. The importance is [to] get on with the game ..." (For the record, I don't have a copy of the title, the above is quoted from page 83, *Hong Kong Xiangqi* magazine, Issue 11, which announced the book and contains the English and Chinese versions of its introduction.)

Now Mr Lai's introduction is dated December 17, 1995 — clearly after the 4th World Cup. Why Mr. Lai did not 'embrace' the so-called 'approved' standard is not entirely clear to me. My guess is that either: (a) he knows some

inside information that others don't; or (b) he discovered that all AXF and WXF approved things are relatively short-lived, typically less than two years. Note also the "Xiangqi (Chinese Chess)" in the quote, this certainly suggests Lai, a WXF officer, is not that 'absolute' in trying to 'forget about Chinese Chess'.

Then last month [August] I got a call from Hong Kong's L. S. Leung [who's currently the Director of Studies of both AXF and WXF], asking for advice on the names of the pieces. I was mildly surprised [on why he needed to do that, since someone already announced to the world it's a done deal] but also a bit curious [not that I'm that interested, but it's just that in the past the 'approved' things used to last a bit longer!]. The confusing part is that he seemed to indicate the names horse, advisor, elephant, and chariot are not that firmly finalised [especially the last one, chariot], thus his seeking for other opinions! After the conversation I sent him the brochures explaining our CCI Recording System, which we have been passing out here in the US for the last 20 years. I also told Mr Leung that all the books and magazines in English that I have seen or reviewed are coherent, perhaps just incidentally, with our system.

So now one can easily understand the confusions [which made me feel sorry for the poor fans who tried to follow the WXF 'approved standards']. On one hand, you have two highly placed WXF officials [who are supposedly the very personnel to directly oversee items like piece's names, etc.] who for various unknown reasons are either not firm on, or not adopting the 'approved' standard in publishing books. On the other hand you have a seemingly self-appointed spokesperson of the WXF repeatedly preaching fast and torrid 'embracing' of these new names. (I hesitate to call his capacity as 'official', as I am not aware of any such position in the WXF, and even long-time WXF officials have no clue on this particular post in their organisation.) It's, well, uh, a tough call, but since numerically the votes stand at 2 v 1, off-hand my common sense tells me to tip my scale towards a couple of 'official' officers from WXF rather than someone who, for all practical purposes, was an absolute outsider before last year's 4th World Cup [who requested information and introduction to the 4th World Cup event from the CCI, and I still have his initial correspondence to support this notion]. But from past experience with Asian groups, I have to keep the door ajar

slightly, in case that other gentleman does have proof that he somehow has higher authority than the Director of Studies of WXF or some secret credentials to back up his claims. As of now, the whole issue is up in the air. The world won't probably know for sure until the next WXF announcement. What do you call this kind of episode? Silly? yes; 'internationally embarrassing'? that too; 'self-inflicted'? certainly. For once, I am looking forward to the next 'change' by the WXF. 1997?

5. Whose existence depends on WXF?

I also wondered which magazines were being referred to in the article. *Variant Chess*? The *CCI Xiangqi Review*? Well, clearly these are periodicals which started 'pre-WXF'. In fact the CCI was publishing lecture notes and newsletters even before the WXF's parent, the AXF was founded [1978]. So I finally did a little checking, and strangely there's only one item out there which fits that description, that its "very existence is dependent on the WXF". So this dubious 'honour' should be most fittingly retained by some 'gentleman' who has so blindly and shamelessly 'embraced' everything dished out by the WXF, with or without merits.

6. WXF, and "embrace its work"?

Mr Horne's assertion that the WXF does not yet have very much influence outside of Asia is an honest and fair statement. The reason is so obvious: they haven't quite figured out how to name the pieces yet! On the other hand, asking Western fans to "embrace WXF's work" is just a wishy and empty proposal, and logically "patently false". Again, the reason for me saying so is quite elementary: you have to have something [preferably physical] to 'embrace'! Excuse my ignorance, but I am not aware of any real 'work' by WXF besides sponsoring a tournament every other year and holding meetings that produce little substance other than confusion. Sure, there were a few not widely circulated bulletins in Chinese for the last three years, but close to nothing was published in other languages. So what work? (Perhaps Academia would count the juggling of a few English words for the pieces' names every other year as 'real work'. I don't.) Even L. S. Leung, who's been with the AXF and WXF from the start [pre-1993] could not name me any 'work' other than in Chinese in our 40-minute phone conversation.

7. The Chinese descriptive notation is perfect? So perfect, there's no room for any other system?

Although we use, and encourage others to adopt, the Chinese descriptive notation, only someone 'special' would call the system perfect. For a start, there's the right-to-left counting of the files, which is against the common writing or printing orientation of people as well as machines. Then it's also not a very complete system: there are no provisions for treating situations when more than 3 pawns are on the same column, or two stacks of pawns with say, 2 on one stack and 3 on the other. You won't find any in the mere one hundred plus books in the Library of Congress [that's peanuts!]. Even checking the 600 plus books and around 1300 issues of magazines and special pamphlets in our CCI Library [modest compared to a couple of real collectors here in the US] did not turn up any. This made it necessary for us to improvise a way, so as to complete our CCI Recording System explanation sheet. Our belief: there's room for improvement for anything, and everything.

Of course, like everything else under the sun, both the algebraic and descriptive methods have pros and cons. The CCI advocates the descriptive, simply as the more appropriate under the circumstances, that in this present stage when 99% of published materials are in Chinese, the advantage of the descriptive far outweighs its shortcomings. Everything changes, in time; just look at the Chinese language itself. If someone should try to tell others that he can predict the future, that something in the present is so 'perfect' it will never change, he's only dreaming. Personally, I think eventually the PC would decide the issue of notation system. Meanwhile, it's our position that it is 'perfectly' all right to have a dual system, i.e. allowing algebraic and Chinese descriptive to co-exist, thus giving fans a choice.

8. That's not the way it should be

We can't and shouldn't expect everyone out there to agree with or praise everything we see and do. I think the article is really going to great length to 'repay' someone who just happens to have a different opinion. The wordings are not in the tone of a friendly discussion. In fact, even though heavily diluted by all these citation of huge figures [100 million happy players, 10,000 potential new fans, etc.], trivial generalisation on publishing and tons of self-hype, they still give an impression of

being vengeful (in spite of the author's claim that this is already the 'least hostile' venue).

Regarding the statement: "The game of Xiangqi, with over 100 million players, has a secure future, whether the West embraces it or not", I am not sure who made up the 'we' and 'us' in the first paragraph on page 18, but I would like to think that this is just the author's own individual opinion, and that he stands alone on this view. Above all, I sincerely hope this is not the WXF's official stand or their new 'approved' policy of globalisation. All along I thought we're supposed to promote to western fans, not to antagonise them. What happened?

ON THE INTERNET

by Stephen Leary

For many CV enthusiasts in the West, Xiangqi and Shogi remain mysteries hidden behind barriers such as language and geography. The literature in English is almost non-existent, and the vast writings in the original languages of Chinese and Japanese are, for western fans, insoluble tomes written by sages unknown.

Over the past several years, the Internet has provided fans the opportunity to play each other, read the latest news, access software, etc.. A window has been cut through the barrier separating East and West. I'll mention a few noteworthy developments on the Internet.

News and Discussion

The primary discussion group for Xiangqi is the Usenet newsgroup **rec.games.chinese-chess**, created in the Fall of 1993. As the person most involved in its creation, I was keen to see the formation of one newsgroup devoted to the game, as previously, spurious discussion could be found on several groups, such as the chess and chinese culture groups, among others. I wanted to see a newsgroup rather than a mailing list because I believe the former receives a much higher level of exposure. But newsgroups are not without drawbacks. Anyone can post anything he likes on any topic of his choosing — and it sometimes happens. On the positive side, the Toronto Xiangqi Association regularly posts news items and David Woo of the Chinese Chess Institute has posted several columns, but a number of areas of the world that are active in Xiangqi still

ignore the newsgroup — such as Europe, which in terms of club and tournament activity among westerners, is where most of the action takes place.

Shogi discussion can be found on the mailing list called Shogi-L. To subscribe, send an Email message to **listserv@techunix.technion.ac.il**. Leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message, simply type **SUB SHOGI-L YOUR NAME**. Compared with the Xiangqi newsgroup, the Shogi mailing list provides its fans with much better international news coverage — Japan, US, and Europe. The Japanese have increased their presence on the Internet recently. One enthusiast posted several lectures for beginners. Reijer Grembergen provides a weekly summary of news from Japan.

The Servers

The Xiangqi and Shogi servers offer enthusiasts around the world the opportunity to play real-time games with each other.

The Internet Chinese Chess Server (ICCS) can be telnetted to at **coolidge.math.harvard.edu 5555**. It has been active since mid-1993, and is the best place to see the game in action. Many special events take place, such as the Internet championship and speed tournaments. In recent years, teams of grandmasters from China visiting the West have been playing simultaneous games over ICCS with the fans. Clients are available for most computer systems, enabling the user to view the action on a Xiangqi board on his monitor.

Shogi servers have had a somewhat difficult time getting off the ground. Shogi can be played on the main Go server at **igs.nuri.net 6969**, but most people are there to play Go. A separate server was created, Internet Shogi Server (ISS). However, while it was active, it simply wasn't supported by the Shogi fans. There were never more than just a handful of people logged on at any one time. Another server, the NTT Shogi server, was created and can be telnetted to at **202.241.3.12 5091**. However, it was intended for the Japanese computer system. English users will see a lot of gibberish on their screens. It can be — and has been — deciphered, but it is a lot extra trouble just to play a game of Shogi, making things even more complex than they are. Most activity apparently takes place on a Java server at present. To access it, one needs Windows 95 and Java capability, such as that provided by Netscape 3.0. Unfortunately, those

requirements cut out some of the fans for the moment. But no doubt the increasing involvement of the Japanese will pay handsome dividends over time. The address for the Java service is: **http://dora.olu.info.waseda.ac.jp:8080/shogi/index.html**.

The activity on the Xiangqi and Shogi servers lags far behind that on the major Chess and Go servers — usually over 100 fans can be found on these on any given day.

[I am given to understand that no spaces should be inserted into electronic addresses. This makes them very inconvenient for printing. And why are they getting longer and longer? GPJ.]

BOOK REVIEWS

by Peter Wood

ORIGIN OF JAPANESE CHESS (Sho-gi) by Koichi Masukawa

This is an attractive book by a leading chess historian. It is written in Japanese. It deals with: 1) the origin of Sho-gi, of which there are two meanings in Japan — one meaning the origin of chess itself, the other the origin of Shogi. 2) The history of Chinese Chess and how Chinese authors are incorrect. 3) Chess history in general. The author believes that this has reached a turning-point, because of new discoveries and researches, e.g.. researches of the chessmen of Afrasiab (Samarkand), and of those of arabic type discovered in Dalverzin-Tyube (Uzbekistan) etc.. 4) Introduction (of chess) to Japan. Because of the discovery of the 'oldest pieces of Shogi (1058 AD)' at the Kofuku-Temple in Nara, this poses problems about how chess was introduced into Japan. The author believes it came from the south-east by the so-called 'Silk Road of the Sea'. *Variant Chess* issues 9 and 16 include a lot of the subject matter of parts 1 and 4, in articles by the author. This is an important book and, like Koichi Masukawa's other books, needs a translation into English or some other western language.

The book is published by the **Library Press of Heibon-sha, Tokyo**.

RITHMOMACHIA

A German researcher has written a thesis on the above. It is available for DM24 plus postage and packing. Write for details to: **Peter Mabben, Freiburg, Reinhold-Schneider Str. 37, 1304 Germany**.

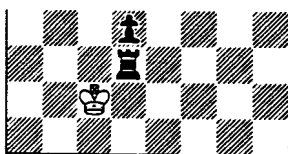
TACTICS AND THEORY OF ENGLISH PROGRESSIVE CHESS
by Tony Gardner

Rules as for Italian Progressive, but in each turn every mobile piece must have moved once before any can move a 2nd time. A player giving check loses any other moves in that turn. A player may not expose his own King to check with any of his moves. If a player moves into a stalemate position before completing his series, the game is a draw.

This is a small 18-page stapled booklet giving many of the author's games, and advice on the strategy and tactics of the variant. The author is the world's number 1; since John McCallion introduced ENPR to him in 1987 he has won over 100 games.

It is not that obvious how a player should conduct a game of ENPR; for example it is difficult to construct a mate compared with say Italian Progressive. What then should a player be looking out for? This book tells you. As Tony Gardner himself says: "I henceforth reveal, by illustration and instruction, my methods of success in this extremely marvelous game."

His discussion about pieces is valuable, and he reaches some not too obvious conclusions. For example: "Queen - A strong piece which may diminish in power as a game unfolds she should not be guarded as a royal, but rather used to lead attack and gain something, like a well-posted enemy piece or certain territorial compensation." Rooks appear to be preferred to Queens, for example "they possess the practical ability (unlike diagonally moving pieces) to provide turn continuance by moving in front of your pawn that would otherwise be compelled to move forward and check".



Knights are preferred to Bishops, which are classed as "good Knight-killers".

"Opening moves are not critical", the author says, "but minor pieces should be developed for ensuing play ... 2-step pawn moves in the opening tend to be counter-productive".

Coming to the middlegame (turns 7 to 14), he says that these moves are

critical. "The objectives are: a) Win by checkmate, b) Establish a dominant board position that makes continued play by the opponent futile, c) Place your units so that your opponent can do minimal damage ... you must decide which of these goals is attainable and move accordingly".

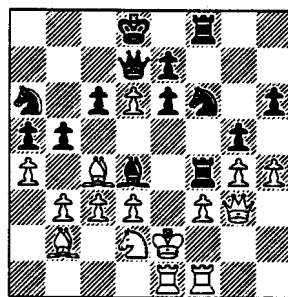
There is advice on 'numbers' — the calculation of one's own and the opponent's number of possible moves, when it is beneficial to voluntarily shorten your turn, and much else. The earlier diagram shows where to place the King vis à vis a pawn so as to force a sequence ending with check. The author points out an even better method, which can limit your opponent's turn to a single move: "forcing your opponent to respond to a check with a check".

I recommend this book to players who wish to improve their understanding of, and results in, English Progressive.

I give some games from the book. In the first White is a victim of 'domination strategy'.

Vito Rallo - Tony Gardner 1994

1.e4 2.g6 Bg7 3.Bb5 c3 Nf3 4.c6 d6 Be6 Nd7 (A common opening formation of Black's.) 5.Ng5 Bd3 Ke2 a4 h4 6.Nc5 Nf6 h6 Rf8 Qc7 Kd7 7.f3 N:e6 b3 Bb2 Qg1 Bc4 e5 8.f:e6 Nh7 Bh8 Rg8 Raf8 b6 Qb7 Kc7 9.g4 Qg3 d3 Nd2 Rae1 Rhf1 e:d6+ 10.Kd8 Qd7 b5 a5 Na6 g5 Rf4 Bd4 Nf6 Rf8



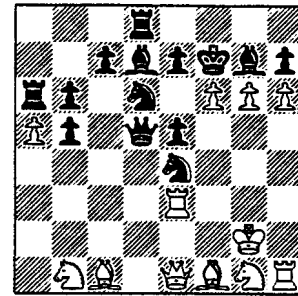
11.b4 Bb3 Nb1 Rd1 c:d4 Ke3 Qh2 d:e7+ (White is forced to give check with his pawn, and thus prevented from making a second sequence.) 12.K:e7 g:h4 Nh5 R:d4 R8f4 e5 c5 b:a4 N:b4 Qb5// Kf6 Ng3 White resigns.

In the next game White adopts what might be termed a direct approach.

Warren Ball - Tony Gardner 1992

1.b4 2.g6 Bg7 3.a4 c4 d4 4.Nf6 d6 Be6 Nbd7 5.a5 b5 c5 d5 Ra3 6.N:c5 Nfd7 a6 Bf5 Rg8 Kf8 7.e4 f4 g4 h4 Rh2 Nd2 Kf2 8.b6 Nb7 Ndc5 Bc8 Qd7 Ra7 f6 Kf7 9.h5 g5 f5 e5 Re3 Nb1 Bd2 Qe1

Rh1 10.a:b5 Ra6 d:e5 Q:d5 Nd6 Bd7 Rd8 Nce4+ 11.Kg2 Bc1 g:f6 h6 f:g6+



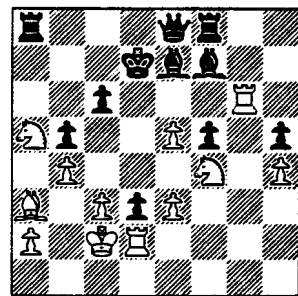
12.K:g6 B:f6 Be6 Rg8 Nf5 Qd6 Nf2 e4 b4 b:a5 Rc6// Qg3+ (Forcing a one-move sequence.) 13.R:g3+ 14.Kf7 Nd3 Nd4 e3 Be5 Bb3 R:h6 Rg7 e6 c6 a4// Nf4#

(Tony Gardner writes: White's strategy was to rid himself of pawns and get to second sequence turns mostly with pieces. But it fails, since his wood makes easy target fodder for Black.)

The following game has good Rook and Knight play, and includes Q sacrifice.

Tony Gardner - Vito Rallo 1992

1.Nf3 2.d5 Nf6 3.b3 e3 Bb5+ 4.c6 Ne4 g6 Bg7 5.c3 Qc2 Kd1 Bb2 Bd3 6.Bg4 Kd7 h5 f6 Qc7 a6 7.Ba3 B:e4 Qd3 Kc2 Ne1 g3 h4 8.Ke8 Nd7 Rd8 Be6 f5 g5 Bf6 d:e4 9.Bb2 Na3 Rd1 Kc1 f4 Rg1 Ng2 Q:d7+ 10.Q:d7 a5 b5 Rb8 Kd8 Bd5 e5 Be7 Rf8 g:h4 11.Nc4 Ba3 b4 Kc2 d3 Rd2 f:e5 g:h4 Nf4 Rg6// N:a5 12.Ra8 Bf7 Qe8 Kd7 e:d3+



13.Kb2 Re6 e4 Nd5 R:d3 Nc4//R:c6 Na5 Nf6#

The author points out that King-placement is difficult to master, but "ironically the best way to develop the King is to keep it fairly centralised and moved off the back rank." However he warns against moving it too far afield. Here is an extreme example.

Tony Gardner - Rodolfo Cortenesi 1993 1.Nf3 2.d5 Kd7 3.e3 b3 Bb2 4.Kd6 Bg4 h5 Rh6 5.Bb5 b4 Ng5 f4 Be5#

The book can be obtained from: Tony Gardner, 1444 Meadowind Court, Conyers, GA 30207 USA. Price is \$3, with perhaps another \$2 to cover the postage. *Reviewer: Peter Wood.*

Work in Progress

ULSTER CYCLE etc

Lex Kraaijeveld writes concerning the news item on the game of Dun in VC21. Dr. Colin O'Boyle, a reader in the Department of Celtic Studies at the University of Aberdeen, has told him that the *Ulster Cycle* probably dates from around 800 AD, although some parts of it may be older, 2500 years is surely not true! Ficheall and Brandub are the games mentioned in the *Ulster Cycle*. Brandub seems to be a (small) Hnefatafl variant; Ficheall's rules of play are more obscure and could have been similar to those of the Roman game of 'Latruncolorum' (as stated in *ECV* under Celtic Chess).

Mr. Kraaijeveld is trying to collect as much information as he can on ancient Celtic and Viking games such as Hnefatafl, Tawlbrydd, Brandub, Gwyddybyll, Ficheall, Gwezboell, Tawlish, etc. Can any reader help? His address is: **The Coppers, London Road, Sunningdale, Berks SL5 0JN.**

GPJ wishes to thank Derick Green, Malcolm Horne and Lex Kraaijeveld who sent newspaper cuttings concerning the game unearthed in Colchester (VC21 p9). The accounts do not entirely agree, but the board used was 12 files by 8 ranks, with men along first and eighth ranks. Rules of play are open to conjecture.

DAVID LI

In the course of doing research on the history of Kriegspiel, David Li is also pursuing the topic of the history/origin of chess. He says he has accumulated two years worth of material, "mainly (from items) in the Library of Congress written in Chinese centuries ago". He is interested in getting references/citations/leads on this topic. His findings, which he considers to be both original and interesting are to be presented in a book planned for December 1997. Write to: **David Li, Post Office Box 341267, Bethesda, Maryland 20827, USA.**

Meetings

Don't forget the inaugural meeting of the Chess Variants Society (if that's the name we decide on!) 2.30pm Saturday 4 January at Peter Wood's address (see front cover of this issue, and the last).

2nd COLLOQUIUM 'BOARD GAMES IN ACADEMIA'

This will take place from the 6th to the 10th April 1997 in Leiden in the Netherlands. Those wishing to participate and/or submit papers should write to: **Alexander J. de Voogt, Da Costalaan 1, 3743 HT Baarn, Netherlands.** Topics so far included are: Classification of board games, Distibution of board games, Fieldwork methodology, Terminology conventions.

TOURNAMENT NEWS

'VARIANT CHESS' TOURNAMENT

On the 1st November a postal Italian Progressive tournament commenced, with 4 players taking part. These are: Steve Boniface, Peter Coast, Ari Luuro (Finland), and Peter Wood.

3RD HETERODOX OLYMPICS

The start of this has been delayed, apparently because of the lack of entries. England, USA and Italy have definitely raised teams, and Alessandro Castelli has been trying to persuade other countries, particularly from eastern Europe, to compete also. It is strange that France and Germany seem unable to raise teams. I have been told that some of the chosen variants are: Dynamo Chess, Italian Progressive, Avalanche and Mutation Progressive. [It has been confirmed in *Eterosacco* that England finished 3rd in the Second Heterodox Olympiad - behind Italy I and the Ukraine.]

AISE

The 1997 list of postal tournaments has been published: 77(!) in all, including 10 non-chess games. Few changes from this year, although **Gliniski Hexagonal Chess** has now been included. Entry fee per tournament: 5000 lire, or equivalent. **Send for list to: Alessandro Castelli, 62010 Villa Potenza (MC), Italy.**

SHOGI NEWS

The 12th European Championship took place in Brussels on the 23/25th August. On tie break the European champion is T. Miyamoto, 2nd was A. Van Oosten (Netherlands), 3rd was T. Fukumura. The first and third both come from Japan. How Miyamoto is European Champion is not explained in *Shoten!* 36 players took part in the main Championship, which included 3 UK players: Steve Lamb was in 6th place a point behind the winner, Mike

Sandeman, the British Champion, who played much stronger opposition, was in 8th place 2 points behind the winner (in fact two of his losses were against Miyamoto and Fukumura), Tony Hosking was in 32nd place with 2 points.

Steve Cain won the subsidiary Kyu section with a clear score (6/6). He should have been included in the main Dan section, but arrived late.

The **Royston congress** on 14th September was won by Steve Lamb (3/3). The open Tori-shogi championship was won by Richard West, for the second successive year.

Shoten magazine has at last received the score of the game which Steve Lamb won against Miss Takahashi in the simultaneous display at the London Shogi Club on July 7th. (See page 24 of VC21.) It is published in the latest issue.

OVER THE BOARD VARIANT TOURNAMENTS

Eterosacco gives the results of a couple of these. There were 12 entrants (all Italian) to an event held on September 14/15 in **Arezzo** in Italy. This was organised by Fabio Forzoni. There were 11 rounds and games were of 15 minutes duration per player. 3 variants were selected for each round. Alessandro Castelli won with 9 1/2 points, with Fabio Forzoni second with 8 points. The deciding game came in the penultimate round when Castelli beat Forzoni at Dynamo Chess.

On 5th October Fabrice Liardet organised a tournament in **Geneva** in Switzerland which had 10 different variants, and players had 8 minutes each on the clock per game. There were 19 participants. The winner was Rodolphe Francey, ahead of Jean Pierre Vegh and Jacques Sauvin. Variants included Omni-chess, Rifle Chess, Checkless Chess, and Twinkle Chess.

There will be another tournament there on December 21st. The variants this time will probably be: Alice C, Double-move C (AISE), Extinction, Madrasi, All-mate C, Push C, Losing C, Synchronous C, and Triplets. **For details write to: Fabrice Liardet, 11 rue Francois Durafour, CH-1220 Avanchet, Switzerland.**

STOP PRESS

The Guildford Chess Club Variants Day, 1 December, attracted 10 players. All 14 of the variants listed in the programme were played within the 4-hours. First Prize went to Alan Punnett (10½/14) Second was M. Surant (9½/14).