

VARIANT CHESS

Founded by George Jelliss

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Editorial

This will be my last issue as editor, and in order to give my successor a reasonably clean sheet I am closing off Volume 4 with an index and printing four extra pages. Three of these pages are devoted to a paper by Lex Kraaijeveld in which he takes a standard technique for the analysis of biological evolution and applies it to the study of Shogi variants (historical evolution). This is more academic than most of our contributions and I have no doubt that some readers will pass over it, but I personally find it a fascinating and instructive example of lateral thinking. It doesn't provide a complete answer to the problems it addresses, but I think it is relevant.

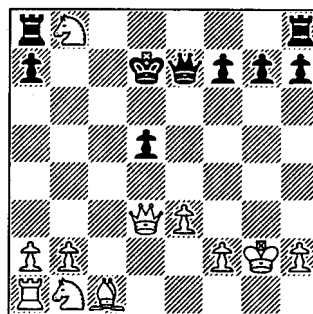
Paul Byway takes over from VC 33. I think we are in broad agreement as to what the magazine should be, so don't expect major changes, but if you would like to see differences in detail - more of so-and-so, perhaps, and less of such-and-such - now is a good time to write and say so.

Mutation Progressive Chess by George Jelliss

This game has been a favourite of mine since I played it in the first Heterochess Olympics, held in 1988, for which it was invented by John E. Bosley of New Zealand.

The basic rule is that a capturer (other than a King) mutates to the type of man captured, but does not change colour. A captured pawn becomes a pawn of the capturer's colour and moves in the usual directions for that colour (i.e. it does not become an 'upside-down' pawn). In the case of a pawn capturing on the promotion rank, mutation takes precedence over promotion. An important extra rule restricts the powers of queens: they may not give check, though they still pin and guard. So a queen next to its king is invulnerable to capture, and many games show this.

The game Jelliss-Salvadori (AISE GP95) illustrates these rules. 1 e3 2 d5, e5 3 Ba6, Bxb7 (becomes P), bxc8 (becomes B, mutation taking precedence over promotion) 4 Ne7, Nxc8(B), Bd6, Qe7 5 d4, dxe5, exd6(B), Qd3, Ke2 6 cxd6(B), Bh3, Kd7, Bxg2(P), gxh1(R), Rxcg1(N)+ 7 Kf1, Kxg1, Kg2, c4, c5, cxd6(B), Bxb8(N)+ :



Now the White K/Q are separated, allowing 8 Raxb8(N), Nc6, Nb4, Nxd3(Q), Rc8, Rxc1(B), Bxb2(P), bxa1(R). But White can counter: 9 Na3, Nc2, Nxa1(R), Rd1, Rxd3(Q), Qf1, e4, exd5, h4 10 Qa3, Kd6, Kxd5, g5, gxh4, Ke6, f5, Qxa2(P), a1=Q, Qe5 11 f4, Kh3, Kxh4, Kg3, Qh3, Qxh7(P), h8=R, Ra8, Rxa7(P), a8=Q, Qf3 ½-½.

The games that follow, classified by opening moves,

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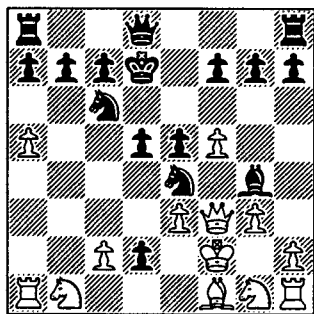
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are some of the more interesting ones I have played in AISE tournaments of 1995, 96 and 97 and in the three heterolympics. (Games from the first heterolympics appeared in *The Games and Puzzles Journal* 1989, p.127.)

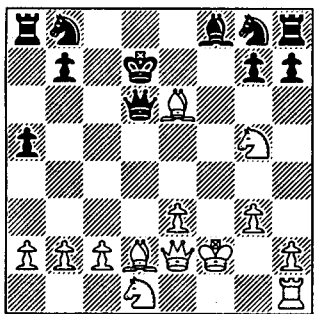
I managed second place in the 1995 tournament but have gone downhill since. The champion in this variant, then and now, by a wide margin, is Vito Rallo of Italy. The other players featured are Patrizio Fontana, Daniele Ferri, Aldo Kustrin, Tiziano Sala, Roberto Salvadori and Gianluca Scovero all of Italy, Jaromil Dziel of Poland, Michael Keller of USA and Josef Zima, Czechoslovakia (as it then was).

In the games, the sign >>> invites the reader to find a mating sequence. Note that the progressive rules are of the Italian variety, i.e. the Nth sequence must consist of N moves, not fewer. Solutions are given on page 67.

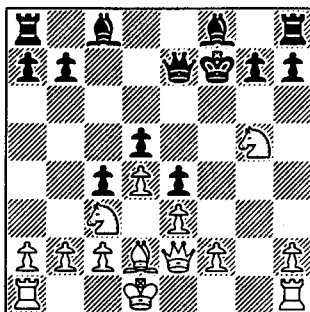
(1) Jelliss-Dziel (Heterolympics 3): 1 a4 2 d5, e5 3 a5, b4, e3 4 Nf6, Nc6, Bg4, Kd7 5 f4, f5, Qf3, Kf2, g3 6 Bxb4(P), b3, b2, bxc1(B), Bxd2(P), Ne4+ 7 >>>



(2) Dziel-Jelliss (Heterolympics 3): 1 d4 2 e5, e4 3 Nc3, e3, Qe2 4 d5, Be6, Qd6, Kd7 5 f3, fxe4, exd5, Nf3, dxe6(B)+ 6 fxe6(B), c5, cxd4, cxc3(N), Nd1, a5 7 Ng5, g3, Bh3, Bd2, Rxd1(N), Kf2, Bxe6+ 8 >>>

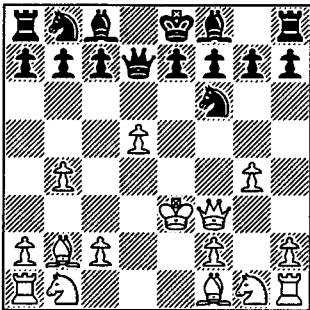


(3) Rallo-Jelliss (AISE GP96): 1 d4 2 e5, e4 3 e3, Nf3, Qd2 4 Nh6, d5, c5, c4 5 Ne5, g4, g5, gxh6(N), Nhxf7(P)+ 6 Ke7, Nc6, Nxe5, Kxf7, Qe7, Nf3+ 7 Kd1, Qe2, Bd2, Nc3, Bg2, Bxf3(N), Ng5+ 8 >>>

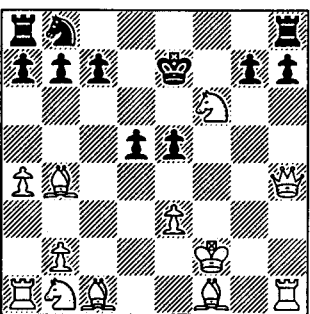


The mating sequence I found in this game is really remarkable: one piece takes all five values PNBRC!

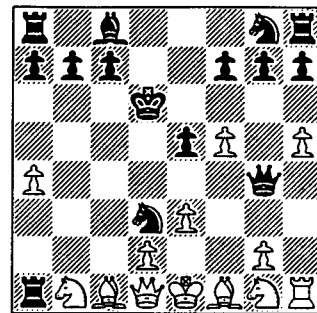
(4) Jelliss-Rallo (AISE GP95): 1 e3 2 d5, Nf6 3 b4, Bb2, g4 4 Qd7, d4, dxe3, e2 5 d4, d5, Kxe2, Ke3, Qf3 6 >>>



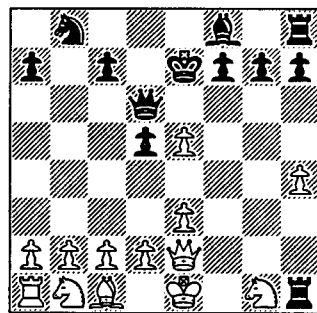
(5) Jelliss-Ferri (AISE GP95): 1 e3 2 d5, Nf6 3 a4, g4, Nh3 4 Ne4, Bxg4(P), gxh3(N), Nhxf2(P)+ 5 Ke2, d3, dxe4(N), Kxf2, Qf3 6 e5, f5, Bb4, Qg5, Ke7, fxe4(N)+ 7 Qxe4(N), Nf6, h4, hxg5(Q), Qh4, c3, cxb4(B)+ 8 >>>



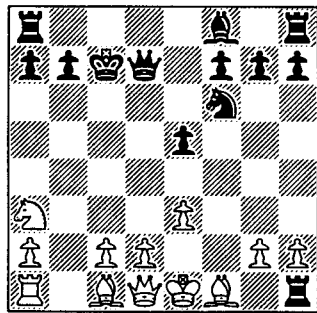
(6) Jelliss-Kustrin (AISE GP95): 1 e3 2 d5, e5 3 a4, h4, h5 4 Ba3, Bxb2(P), bxa1(R), Ke7 5 f4, f5, c4, cxd5, d6+ 6 Kxd6, Qg5, Qg4, Nc6, Nb4, Nd3+ (Aldo claimed mate here but it is only check: would be mate with BKc5 but this takes another move) 7 >>> Mate here requires only six moves.



(7) Jelliss-Sala (AISE GP95): 1 e3 2 d5, e5 3 f4, fxe5, h4 4 Be6, Qd6, Kd7, Nf6 5 Ba6, Qe2, Bxb7(P), bxa8(R), Rxb8(N)+ 6 Ke7, Nd7, Nxb8, Bh3, Bxg2(P), gxh1(R) 7 >>>

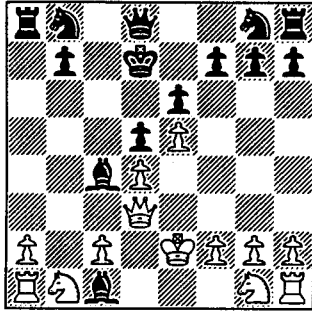


(8) Jelliss-Scovero (Heterolympics 1): 1 e3 2 e5, Nf6 3 f4, fxe5, Nh3 4 d6, dxe5, Qe7, Na6 5 Na3, b4, b5, bxa6(N), Nxc7(P) 6 Bxh3(N), Nf2, Nxb1(R), Kd7, Kxc7, Qd7 7 >>>

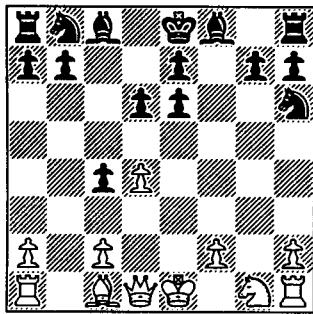


This finale has been published before in *The Problemist* but the problem-like nature of the mating position makes it well worth repeating here.

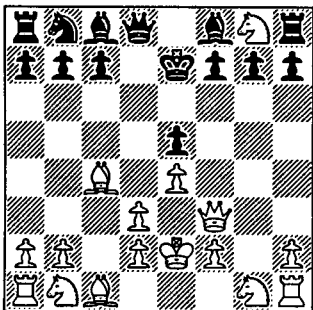
(9) Sala-Jelliss (Heterolympics 3):
 1 e4 2 a5, d5 3 d4, e5, Bb5+ 4 c6,
 cxb5(B), a4, e6 5 b3, bxa4, Qd3,
 Ke2, axb5(B)+ 6 Bd7, Bxb5, Bc4,
 Ba3, Bxc1, Kd7 7 >>> Tiziano
 reported that he spent a week in study
 to find the mating reply here!



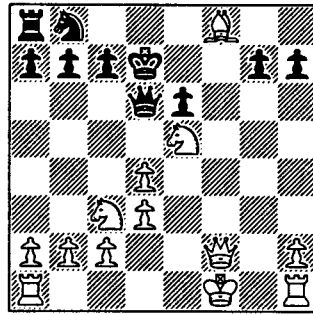
(10) Fontana-Jelliss (Heterolympics
 2): 1 e4 2 c5, c4 3 b3, bxc4, d4
 4 f5, f4, Nh6, d6 (d6 stops 5 Qh5,
 Qxh6(N), c5, Bc4, Bf7 mate) 5 e5,
 e6, Na3, Nb5, Nc7+ 6 Qxc7(N),
 Nxe6(P), f3, fxg2, gxf1(B), Bxc4(P)
 7 >>>



(11) Jelliss-Rallo (AISE GP96): 1 e4
 2 d5, d4 3 Bc4, Qf3, Ke2 4 e5, Ke7,
 Nh6, d3+ 5 cxd3, g4, g5, gxh6(N),
 Ng8+ 6 >>>



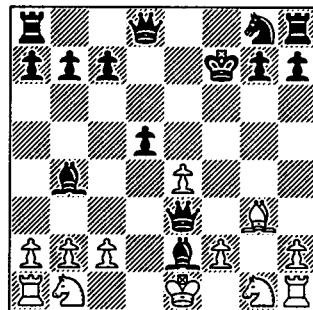
(12) Rallo-Jelliss (Heterolympics 3):
 1 e4 2 d5, d4 3 d3, Qd2, Nf3 4 f5,
 fxe4, e3, Nh6 5 fxe3, exd4, Qe3,
 Ke2, Nc3 6 Bh3, e6, Qd6, Kd7,
 Bxg2(P), gxf1(B)+ 7 Kxf1, Qf2,
 Bxh6(N), Nf7, Nxh8(R), Rxf8(B),
 Ne5+:



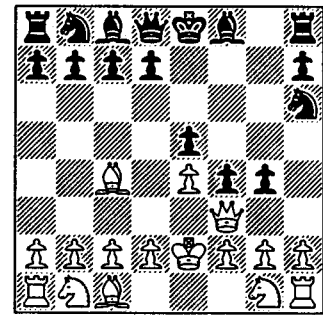
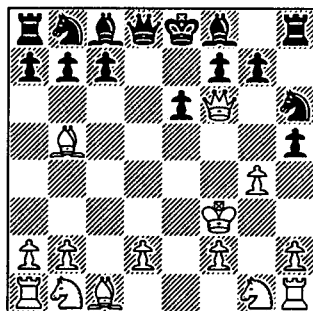
(13) Jelliss-Zima (Heterolympics 1):
 1 e4 2 e5, Nc6 3 Qf3, Bc4, Bxf7(P)+
 4 Ke7, Nd4, Nxf3(Q), Kxf7 5 d4,
 Bf4, gx f3(Q), Qe3, Bg3 6 d5, Bg4,
 Be2, exd4, dxe3(Q), Bb4+ 7 >>>

The sequence actually played was:
 8 Qxe5(N), Nc4, Nxb2(P), Nc6,
 Nxd4(P), dxc3(N), Rxf8(B),
 bxa1(R)+ 9 >>>

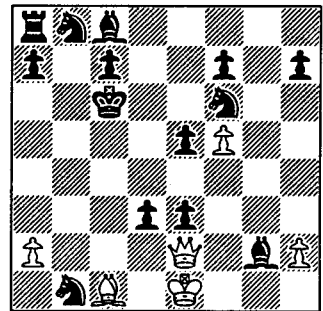
(14) Ferri-Jelliss (AISE GP95): 1 e4
 2 e6, h5 3 Qf3, Bd3, Ke2 4 Nh6, d5,
 dxe4, exd3(B)+ 5 cxd3(B), Qf6, Kf3,
 g4, Bb5+ 6 >>>



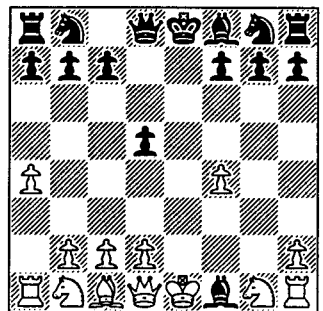
(15) Salvadori-Jelliss (AISE GP96):
 1 e4 2 e5, Nh6 3 Bc4, Qf3, Ke2 4 g5,
 g4, f5, f4 5 >>>



(16) Jelliss-Fontana (Heterolympics
 2): 1 f4 2 d5, e5 3 f5, c4, c5 4 b6,
 bxc5, g6, gx f5 5 g4, gx f5, e3, d4, Qe2
 (threat 7 Nh3, Rg1-g6-c6, Qh5, Bb5,
 Re6) 6 cxd4, dxe3, d4, d3, Qd6, Kd7
 (a try at Italian mate here is 7 Bg2,
 Bxa8(R), Kf1-g2-h3, f6, Rxg8(N)+
 but 8 Ke6! etc) 7 Nf3, Nd4, Nc6, Rg1,
 Rxg8(N), Bg2, Nf6+ 8 Qxf6(N)
 forced, Rg8, Rxg2(B), Kxc6, Ba3,
 Bxb2(P), bxa1(R), Rxb1(N) 9 >>>
 Only 8 moves are needed to give
 mate.



(17) Jelliss-Keller (Heterolympics 2):
 1 f4 2 e5, ex f4 3 e3, ex f4, a4 (threat 5
 ...Bc4, Qxf7(P) mate; if 4 d5... 5
 ...Rc6, Bb5, Re6++) 4 d5, Bh3,
 Bxg2(P), gxf1(B) 5 >>>



You may be able to detect alternative
 mating sequences or improved
 defences, especially in the earlier
 heterolympics games where the
 variant was new to all.

Pocket Knight Chess by Malcolm Horne

Pocket Knight adds a little touch of exotica to the orthodox game. Each player holds an extra knight in reserve, and this can be entered on an empty square at any time in the game, in place of a normal move. Once dropped the knight behaves normally.

According to *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* (which features an excellent postal game Buckley v Richardson), the QN or KN has sometimes been removed at the start of play and placed "in the pocket", but nowadays it's more common to give each player a third knight. Tournaments took place in Amsterdam (1909, removing QN) and Berlin (1910, removing KN), the latter boasting some 150 players.

The British Correspondence Chess Society (BCCS, see VC 29 p 16) has run a Pocket Knight tournament for several years, typically with 10-20 players competing. Jonathan Tait, a postal IM, recently played half a dozen games in this tournament, and has kindly annotated the most interesting of these for this article. Note that the BCCS places two small restrictions on the pocket knight: it must not be dropped to give check, nor must it cover a square to prevent castling.

Eddie Fierek and I have played a number of mostly quick over-the-board games (without the BCCS restrictions), and we both thought highly of the game. Two strategical questions soon pose themselves:

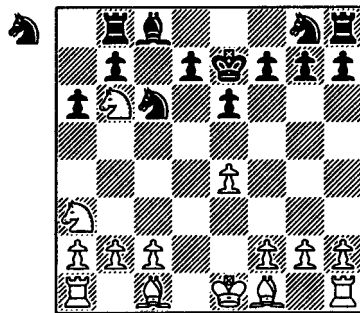
(1) What approach should one take in the early stages of the game? Jonathan tended to prefer cautious openings in his BCCS games, avoiding "holes" for a hostile pocket knight to jump in to. But Eddie played very boldly against me in our game below (and got away with it).

(2) Is it better to drop the pocket knight early on, perhaps to aid a developing attack, or should one keep it back as a Sword of Damocles, hovering over a nervous opponent? It depends on circumstances of course, but Jonathan and Eddie have both tended to use the pocket knight early, whereas I've often held it back

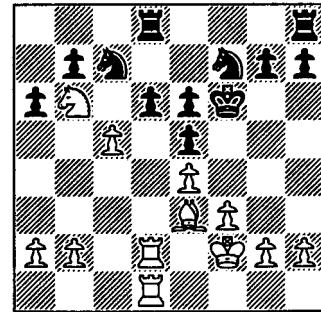
(though not in the game below, to my cost).

In *ECV* the possibility is mentioned of *two* knights in the pocket. That sounds interesting - or would it be too over the top?

Richard Colliass - Jonathan Tait, BCCS Pocket Knight 1997-98. Notes by Jonathan Tait, who starts: "Firstly, let me explain my 'tactics' for these games. Even though we were playing by post I decided to spend only a short time (not more than 10-15 minutes) on each move, hoping thereby to increase the fun by being surprised at the appearance of the opposing PN. Mostly I stuck to these tactics and was thus duly surprised." 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 e6? 5 Nb5! Because of this move the Taimanov Sicilian can be regarded as unsound in Pocket Knight Chess. After the standard 5...d6? comes the surprise 6 PNC4! and Black loses the d-pawn (6...d5 7 exd5 exd5 8 Qxd5). 5...a6 6 Nd6+ Bxd6 7 Qxd6 Qe7 8 Qxe7+ Kxe7 9 PNB6! Rb8 10 Na3 :

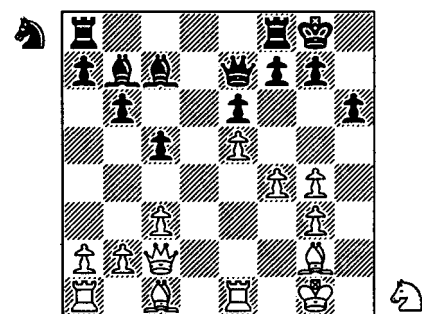


It is easy to see that White is already much better. Black has terrible dark square weaknesses increased by the loss of the appropriate bishop. And unfortunately there are no Pocket Bishops. 10...Nf6 11 f3 d6 12 Be3 e5 13 Bc4 Be6 14 Rd1 Rbd8 15 0-0 Nb8 Rerouting to make at least a token fight for b6. 16 Bxe6 fxe6 17 Nac4 Ne8 18 Rf2 Nd7 19 Bg5+ Ndf6 20 Rfd2 PNF7 21 Be3 Nd7 22 Kf2 Nxb6 23 Nxb6 Kf6 Preparing a positional trap. 24 c4 Nc7 25 c5? And White falls into it (diagram at top of next column). 25 c5 wins a pawn since 25...dxc5 loses to 26 Nd7+ etc.



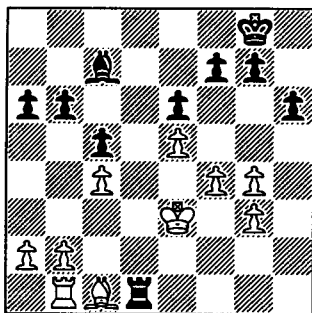
However, Black has a much better way to lose the pawn. White should have continued to build up with good winning chances since, again, I had no constructive moves. 25...d5! 26 exd5 exd5 27 Nxd5+ Nxd5 28 Rxd5 Rxd5 29 Rxd5 Rd8! Before White has a chance to hide his rook. 30 Rxd8 Nxd8 31 Bd2 Ke6 32 Ke3 Kd5 Made it. White cannot now break through. 33 b4 Ne6 34 Kd3 g6 35 Be3 Ng7 36 a4 Ne6 37 a5 Nc7 1/2-1/2.

Jonathan Tait - Gek Tan, BCCS Pocket Knight 1997-98. Notes again by Jonathan Tait. 1 Nf3 Nf6 2 d3 d5 3 g3 e6 4 Bg2 Be7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c3 c5 7 Nbd2 Nc6 8 Qc2 b6 9 Re1 Bb7 10 Nf1 h6 11 h3 White's opening moves have been terribly cautious. This was my first time at Pocket Knight chess and I confess I was simply frightened - that if I advanced too much my opponents' PNs would drop in behind. It didn't work out that way when I was Black though, and you have to advance sooner or later. 11...Bd6 12 e4 dxe4 13 dxe4 Bc7 14 Ne3 Qe7 15 Ng4 Nxg4 16 hxg4 Ne5 17 Nxe5 Bxe5 18 f4 Bc7 19 e5 :



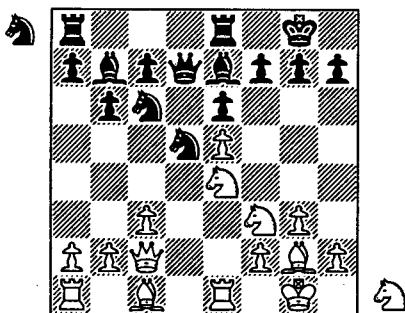
I had vague ideas of g4-g5 and an attack down the h-file, maybe with PNg4 thrown in. But look at all the

holes in White's position now. What happened to my cautious strategy? 19...Bxg2 20 Kxg2 Qd7 21 Kf2 To prevent ...PNd3 or ...PNe4 since the knight cannot drop with check. Also ...PNh2 cannot be played immediately because of 22 Qe2 and the knight is in trouble. 21...Rfd8 22 Rh1 Now to prevent ...PNh2. 22...Qd3 23 Qxd3 Rxd3 24 c4 Trying to keep the Bc7 out of the game. 24...Rad8 25 Rb1 a6 26 Be3 Pnc2 27 Bc1 Only a brief excursion for the bishop, but at least the opponent's joker has now been played. 27...Rd1 28 Rxd1 Rxd1 29 PNe3 Nxe3 30 Kxe3 :

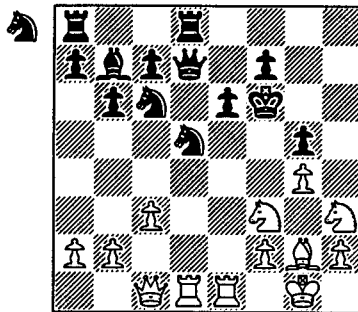


30...f6? Black's only mistake of the game. He should instead have activated his bishop: 30...b5 31 b3 Ba5 32 cxb5 axb5 (not 32...Bd2+? 33 Bxd2 Rxb1 34 b6) 33 Ke2 Rg1 34 Kf2 Rh1 35 a4, and now not 35...Bd2? 36 axb5 Bxc1 37 Kg2! (to forestall ...Be3+) Rd1 38 b6, but 35...bxa4! 36 bxa4 Bb4 37 Kf3 Kh7 with good winning chances since White has no constructive moves. 31 exf6 gxf6 32 b3 e5 33 Ra1 Rf1 34 Ke2 Rh1 35 Kf3 Kf7 36 Bb2 Rh2 37 Rb1 1/2-1/2 since White will now unravel.

Jonathan won his other four BCCS games. Here, White against Malcolm Titley, he dropped the pocket knight to launch a very strong attack:

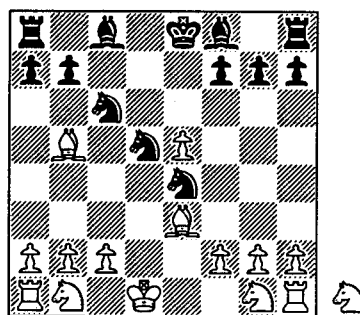


14 PNg5 h6 15 Nh3 If 15 Nc5? not 15...bxc5? 16 Qh7+ Kf8 17 Qh8+ PNg8 18 Nh7 mate but 15...Bxc5 with advantage. 15...Red8 16 g4 g5 17 Bxg5!? hxg5 18 Rad1 Kg7 19 Nf6 Bxf6 20 exf6+ Kxf6? 21 Qc1 :

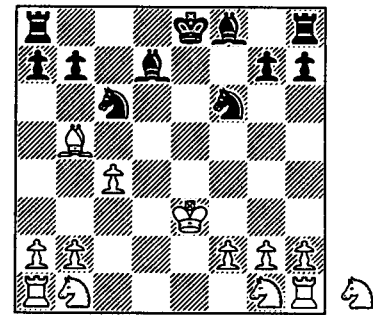


21...PNf4 22 Nxf4 gxf4 23 c4 Ncb4 24 a3 Na6 25 Ne5 Qe8 26 cxd5 Bxd5 27 Qxf4+ Kg7 28 Bxd5 Rxd5 29 Rxd5 exd5 30 Qg5+ Kf8 31 Ng6+ ffg6 32 Rxe8+ Rxe8 33 Qf6+ Kg8 34 Qxg6+ Kf8 35 h4 and White won easily.

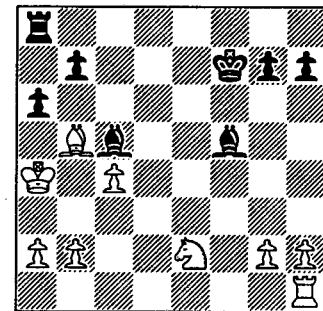
Malcolm Horne - Eddie Fierek, over-the-board friendly, November 1992. No restrictions on dropping the pocket knight, unlike BCCS (see introduction). Notes by MH. 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 d4 c6!? 4 dxc6 Nxc6 5 Bb5 Perhaps 5 Bf4!? with the idea of dropping the pocket knight at c7. 5...e5!? Black plays very vigorously with yet another pawn sac. I'm not sure it's sound, but it certainly confused me. 6 dxe5 Qxd1+ 7 Kxd1 Ne4 8 Be3 PNd5!?:



Using the extra knight very early; it both aids the attack and prevents a drop on c7. Now 9 Bxc6+ or Bd4 would probably be best, but ... 9 Ke2?! Bd7 10 c4 Nxe3 11 Kxe3!? f5! 12 exf6 Nxf6 and we have the diagram at the top of the next column:



13 Pnc7+?! Too greedy. I underestimated Eddie's attack and thought the material plus would win the day. Better to develop or defend, not that it's easy. 13...Kf7 14 Nxa8 Bc5+ 15 Kd3!? Bf5+ 16 Kc3 Ne4+ 17 Kb3 Nd4+ 18 Ka4 Nxf2 19 Nc3 Rxa8 20 Nge2 Nxe2 21 Nxe2 Nxb1 22 Rxh1 a6! :



If only he hadn't had that move! Now Black gains a decisive material plus. 23 Rf1 Kg6 24 Nf4+ Kg5 25 a3?! Better 25 Kb3. 25...Bc2+ 26 b3 axb5+ 27 Kxb5 Bxa3?! Just a touch risky. It works out OK for Black, but 27...Bd6 keeps a solid advantage. 28 Ne6+ Kg6 29 Nd4 Be4 30 Ra1 The pin doesn't quite succeed. 30...Rd8 31 Ne6 Bc6+ 32 Kb6 Ra8 33 Rf1 Not 33 Nc7? Bc5+. 33...Bd6 34 Nc5 Bxc5+ 35 Kxc5 Ra2 and Black eventually won (0-1 in 62 moves).

"Fortress" or "shut-out" draws such as that at the end of Jonathan Tait's first game often come as a complete surprise to the opponent. I remember an endgame study ending in such a draw being set for solution at a World Chess Solving Championship a few years ago. The solution was only five moves deep and it looked easy enough when examined afterwards at leisure, but only 18 competitors out of 50 got it right. - JDB

Hostage Chess by David Pritchard

Last issue I unwisely backed Magnetic Chess as the variant of the decade. I must adoube. This new game, the invention of Prof. John Leslie of Guelph, Canada, must rank above it. Hostage Chess, for want of a better description, is a Chessgi variant. But a variant with two advantages. In the first place, it uses a single chess set, effectively pushing Chessgi, with its requirement for two sets and the almost inevitable confusion that that causes (have you tried playing it over the board?) into limbo, except perhaps for correspondence play. And secondly it introduces additional skill elements that are difficult to evaluate, which in my view make the game much more interesting. So it's goodbye Chessgi.

Usual men and set-up. Notionally each player has, adjacent to the board, a prison on their right-hand side and an airfield on their left. I have found beer-mats ideal to represent these facilities (put your beer somewhere else) although they are not strictly necessary.

Rules

[1] When you make a capture, you place the captured man, now called a hostage, in your prison.

[2] At the start of your turn, and before you move, you may offer a hostage held by you in exchange for a man of yours held hostage by the opponent. The man you offer must be of at least equal value to the man you want released. The table of values (lowest to highest) is, fairly obviously, pawn, knight and bishop (equal), rook and queen. This must be a straight exchange (one man for one man). The opponent cannot refuse the exchange.

[3] The man you have reclaimed must immediately be placed on the board on any vacant square except that a pawn cannot be dropped on the first or eighth rank. This ends your turn.

[4] The hostage you release is placed on the opponent's airfield. This man may be dropped by the opponent at any time during the game corresponding to the way in which captured pieces are employed in Chessgi.

[5] A pawn may not be promoted unless there is a piece (N,B,R,Q) for which it can be exchanged. If there is none, it follows that a pawn poised for promotion does not attack the squares diagonally ahead of it; so, for example, a king apparently under attack from such a pawn, is not in check. This complicates matters a little for it means that the defending player in this situation is forbidden to make a piece (as distinct from a pawn) capture since this would allow the owner of the pawn to promote and capture the king, an action that anyway would be contrary to the laws of chess. Where a promotion is possible, the pawn changes places with the hostage of the player's choice. The released hostage thus becomes the promoted piece and the pawn is removed to the opponent's prison.

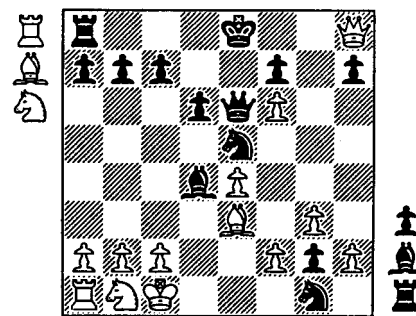
[6] A pawn dropped on the second rank regains its two-square move option and a rook dropped on a home corner square is deemed as unmoved for castling purposes.

[7] The game otherwise remains as chess with all the usual rules applying.

Here are two games won by Roger Smook, a high-ranking Canadian chessplayer, against the inventor. Hostage exchanges are shown in parentheses. Thus (Q-R) means that the turn player has surrendered the queen he held in return for a rook held by the opponent. The move that follows therefore will inevitably be a drop of the second man, in this case the rook.

Game 1 1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Bc5 3 Nf3 d6 4 d4 exd4 (Black places the white pawn in his prison) 5 Nxd4 (White does likewise with the black pawn) Qh4 6 g3 (a bad move which ultimately costs White the game) Qh3 7 Be3 (P-P) P*g2 (Black releases the captured white pawn to White's airfield, rescues his pawn from White's prison and drops it on g2) 8 Qf3 Nf6 (notice that Black cannot promote the pawn because there is no

black piece in White's prison) 9 Rg1 Bg4 10 Qf4 (not 10 Qxg2 Qxg2 11 Rxg2 when Black exchanges the captured queens and plays Q*d1 mate) Nbd7 11 P*g5 (White drops the pawn poised on his airfield) Ne5 12 gxf6 g5 13 Qxg5 Bxd4 14 (N-N) N*g7+ Kf8 15 Ne6+ Ke8 16 Qg7 N*f3+ 17 Kd1 Nxf1+ 18 Kc1 Bxe6 19 Bxe6 Qxe6 20 Qxh8+ :

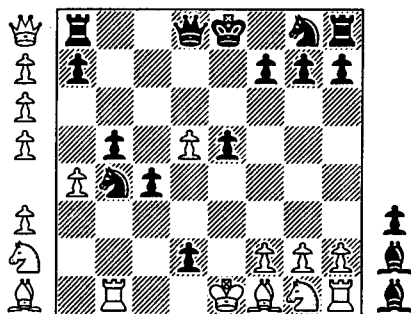


20...(R-R) R*f8 21 (B-N) N*g7 Kd7 22 Qxf8? Rxf8 23 Nxe6 (Q-Q) Q*e1+ and mate next move.

Game 2 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Bc5 4 c3 Qf6 5 Bxc6 dxc6 6 d4 exd4 7 cxd4 Bb4+ 8 Bd2? (B-N) N*d3+ 9 Ke2 Bxd2 10 Qxd2 Nf4+ 11 Kf1 (B-B) B*c4+ 12 Kg1 Nh3+ 13 gxh3 Qxf3 14 B*g2 (N-N) N*e2+ 15 Kf1 Nf4+ 16 Resigns

Here, for lessons rather than quality, is a quick friendly I had with Frank Parr recently (a 'first' for both of us). *White F.P. Black D.P.* 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 (rather better than the equivalent chess move since it will give Black the first opportunity to exchange a hostage) 3 Nc3 e5 4 d5 c6 5 e4 b5 6 dxc6 (P-P) *d4 7 *d7 (the pawn is from White's airfield) Nxc6 (the Black king is not in check as White cannot promote) 8 Qxd4 Bxd7 (the queen cannot be taken) 9 Qd1 (P-P) *d4 10 Nd5 Bb4+ 11 Bd2 Bxd2+ 12 Qxd2 Be6 13 a4 (White might have tried 13 *b7 followed by (B-B) B*c7 but the white queen remains in danger) Bxd5 14 exd5 (B-B) B*d4 15 *c3 dxc3 16 bxc3 Bxc3! 17 Qxc3 (N-B) B*b4 18 Qxb4 Nxb4 (White can now only rescue his queen by capturing Black's queen whereas

Black can sacrifice his queen at any time and promptly re-enter it) **19 Rb1 (P-P) *d2+ :**



20 Kxd2 (Or **20 Kd1 Qxd5**. Now **21 N*c7+** achieves nothing as neither the queen nor the rook can be taken as Black then exchanges hostages and mates on e1. If **21 Rxb4** Black has the crushing **Qd3** which threatens both (Q-N) **N*c3** and (Q-B) **B*c2**. White could try **21 N*e3** but after **Qd3**

22 Nf3 Qxb1+ 23 Kxd2 Black again mates; and if **21 *c2 Qd3 22 N*e3 Qxf1+** wins easily; all of which attests to the extraordinary vitality of the game) **Qxd5+ 21 Kc1** (White must drop on d3) **Na2+ 22 Kc2 (P-P) *b3+ 23 Kb2 (Q-B) B*c3 24 Ka3 b4 mate**. Typically, as so often in Shogi and Chessgi, if the attack fails retribution waits - White here has Q, B, N & 2 x P on his airfield.

The game has been refined over a period and after much experimentation. The subtle differences between Hostage Chess and Chessgi will become apparent with practice. The first important point to notice is that a captured man does not change sides as it does in Chessgi so there is no confusion about colour. Again, if you need a knight to drop with advantage you can't just capture an opponent's

knight - you must get your opponent to capture one of yours. It is fairly obvious that in claiming a hostage exchange you cede to the opponent the right to drop his man at any time whereas you are obliged to drop your recovered man at once. Tactical subtleties can arise. The inventor quotes one such from play. The turn player dropped a pawn on the seventh, simultaneously attacking two rooks. The opponent promptly exchanged the only piece he held hostage. Neither rook could now be taken as there was no piece in the opponent's prison for which the promoted pawn could be exchanged (you can't exchange one from an airfield).

The game seems very suitable for a BCVS correspondence tourney. If any reader plays an interesting game of Hostage Chess I would appreciate the score.

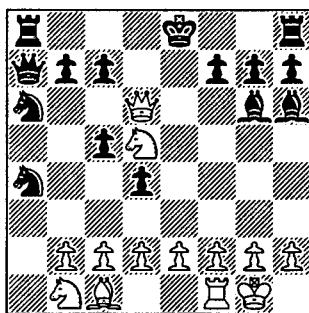
Points from near and far

Knight's tours on a circular board (VC 31 pp 34/48). To my surprise, George Jelliss tells me that the second and third tours on page 48 do appear to be original with myself; he knows only of some articles by S. Vatriquant in *L'Echiquier* (Sept 1929 pp 414-5, Nov 1929 pp 517-8) which include 4 x (2n+1) cylindrical boards but not 4 x 2n.

Nevertheless, I did no more than apply established techniques in a straightforward manner, and would not wish to claim any particular credit. My first attempts were distinctly unimpressive, and it was not until I read George's article in *Chessics* 22 (itself quoting work by C. Flye Sainte-Marie in 1876, as he reminds me) that I started making progress.

Through the Looking Glass backwards. Those of us who are interested in problems have come to recognize Ronald Turnbull as by some way the most talented and imaginative British problem composer active today (he can take a half-formed idea of my own and set it with a depth and precision which it would not have occurred to me even to attempt), and this showed itself in an article on

Alice Chess which he recently wrote for the French composition magazine *diagrammes*. Among the problems he quoted was the original below. Board B is empty, and White mates in two by **1 Qd8>B** threatening **2 Qe7>A**; but why can't Black escape by **1...0-0**? The answer, rich in subtle touches, will be found on page 67. I found when I was problem editor of the *BCM* that readers who took no interest in ordinary problems would perk up when I invited them to work out how a particular position could have been reached in play, and perhaps the same is true of *VC*.



(A brief resumé of Alice rules, for readers who have not seen recent issues. The players have two boards, A and B, but only one set of men.

Initially, the normal game array is set up on A and B is left empty, but when a move is made the man moved passes "through the looking glass" and reappears on the other board. In the position given here, therefore, **1 Qe7** is not mate because the queen vanishes to board B; but White can play **1 Qd8**, the queen again vanishing to B and therefore evading capture, and he is now threatening to play **2 Qe7** on B, the queen coming back to A and giving mate.)

Progressive Circe? Ian Richardson's problem **282** on page 64 causes me to wonder: has anyone tried playing Progressive Circe (a man which is captured reappears on its game-array square)? It would appear to offer even more scope than ordinary Progressive for the perpetration of surprise mates, since opposing men can be sent back to squares where they will block the escape of their king.

Losing Chess on the Net. I read in *The Problemist* that Stan Goldovski's website can be found at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Stan_Goldovski/Index.htm.

Phylogenetic analysis of Shogi variants by Lex Kraaijeveld

Chess as a game is similar to an animal or plant species in that it can evolve (and obviously, this holds for board games in general). As a result of one or more changes in the rules of play, a particular chess variant can change into another variant, another chess 'species'; just think of the introduction of the queen in western chess at the end of the 15th century. A magazine like *Variant Chess* wouldn't exist if chess didn't have the potential to continuously mutate and evolve, to give rise to new forms. Some of these forms may be short-lived, others may last for centuries.

Darwin's idea, survival of the fittest, can be recognised in chess variants: if a new variant arises as a result of a change in the rules of play and that change improves the game in the eyes of the players, that new variant will replace or outcompete the old variant, which may then go extinct. Again, look at what happened to medieval chess after introduction of the queen. Chess also has its fossils: variants that were played in the past and of which some or all of the rules are known only from historical sources.

I hope to have convinced you that there are parallels between biological species and chess variants. In biology, there are analytical tools to reconstruct the evolution of a group of animal or plant species from their character states. These tools are used in a field of biology, called phylogeny. Phylogenetic analyses are established, widely accepted biological methods and have also been used by linguists to determine relationships between languages.

Space does not allow me to go into detail on these analyses (and it would probably get boring to most readers of *Variant Chess* very quickly!), but there are two concepts that are basic to phylogenetic analyses which, I think, need to be mentioned here.

First of all, characters exist in two states: primitive (the technical term is 'plesiomorphic') and derived ('apomorphic'). For a biological example,

think of birds having feathers to cover their body as compared to reptiles having scales. For the character 'body cover', having scales is the primitive character state (fish have scales as well); having feathers the derived state. Shared derived character states point to relatedness ('if it has feathers, it is a bird'); shared primitive states do not. To get back to chess: if variant A and B both have a knight as one of the pieces, that does not mean they are necessarily closely related. The knight was almost surely present in the chess variant that all others descended from and A and B therefore inherited the knight from their original ancestor.

Second, there is the parsimony principle: it is assumed that it is unlikely (but not impossible!) that the same change occurs in two different species independently of each other. Therefore, in reconstructing evolution, the analysis searches for the lowest number of such independent similar changes.

Phylogenetic techniques have, to my knowledge, never been applied to chess or any other board game. In order to see whether it can be done in the first place (in other words, whether the results make any sense), we need a group of chess variants that is not too large, relatively homogeneous, but still shows enough variation to work with. The perfect group for this purpose is the family of Shogi variants.

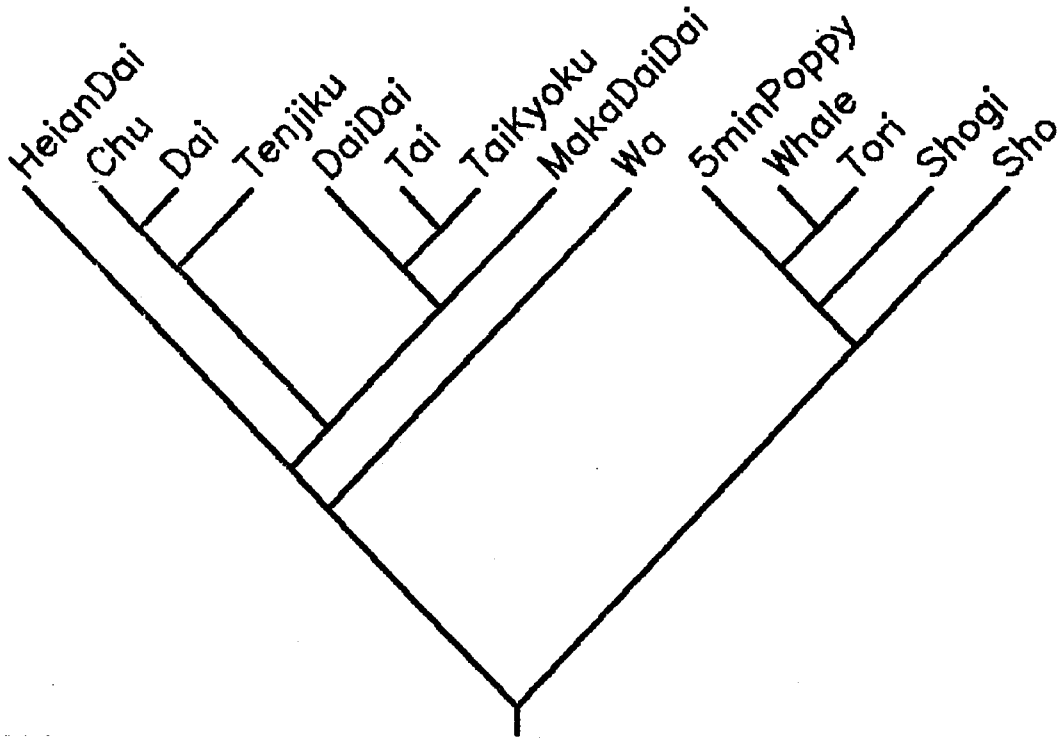
For a first analysis, I decided to use all known Shogi variants that originated in Japan before the start of the 20th century. In addition, I included one modern western and one modern Japanese variant; variants for more than 2 players, whether historical or modern, are not included.

Information on Heian Shogi (HE), Sho Shogi (SH), Shogi (S, the game as it is played today), Heian Dai Shogi (HD, sometimes referred to as Oo Shogi), Wa (or Yamato) Shogi (WA), Chu Shogi (CH), Dai Shogi (DA), Dai-Dai Shogi (DD), Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi (MD), Tai Shogi (TA), Tenjiku Shogi (TE) and Tori Shogi (TO) is taken from the TSA leaflets

(published by George Hodges), John Fairbairn's article in Shogi magazine in 1980 and several articles (especially by Koichi Masukawa and Peter Blommers) in recent issues of *Variant Chess*. Details on the two modern variants included, Whale Shogi (WH) and Five-minute Poppy Shogi (5P), are taken from David Pritchard's *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*. Finally, the initial set-up of Tai-Kyoku Shogi (TK), a 36x36 variant with 402 pieces a side (the chess equivalent of a brontosaurus fossil!), was very kindly sent to me by Koichi Masukawa. The existence of even larger variants (up to 40x66) has been suggested, but if they did ever exist, nothing is known about them. Ko-Dai Shogi and Chu-Dai Shogi are two names of which nothing is known and 'Wide Shogi' is generally thought to be a version of Xiangqi, rather than of Shogi.

The data set is shown in full (with the abbreviations given above to indicate the variants). Characters are scored as Y/N/B (i.e. present, absent, or both), with ? to indicate irrelevance (if a variant does not have a hook-mover, the question whether it promotes or not makes no sense) or lack of information. In determining whether two variants have a piece in common, the move of the piece is considered more important than the name. So, for example, Tori Shogi shares a drunk elephant with several other variants, even though the piece with that move is called falcon in Tori Shogi; similarly, the blue whale from Whale Shogi is in fact a copper general by move. Because the only information I have on Tai-Kyoku Shogi is the initial set-up, it is assumed that pieces that Tai-Kyoku Shogi seems to have in common with any other variant judged by name (i.e. the same kanji characters) will also have the same move.

Masukawa's 8x8 version of Heian Shogi (the version with one gold general) is assumed to be the ancestor of all the other variants. In other words, in this analysis all the character states of Heian Shogi are by definition primitive.



Output from computer analysis

The evolutionary tree shows a clear split of the Shogi variants into two groups (keep in mind that Heian Shogi, being the ancestor of all other variants in this analysis, is not in the tree itself, but should be thought at the base of the tree): Sho Shogi plus Shogi, Tori Shogi and the two modern variants form one group, most of the older historical variants form the other. This latter group contains all the larger variants, whereas the first group shows a tendency to smaller and smaller variants.

The interesting thing about the group with all the larger variants is that it suggests that there was not one chain of Shogi variants simply getting larger and larger, but that there were several (two, maybe even three) parallel evolutions towards larger variants: Heian Dai giving rise to a Chu Dai chain (with Tenjiku as an offshoot) and to Dai-Dai which in turn gives rise separately to both Maka-Dai-Dai and to Tai Tai-Kyoku. A final point to make is that Wa Shogi doesn't appear to be closely related to anything else; it comes out of the analysis quite separate from the other historical variants. It would be interesting to know how much historical evidence there is to confirm

this parallel evolution towards larger variants.

Obviously, these kinds of phylogenetic analyses can never replace historical research, but are meant to be complementary. Historical information can be included in phylogenetic analyses to a degree. If, for instance, it is known from historical sources that a certain character state appeared only once, that character can be given a higher weight. In the analysis, this was done with the character "drops", as it is generally thought to have been introduced only once, around 1570. Assigning weights has to be done with care, though, and only on the basis of solid historical information.

The analysis done here is a standard one. More refined analyses are possible, but that only makes sense when done on historical information. Unfortunately, most of the research on Shogi history is published only in Japanese, and therefore inaccessible to me. The TSA reconstructions are based on historical sources, but as the aim of the leaflets is to present playable games it is unclear from these leaflets what is actual historical information and what is inferred or interpreted.

My thanks are to Peter Blommers for help, comments and discussion and to Koichi Masukawa for sending me the information on Tai-Kyoku Shogi. The analyses were done with the PHYLIP-package which is provided on the Internet by Joseph Felsenstein, University of Washington. I can be contacted at the NERC Centre for Population Biology, Imperial College at Silwood Park, Ascot, Berks SL5 7PY, England or by e-mail at a.kraayeveld@ic.ac.uk.

Before publication, Lex Kraaijeveld sent this article to Peter Blommers, who made the following comments:

"There is discontinuity in the Shogi variant system, due to the apparent fact that most of the games didn't last long. Only Sho, Chu, Dai and normal Shogi existed over a prolonged period.

"In two instances the structural relationship tree presented here contradicts the known historical order of development: Tenjiku and Wa are late instead of early branches."

Even so, the technique described here seems to me to have a useful contribution to make, and I wonder what light it might throw on the development of other games. - JDB

Bughouse on the Net by Fabrice Liardet

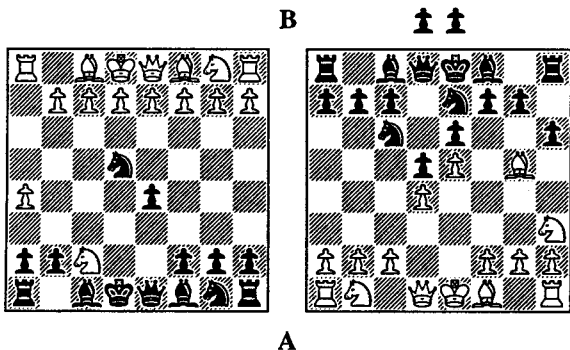
“Bughouse” is what Americans call one of the most popular chess variants, while the preferred English (and German) term for this game would be “Tandem Chess”.

Bughouse is played on two boards between two teams of two, each team having White on one board and Black on the other. All pieces taken are passed to the partner, who can drop them on his board as in Chessgi. A drop counts as a move, and the only restriction is that a pawn cannot be dropped on the first or last rank (but dropping with check or mate is allowed). The first game to be finished determines the result.

While Bughouse was already being played in almost all parts of the world, the newly created chess servers (places to play chess and chess variants on the web, which I reviewed in VC 30) have allowed at least the players with Internet access to meet on-line. As a result, the game has raised considerable interest on the web.

The most interesting Bughouse page is undoubtedly *The Ferrante Chess Page*, held by Chris Ferrante. It includes a set of nice exercises (combinations) and an article about team aspects of Bughouse. Being a tennis coach teaching his pupils how to play doubles, Chris is able to give a very interesting insight into the psychology of partnership.

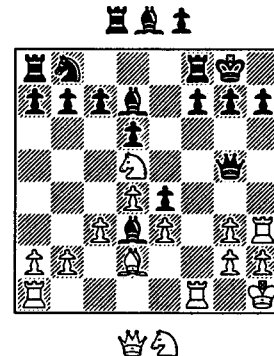
Here is a simple exercise from the page to stress the importance of team play.



Assume that team A are to play on both boards and have a time advantage on the clock. Then they can win forcefully by playing 1...Qf6! on the left board, while the right player *doesn't play* - team A can allow themselves to freeze one game (“to sit”, in Bughouse slang) since they are ahead on time. Finding himself without a single pawn in hand, team B’s left player has sooner or later to answer 2 f3 ; but then team A’s right player finally plays 1 Bxh6!, and his partner drops this pawn on f2, giving mate!

The next diagram shows the most spectacular one-board exercise from the page. This is the famous Levitzki-Marshall game revisited. White mates by 1 *Qg6!! (* means a piece drop), after which the threat 2 Qxh7# can be parried in many ways :

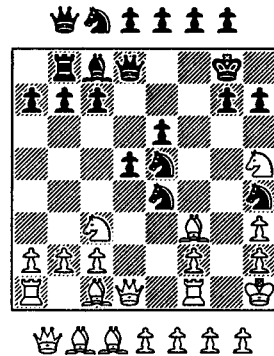
- 1...hxc6 2 *Ne7+ Qxe7 3 Nxe7#.
- 1...fxg6 2 *Ne7+ Qxe7 3 Nxe7+ Kh8 4 Rxf8+ and 5 Rxc8#.
- 1...Qxg6 2 Ne7+ Kh8 3 Nxc6+ fxg6 3...Kg8 4 *Ne7#.



- 4 Rxf8+ and 5 *Nf7#.
- 1...*Rh6 (or any other way to protect h7) 2 *Nf6+ Qxf6 3 Nxf6+ Kh8 4 Qxh7+ Rxc7 5 Rxc7#.
- 1...*Nf6 2 Nxf6+ and 3 Qxh7#.
- 1...f5 2 *Ne7+ Qxe7 3 Nxe7+ Kh8 4 Qxh7#.
- 1...Re8 2 Qxh7+ Kf8 3 Qh8+ and 4 *Nh7#.

Bughouse.net is another very good site ; it does not feature so much original material, but has the most comprehensive set of links and information. Furthermore, its *Bug Board* forum is a meeting point for all bug enthusiasts.

The special feature of *Thufir's Bughouse Page* is what it offers for download : a huge database of games played on the chess servers by the best players, together with a nice game viewer displaying them on two boards. The following combination (also from *The Ferrante Chess Page*) was played between two of the very best players in the world :



Nilsson - Aronsson, FICS, 1998 (after White's 17th move)

Black found a variant of the classical smothered mate : 17...*Qg1+!! 18 Kxc1 If 18 Rxc1 Nxf2# 18...Nexf3+ and White resigned, in view of 19 Qxf3 19 Kh1 *g2#. 19...Nxf3+ 20 Kh1 *g2+ 21 Kxc2 *Nh4+ 22 Kh1 *g2#. This was played in a 3-minute game!

Addresses (preface by http://) :

- Thufir's Bughouse Page*
www.tasunder.com/bughouse/
Bughouse.net
bughouse.net/
- The Ferrante Chess Page*
home.att.net/~cferrante/chess/index.html

The End Is Nigh ! by Paul Byway

20 The Finches, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7TB

Extinction Chess

Here is my first game in this variant. It was played last weekend at David Pritchard's house in the 'chess variants' tournament following the AGM. Although I give the whole game, the end is not far off! I am Black and the fairly natural moves probably reflect the inexperience of the players.

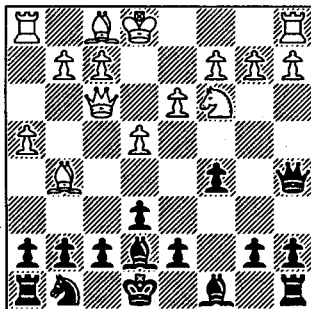
- 1 e2-e4 c7-c5
- 2 Nb1-c3 Nb8-c6
- 3 d2-d3 e7-e6
- 4 Ng1-f3 Nc6-d4

Life is easier with a plan. I intend to exchange one knight and then go after the other.

- 5 Bc1-g5 Bf8-e7

I can treat the bishops in the same way.

- 6 h2-h4? Nd4xf3
- 7 Qd1xf3 Qd8-a5
- 8 Resigns

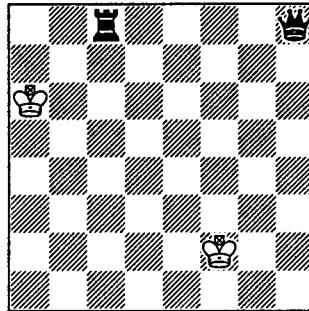


One unique piece is pinned against another: there's nothing to be done.

Losing Chess

The computer continues to make an impression. Here is a position from the programmer of ASCP (a Losing Chess program) which comes via John Beasley and Fabrice Liardet.

#59 Database



White to play and draw

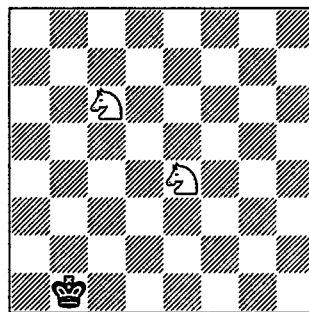
- 1 Ka6-a7! Rc8-d8
- 2 Kf2-f3! Rd8-c8
- 3 Kf3-f2! Rc8-d8

etc.

If White relaxes the pressure, Black wins by taking one of the kings: 1 Ka5? Rc3 2 Kf1 Rc2 and wins, or 1 Kg3? Qh2 2 Kxh2 Rc2. Black also wins after 2 Kb7? Rc8 or 3 Ke2? Rb8.

The next pair come from John's work on three-man endings. The solutions will be given at the end. In the first you should be aware that two knights are usually unable to corner the king.

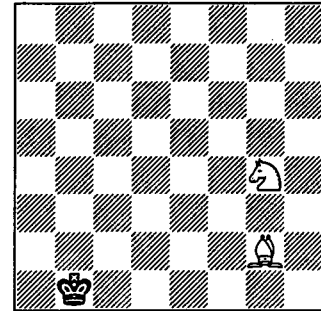
#60 Database



White to play and win

Now comes the longest win for bishop and knight against the king. It has a similar finish to #60.

#61 Database

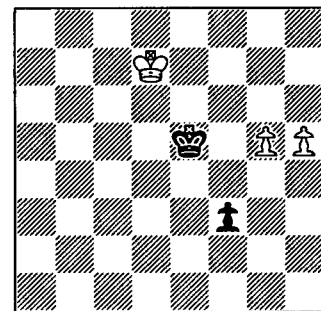


White to play and win

Sting

Which is a variant that was discussed by Ronald Turnbull on page 44 of issue 31. In this one the king (known now as a scorpion) has the additional power of a grasshopper. That is, it can move along a Q-line to the square immediately beyond some other piece of either colour. King and pawn endings could be a fruitful field for investigation: here's a nice example from Ronald.

#62 Ronald Turnbull



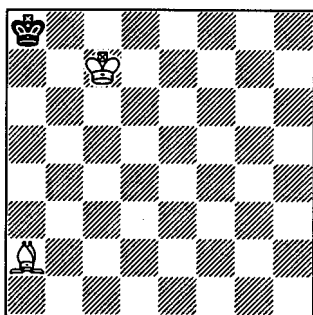
White to play and draw

- 1 h5-h6 Ke5-h5
- 2 h6-h7 Kh5-h8
- 3 g5-g6 f3-f2
- 4 Kd7-e8 f2-f1(Q)
- 5 Ke8-h5+ Kh8-g7
- 6 Kh5-g4+ draws

Ronald's article also features a bare-

bishop mate, which he attributes to Ian Richardson. Ian's 3-man setting has the stipulation 'helpmate in 4½, 2 solutions' which is strictly for the problemists, I'm afraid. Ronald adds a pawn and contrasts with the orthodox solution. Here is my preferred setting:

#63 Paul Byway
(after IR and RT)



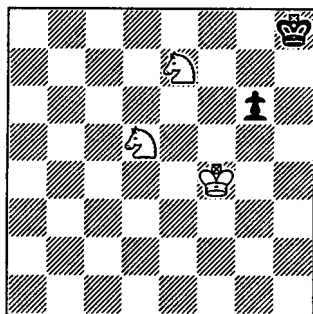
Mate in 3
Twin: White king b6

- (a) 1 Ba2-e6 Ka8-a7
- 2 Be6-c8 Ka7-a8
- 3 Bc8-b7 mate

- (b) 1 Ba2-c4 Ka8-b8
- 2 Bc4-a6 Kb8-a8
- 3 Ba6-b7 mate

I managed to construct a mate with two knights, but there is no doubt that the play is rather mundane. Let me know if you can do better.

#64 Paul Byway



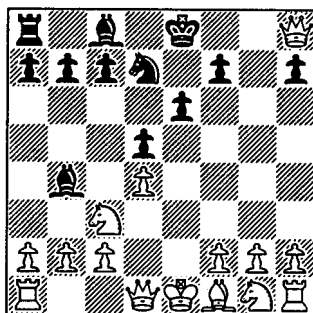
Mate in 3

- 1 Kf4-g5 Kh8-h7
- 2 Nd5-f6+ Kh7-h8
- 3 Ne7xg6 mate

Competition 8

And now three positions from Italian Progressive Chess for you. In the first Black overlooked a mate at series 6.

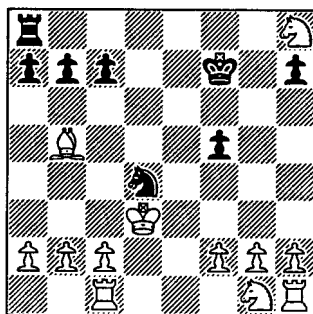
#65 Galimberti-Pugnali



Black to play series 6

In the next one Black missed a mate at series 8.

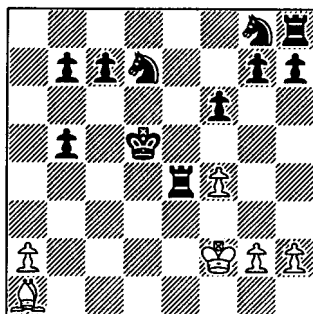
#66 Crasto-Gatto



Black to play series 8

Our third position looks as if it has a unique mate: double bonus points for a second solution.

#67 Anon.



White to play series 9

Solutions to Competition 7

#57 (a) Black wins with 6 Ke7, Ke6, Kf5, Kxf4, Nf6, Ne4 (also Re8, Re2).

(b) White (playing as Black) can win in 6 with Ba3, Kc2, Nd2, Ne4, Re1, Nf6 mate. With the White king on b2 the sequence would have been unique.

(c) Several answers here for Black (playing as White) to win in 7. Two nice ones are (i) Rd6, Rf6, Rxf4, Ke7, Kf6, Kg5, Rf2 Italian mate and (ii) Nf6, Ng4, Nf2, Bf3, Rd6, Re6, Re2 mate.

#58 The intended solution was as follows: 6 Kg6, Kg5, Kf4, Kxe4, Kxd4, Qe3 Italian mate. I overlooked the idea of bringing the rook to the e-file. It wasn't until I checked the solutions that I noticed a mate in 5 by Kg6, Kg5, Kf4, Qxe4, Qe3 (no one found this).

I gave bonus points to Fred Galvin for giving the extended solutions for the Scottish rules.

The scores are now:-

Fred Galvin	23
Ian Richardson	23
David Pritchard	14
Ronald Turnbull	5
Stefano Bruzzi	2

Losing Chess Solutions

#60 1 Nd2! (1 Ne5? Ka1! and after 2...Ka2 the king escapes) 1...Ka1 2 Nb3! Kb1 3 Na1! Kxa1 4 Nd4! and the king is dominated.

#61 1 Bf1! (now the knight aims for e4 via f2 so ...) 1...Kc1! 2 Ba6! (2 Bb5? Kb2 3 Nf2 Ka3!) 2...Kb1 (best) 3 Nf2 Kb2 (now White must wait again) 4 Bf1! Kb1(a2) 5 Ne4! Ka1 6 Ba6! Ka2 7 Bb5(e2) Kb1 (7...Ka1 8 Ba4) and now the knight manoeuvre we saw in #60 8 Nd2! Ka1 9 Nb3! Kb1 10 Na1! Kxa1 11 Ba4! and wins.

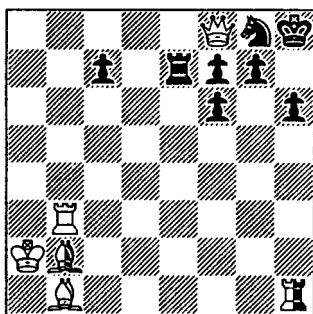
Neutral pieces by Ronald Turnbull

A neutral piece is one that belongs to both sides at once. A neutral unit may be moved by either player as if it were his own, and may be captured by either player as if it were an enemy.

It takes a few moments to grasp how this works; the grasping of it is the reason for offering these diagrams. Once grasped, neutrals offer a fertile and amusing field of fairy problemism. Which is the other reason for the diagrams!

In diagram 2, White cannot move the neutral pawn at all. Black could play it to c1, with promotion to the neutral piece of his choice. However, if the black knight were absent, then Black would be prevented from 1...c1=nR and 1...c1=nQ as these would give check to his own king.

1 - T. R. DAWSON
Fairy Chess Review 1950



Mate in 2 (nRh1, nBb2)

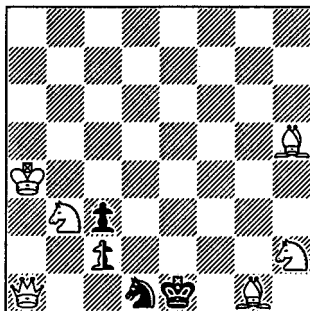
To deliver mate by a neutral will be a problematical feat, as the attacked side may simply move the checking unit away. Since problems are in their nature problematic, this particular feat has rather mesmerised composers. Indeed, when solving, a mate by neutral is the first thing I look for! Dawson invented neutrals and diagram 1 is an early example. After 1 Rg3, the threat is 2 Qxg7 and Black accordingly moves this pawn: 1...g6 2 nRxh6 and 1...g5 2 nBxf6.

A mate by a neutral must be an irreversible move - in general, as here, a capture. The interesting part is the way the black pawn prevents the neutral from moving off the check-line.

Summary: neutral pawns move up the board when White moves them, down when Black moves them, and

promote to neutral pieces. Either side may use a neutral to capture another. A neutral gives check to either king.

2 - Kjell WIDLERT
The Problemist 1971



Mate in 2 (nPc2)

In judging the originals of *phénix* for 1994, Bruno Kampmann criticised composers for so often being content with achieving an Allumwandlung (the promotion of a pawn to each of Q,R,N,B). He then gave 2nd Prize to an AUW problem! Like England's Lake District, AUW is over-popular because it's so nice. In orthodox two-movers there is no way the four promotions can give four separate variations, and it isn't obvious they can in Neutrals. But they can, as diagram 2 shows with delightful economy.

The key 1 Nd4 makes no threat, and gives Black's king a flight square on d2. Black's replies are the four promotions.

1...c1nR 2 nRxd1 and Black can't move the neutral away because of the wQ behind it.

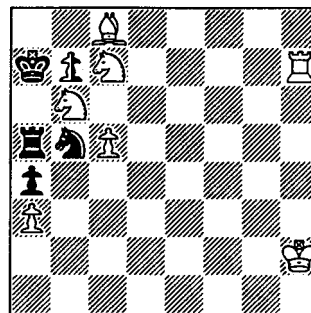
1...c1nQ not 2 nQxd1?? which is illegal self-check to wK but 2 Qxc3. Neutral Queen pins the Black knight, and it's no use her interposing or capturing as that simply replaces a wQ check with a nQ one.

1...c1nB 2 Nc2 (nB guards d2 but not c2)

1...c1nN 2 dNf3 (nN guards e2)

And finally the King-flight: 1...Kd2 2 hNf3. Some would criticise this last variation, as diluting the thematic intensity. Still, even here the nP is functional, guarding d3 - and a flight-giving key is always welcome. But the most notable feature of this problem is its splendid economy, with a mere 10 units.

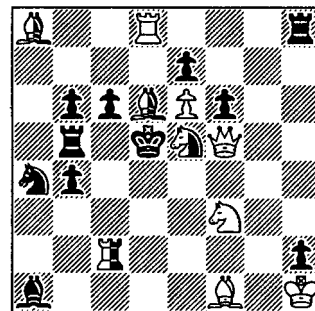
3 - Kurt SMULDERS
HM, Europe Echecs 1970



Mate in 2 (nPb7)

Diagram 3 is similar, and similarly enjoyable. Readers who unravel it for themselves will get the most pleasure: the solution is at the end of the article.

4 - Hans-Peter REHM
3rd Prize, Die Schwalbe 1974



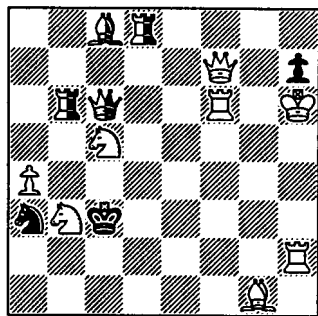
Mate in 2 (nRc2, nBa8/d6, nNe5)

We leave the two "obvious" themes - AUW and mate by neutral - with a complex and heavyweight example of the former by a master composer. When I say that diagram 4 is not to my own taste, I do not gainsay the judge for *Die Schwalbe*, who is more eminent than I. Rather I console any reader who may also find this degree of force unprepossessing. The idea - cyclic mutual capture of three neutral mating pieces - is a difficult one, and the setting reflects this.

1 nRxc6 - a rare example of neutral keymove - pins the neutral rook to threaten 2 Bc4. 1...Rc5 2 nRxd6, 1...Rh4 2 nBxe5 and 1...Nb2 2 nNxc6. In each case, the mating move discovers check by a neutral piece which pins itself.

Another problematic possibility is explored in diagram 5. Can a Q obstruct her own R and B? After the piquant key 1 Na1 we find that she

5 - Petko PETKOV
2 HM, The Problemist 1974



Mate in 2 (nQc6, nRd8/b6, nBc8)

can, as mutual obstruction of nB and nQ takes place on e6, mutual obstruction of nR and nQ on d5. (Black's moves are to block the threat 2 Qb3.)

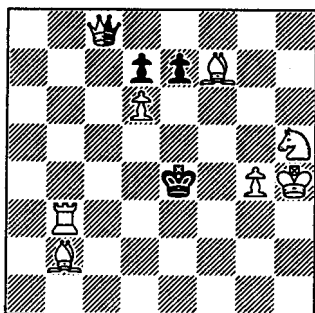
1...nBe6 2 Rf3 (nB unpins wR, and of course not 2...nQxf3??)
1...nQe6 2 Rh3 (and not 2...nQxh3??)

1...nRd5 2 Ne4 (obstructing 2...nQxe4 which could otherwise eliminate the double-check)

1...nQd5 2 Bd4 (not 2...Kxd4, guarded by neutral Q)

Such obstructions of lesser pieces by queen - Holzhausen Interferences, they're called - are a favourite theme of my own, and can be shown in many different fairy forms.

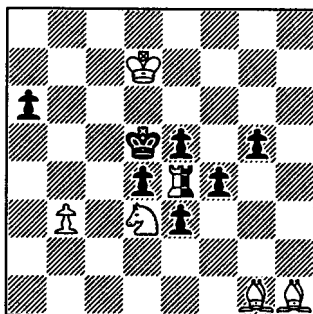
6 - Ronald TURNBULL
3rd Prize, Nixon Memorial Ty 1997



Mate in 2 (nQc8)

As I said, the ideas of mate-by-neutral and AUW have been intensively explored. Otherwise, though, neutrals are a field where there are many pleasant treasures unfound. As I discovered when I entered the not-terribly-complex diagram 6 (solution at the end) in *The Problemist's* Nixon Memorial Tourney a couple of years ago. To my pleased surprise, it hadn't previously been thought of. The key is quite surprising, and introduces the three main variations, which are, naturally, moves of the neutral Queen.

7 - Kjell WIDLERT
4 HM, feenschach 1979

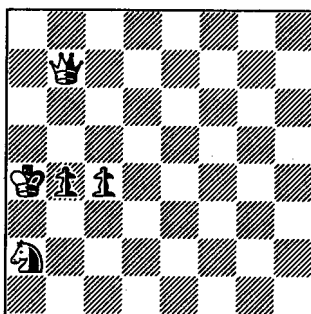


Mate in 5 (nRe4)

Diagram 7 is a rare neutral more-mover of delightful simplicity. Strangely, it was composed before the wide-scale introduction of that useful garden machine the Strimmer. It is the only more-mover with a single neutral piece that I've seen. Anything else you compose with similar force will probably be a new discovery! The black pawns must be mown down in the correct order.

1 nRxe5++ nRe4 2 nRxf4+ nRe4 (2...nRf3 3 Bxf3) 3 nRxe3+ nRe4 4 nRxd4++ nRe4 5 Nb4.

8 - H. MÜLLER
The Problemist 1988



Helpmate in 3, set play (all neutral)

It's a bad idea to Go All The Way - certainly not until you're sufficiently mature and ready. My teenage children ignore this advice, and so do fairy composers and solvers. For me, problems with everything neutral are too alien and troublesome. Though Diagram 8 might tempt me into the All-Neutral indiscretion... First of all, check on the neutral king by a neutral piece is impossible. If Black plays 1 Qa7, this is check to nK (considered White) from nQ (considered Black) but also the other way around - so it is self-check and illegal. However, check can be administered by a pawn. Black could play 1 Ka3+: this is check

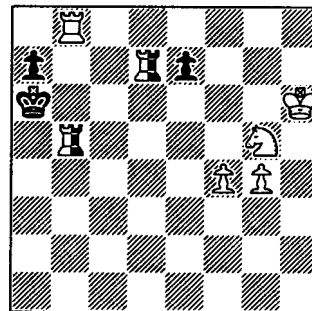
to the nK (considered White) from nP (considered Black) but not vice versa.

The mating piece will be a pawn, then, and its move will be a capture (else Black could simply reverse it). Further, the pawn must be either blocked from behind or pinned (else Black could simply move it away.) This quickly leads to a mating move PxN, with the other pawn behind to block and nQ guarding K-flights.

So here's the solution: note that the second play of each move is the White one. 1 Qb8 Ka5+ 2 Ka6 Nc3 3 Nb5 cxb5 - the ordering of the moves is determined by the fact that Black may move nK to a5 (giving check) but White may not (illegal self check). In the set-play, White starts and gives mate on his third move. The loss of the first Black move leads to the same mate, one square down the board. 1...Ka5+ 2 b3 Nb4 3 c3 cxb4.

I thank John Beasley and Mark Ridley for showing me many of the problems cited. Most are drawn from *Les Pièces Neutres* by R Meignant and K Widlert, published by *Rex Multiplex*, an absorbing read. The final diagram 9 is for solving along with the other originals of this issue.

9 - Ronald TURNBULL



Mate in 3 (nRd7/b5)

Solutions not in text:

3 (Smulders): 1 Na6! 1...N random 2 b8nR (b8nQ,nB being check to White and b8nN attracting 2...nNd7!) 1...Nc7 2 b8nB (not b8nQ 2...nQxc8) 1...Nd6 2 b8nQ (not b8nB 2...nBc7) 1...Kxa6 2 b8nN (not b8nR 2...nRb7). By-play 1...Rxa6 2 Rxb7 - again, this variation has been criticised as non-thematic, but I like it. I would not add extra force in order to achieve it, but neither would I add force in order to eliminate it.

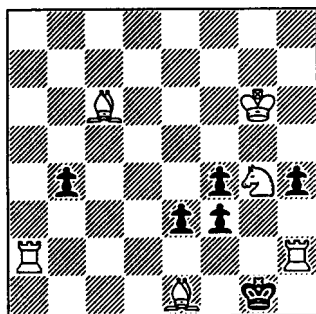
6 (Turnbull): 1 Kg5 threatens 2 Ng3 but exposes W to three checks 1...nQg8+/nQc5+/nQc1+ 2 Bg6/Bd5/Re3, with nQ unable to capture. Byplay 1...nQc3 2 Rb4.

Problem pages by Ronald Turnbull

Highland Cottage, Gatelawbridge, Thornhill, Dumfries and Galloway DG3 5EA

For this issue, some of our regular contributors have obliged with problems showing the forms explored last time. And if they have embellished them with Transmuted Kings, well, we Fairy Problemists are like that.

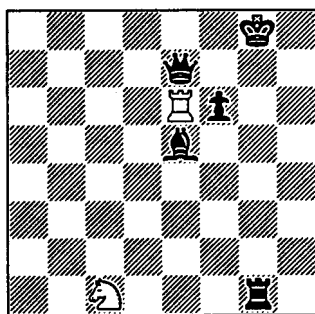
281 - John RICE



Circe; mate in 2

Still, 281 is straightforward Circe, and rather easier than the one I offered last time. Note that the key appears to make 2 threats but in fact makes none.

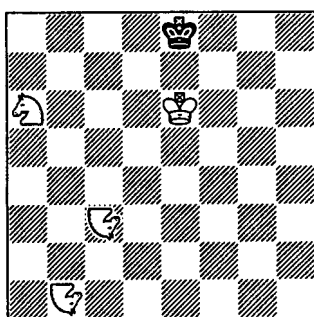
282 - Ian RICHARDSON



Circe; series mate in 6

In a series mate, White makes a series of moves (here, 6) none of which may give check except the last, which mates. This is like Progressive Chess, and useful practice. (However, there are no Italianate complications.)

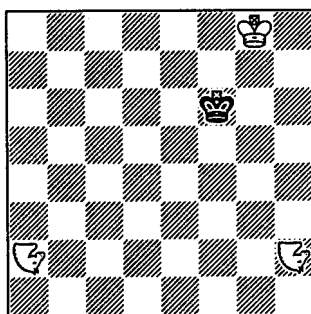
283 - Ian RICHARDSON



Nightriders c3, b1; mate in 3

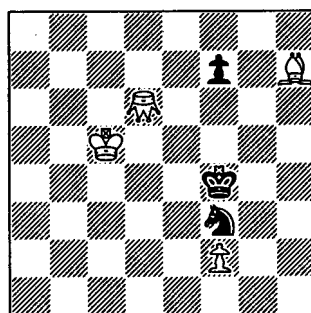
Ian's 283 brings the Nightrider: this piece, invented by T. R. Dawson, is why problemists continue to refer to the Knight as S (for the German "Springer") rather than N (as in VC). We shall have to call the Nightrider NR. It moves like a knight, but may keep going. Thus NRb1 may move to d2, but also f3/g4. However, NRc3 blocks it from NRb1-e7. It takes a while to visualise the lines. In general, if a NR can reach a square in two moves, it can do so in just 2 ways, like N,B,R. However, NRc3 can reach f3 in two moves in 4 ways.

284 - Arthur WILLMOTT



Nightriders a2, h2
Helpstalemate in 2, two solutions

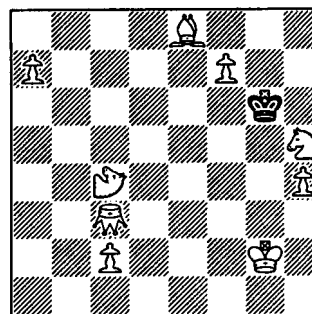
285 - Arthur WILLMOTT



Grasshopper d6
Helpmate in 3, two solutions

In the helpstalemate 284, B & W collaborate, Black starting, to achieve stalemate on White's second move. There are just two ways to do this. 285 has Dawson's other piece, the Grasshopper. This moves along Q-lines, but only to the square immediately beyond some other unit (B or W). So this one can move only to b4 or f3. It could capture a Black unit on either of those squares. 1 Ne5?? would be illegal self-check by Black.

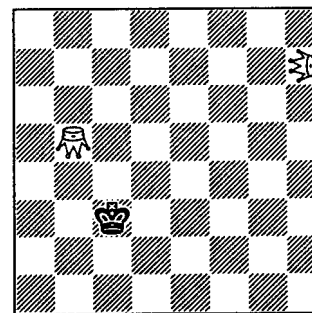
286 - Valery NEBOTOV



Rois transmutes, Dragon c4,
Grasshopper c3; mate in 2

286 combines Grasshopper with Dragon (N+P), and also with Rois Transmutes: King in check moves as the checking unit. So if White starts 1 f8=Q+, bK moves as B, escaping to c2, d3, h7 etc. If 1 f8=N++, bK can move as B or as N. As is usual when fairy pieces are present, Pawns may promote to DR or G as well as QRBN.

287 - Erich BARTEL

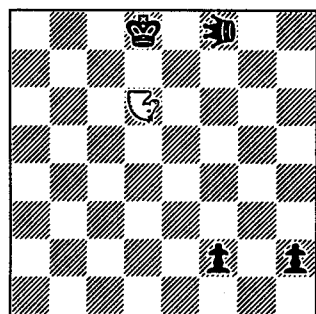


Rois transmutes, Grasshopper b5,
Contra-G h7; helpmate in 6, 2 sols

287 combines Grasshopper with Contra-Grasshopper, whose move is the reverse. KG moves only when adjacent to some other unit: and moves over that unit along Q-lines. Place a unit of either colour on g6 and KG could move to f5, e4, d3, c2, b1. Place a second unit on d3 and KG is blocked from c2, b1. If that second unit is Black, KG could capture it. If that second unit is bK, it is in check.

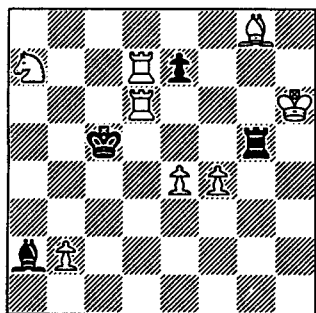
An orphan (288) is a sort of transmuting piece. When attacked it takes on the move of the attacking piece, and otherwise may not move at all. Again here, promotion may be to NR or O as well as to QRBN. Black starts, and is stalemated on White's fifth.

288 - Erich BARTEL



Orphan f8, Nightrider d6
Helpstalemate in 5

289 - Paul RAICAN



No-capture Chess
Helpstalemate in 4, 3 solutions

In 289 the simple added rule is: all captures are illegal. They may not even be used to escape checkmate. Check is not affected.

9 on page 63 is also for solving.

290 - EUREKA!



White to play and draw

And finally, Eureka! After an obvious first move to save the pawn, Black's best reply is 1...Qd8. Now only 2 Kb6 will hold onto the draw. What Variant are we playing?

I've so far received no reaction either for or against the more straightforward style of last VC's Problem Pages. Perhaps those who liked it that way may be stung into response by this issue, where I have partly reverted.

Variant Chess Theme Tourney 2,
Zvolen's Chess: Award

This time, I seem to have hit on a truly unattractive idea. The only entry, a synthetic game by Ian Richardson, has been awarded Honourable Mention by the judge Miroslav Brada.

PART 1: From the game array, construct the shortest game in which mate is delivered (a) by a QN (i.e. knight from b1 or b8), (b) by a KN (knight from g1 or g8) standing on the f-file.

PART 2: Construct the shortest game in which a mated bK is in check from wP on f3 in the mating position.

There are some duals in the play, as often in such synthetic games. Solution to either part scores a solving point, but no bonus for both.

VC 31. Comments: John Beasley, Stephen Emmerson, Paul Raican, Ian Richardson, Ronald Turnbull

277 (Turnbull): Whenever bK leaves b1, he must be driven back with check. But then he must be allowed off again to prevent stalemate. So all moves after the first are fairly automatic. 1 Rb8 Ka1,a2 2 Ra8+ 3 BPa4 4 BPb5+ 5 BPa6 6 BPb7+ 7 Rb8 8 BPa8=Q. Problemists ignore mating duals like a8=R/Q. That wB is a naughty red herring! - IR. T. R. Dawson would have blocked bP with a clump of Black units - JDB.

278 (Turnbull): 1 Rb4 Kxh6 (Bf1) 2 Rh4. The "Indian" theme usually requires 3 moves and more than 4 pieces.

279 (Turnbull): 1 Bxc4(Ra8) threat 2 Bd4 mate. A "give-and take" key: bad, it removes bR from the heart of the action, crudely unguarding d4 for the threatened mate. Good, it sets up the thematic pin of wQ. 1...Nxf4(wRa1) 2 Qxf4(bNb8) the reborn bN allows wQ to move off the pin-line! Similarly 1...Nf6/Ne7/Rxf8+(Qd8) 2 Qxf6(Nb8)/Qxe7(Nb8)/Qxd5(Ng8). By-play 1...Nxe3(Bc1) 2 Bb2. No solution after 1...RxQ+! - unnamed solver.

280 (Eureka) Well, why does 1 b7 threaten 2 a8B rather than 2 a8Q mate? SE came close, suggesting Anti-Andernach - piece that moves without capture changes colour. In fact, this is Volages: unit (not K) that changes square-colour changes colour, but only the first time it does so from the diagram. So 1 b7=bP threatens 2 a8B=bB and the bB cannot depart to prevent 3 Rxa8 mate. Defence 1...b6 leads to 2 a8N=bN, and again 3 Rxa8.

In Anti-Andernach, 1...b6=wP refutes by reversing the key move. Problem could, though, be reset in Anti-A. Saving a pawn, but with obvious pawn-capture key (A-A keys must be irreversible). (solving point to SE for White Anti-A)

Dragons & Scorpions:

3 (Richardson): 1 ba Kb4 2 b2 Kd4 3 b4 cb, 1 bc Kd1 2 b4 Ka4 3 b2 ab. But 2nd doesn't lead to mate, while SE and PR cook: 1 bc Kb4 2 b2 a4 3 bxa4 Kxa4.

4 (Turnbull): 1 Rf6+ Ke3 2 Rxf1

(very crude) ...Ke2+ One solving point for finding this fork 3 Rf3 Now wR, bP are both pinned but both immune from capture. 3...Kd1 unpins bP to threaten PwxR, wR still pinned. Another point for finding White's unfork and Black's continuation. 4 Nf2+ Ke2 - but wR is still pinned down, and if 5 Nxg4 then h8=Q+. Aha, but 6 Nh2+ - the final fork! I thought this would be tough and was gratified to see some solvers gain the full 3 points.

G-specific pin on bP will be familiar to fairy enthusiasts, but it's the simultaneous pins that make this lively study - SE. Bonne étude! - PR. Hear, hear - JDB

6 (Richardson): 1...DRf3 2 Kf5 Kf2 3 Kf4 DRe3 b) 1...Kc7 2 Kd5 DRc3+ 3 Kc5 DRd3.

Turbulent Priests:

2 (Turnbull): 1...Bd4 2 Bxd4 Kc7(wBc4) 3 Ba7 Be4; 1...Kc7 2 Bxe5+ Kc6(wBe4) 3 Bb8 Kb6. Second solution not completely tricky as bB must get to a7 or b8 somehow - RT. Clever reflected echo - SE. Again, hear, hear - JDB

3 (Fayers): 1...Be5(Bd4)+ 2 Bd4(Bd5, Bd4)+ e4(d4,Bd5,Be5)+ 3 Bd8(Be5,d5) d6(Be4). Try 1...Bg1 2 Bd4(Bd5)+ e4(Be5,d4) 3 Bb8(d5) Bd4(e5,Bd5) but 4 Be5! rotates wB. Spectacular sequence, even if checks to W are cosmetic - SE. I like this variant - IR.

4 (Turnbull): 1 B<B 3 Bb7 4 B<B 6 Bb7+ B<B. Many offered 5 Bc6+ B<B, but Black escapes by K<K. It'd be nice to see a Messigny problem with a first move that wasn't a swap! - JDB

5 (Fayers): 1...Bc3 2 Bc1 Be1 (1...Bf2? gives check). Black starts: 1...Bc2 2 Bg1 Be1. Tricky and interesting, despite extreme simplicity of setting - RT Neat echo: the only mating matrix - SE.

Scores: IR - 8. SE - 13 (max). PR - 11
Late score VC 31: SE - 10 (max).

Cooks and corrections: SE duals Dragons & Scorpions 2 by 1...Be2 2 Ke1 Bg4 3 Kf1 Kg3 4 Kg1 Bh3 5 Kh1 Bg2, and shortens 7 to a mate in 7, with 1...Kh8 2 Kf7 3 DRg5+ but a dual-free full length line after 1...Kh7 (as does PR).

Full solution to the excellent and difficult 242 (VC 30, Raican, maxi): 1 Ke5! with two lines 1...Nc7 2 Rg3 Ba7 3 Re3+ Kg5 4 Rd3 Bg1 5 e4 Ba7 6 Bd2+ Be3 7 Bc1 Bxc1 8 Rd4 Bf4, and 1...Nb6 2 Bd2 Bc5 3 Ra7 Bg1 4 Kd6 Bc5+ 5 Kc7 Bg1 6 e3 Bxe3 7 Kb8 Bh6 8 Bf4 Bxf4.

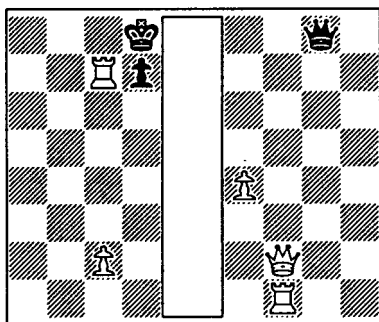
274 (VC 30) SE's computer confirms.

269 (VC 30) My Alice mate-in-two: SE and PR point out that it's still unsound, even after correction in VC 31. After 1 Ra7>B Ra5>B, 2 Ra4>A is impossible as wR has passed through bR on B. Sound (but less interesting) with bRa5.

The 1999 World Circular Chess Championship

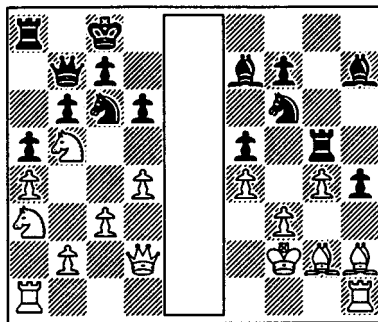
This year's World Circular Chess Championship, held at Lincoln Castle on May 16, resulted in a third successive victory for Francis Bowers, who beat Paul Byway in a play-off (4½ out of 5, 31 competitors). His victory was not without good fortune, since he survived at least one lost position in the course of the day, but he was also the round-by-round organizer and had to work out the pairings for the next round while everyone else was having a rest. Perhaps a little good fortune in the play evened things up.

The rules were given in VC 31, but if you do not have this to hand think of an ordinary board split into two halves which are then joined so that the a/h files form a continuous ring, and likewise the b/g, c/f, and d/e files. In the sketch below, wQf2/wRf1 are effectively at c15/c16 and so guard wRc7, while bQg8 is effectively at b9 and prevents mate on c8 and f8 (=c9).

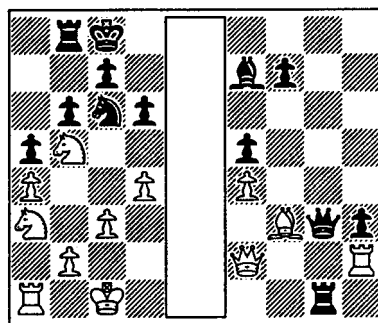


Massed major pieces on a ring can be very powerful. The sketch above was taken from one of my own games, my opponent having inadvertently withdrawn a second guard from f8; now 1 Rxd7+ forced mate next move (1...Kxd7 2 Qc7, 1...Qxd7 2 Qf8). All right, you may say, this is no different from a position in ordinary chess with major pieces massed on the seventh rank (say wRa7, wQg7, wRh7, bKb8, bQc6, play 1 Ra8+ etc). But how often do you see all three major pieces on the seventh rank in ordinary chess? You don't, except in the final stages of a game when the opponent has already been crushed; but similar positions in Circular Chess can arise very easily.

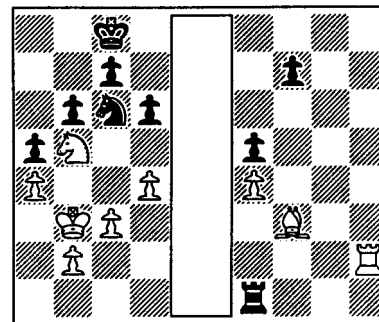
The play-off, under the camera lights of TransWorld Sport, was a thriller. Paul had White, and we take up the game after his 19th move:



Here Francis played 19...Bxe4, which objectively is probably unsound but appeared a reasonable gamble in a fifteen-minute game, and play continued 20 fxe4 Nxe4+ 21 Kf1 h3 (this P is guarded by bRa8) 22 Bf3 Nxe2+ 23 Rxh2 Rg1+ (guarded by bQb7) 24 Kc1 Qg3 25 Qe2 Rb8 :



The b/g ring is now dominated by Black, White's king is exposed, and few onlookers expected White to hold out; but by defending against the most immediate threats, and seeking exchanges when he could, he gradually weathered the storm. Play continued 26 Rb1 Bh4 27 Rh1 Rxb1+ 28 Nxb1 h2 29 Rxh2 Qg1+ 30 Kc2 Be1 31 Qxe1 Qxb1+ 32 Kb3 Rg1 33 Qd2 Qf1 34 Be2 Qe1 35 Qxe1 Rxe1 36 Bf3 and the worst was clearly past (see diagram at top of next column); furthermore, Black had taken longer to create his threats than White had taken to answer them, and White was ahead on the clock as well. But as so often happens, the player who was ahead on time and material tried to play properly and clinch his win,



while his opponent simply blitzed out moves, and it was White's flag which eventually fell. This was Paul's first appearance at the championship, and I received the impression in the pub afterwards that most people were sorry his fine defence had not been crowned with the victory it deserved; that having been said, it was Francis's initiative in trying 19...Bxe4 which had made the game what it was in the first place.

And the event as a whole? It is definitely among the friendlier of world championships and some of the 31 participants were strictly social, but if beer was the preferred drink lower down the room the play at the top was serious enough. I don't think any contestant had come specially from abroad, but several had made journeys across Britain comparable to those of Paul and myself. The organizers had attracted a number of local sponsors, and had rewarded them with some discreet but attractive posters; the Mayor and Sheriff of Lincoln, complete with chains of office, were present to perform the opening draw; there was croquet to watch between rounds (and to take part in if your game had finished early enough), and Morris dancing in the Castle Foregate; in the evening, the Castle's resident goose could be seen in stately progress across the lawns with her superbly marshalled family of eleven (we were told that the Castle also had a resident owl, but she did not put in an appearance); there was even one of the four surviving copies of Magna Carta to look at. Paul went with Carol and Stephanie, I went with Sue, and a most enjoyable day out was had by all. - JDB

News, notices, solutions

BCVS Notices

The AGM (see VC 31 p 48) adopted the 1998 accounts and appointed the officers listed on the front page. Following the AGM, George Jelliss offered to set up and run a BCVS Library. This is excellent news, and details will be given in VC 33.

Stephen Emmerson has produced an attractive award leaflet for our first **problem theme tourney** (VC 29 pp 12-13 and VC 30 p 30). It has diagrams of all the honoured problems with solutions and judge's comments, plus the article in VC 27 which introduced the tourney. Copies are available from myself free of charge.

Variant Chess bound volumes

Comb-bound copies of Volume 4 are now available from George Jelliss at **5 Biddulph Street, Leicester LE2 1BH** (please note new address) at £8 including packing and UK postage. Volume 3 remains available from George at £13.50, and I believe the privately owned Volumes 1 and 2 are also still available: Volume 1 at £10 from George, Volume 2 at £17 from Peter Wood, 39 Linton Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1TW.

News

The post-AGM **multiple-variant tourney** was won by Adrian Mylward (6/7), ahead of David Pritchard (5) and a group on 4. Adrian produced "Sabbatical Chess": a player capturing a man can withdraw one or more of his own men for later dropping. It proved a bit complicated for five-minute play, but we may well examine it further.

For the **1999 World Circular Chess Championship**, see opposite.

Forthcoming events

XiangQi. The Shanghai Cup (1999 UK Individual Championship) will be held at the Shanghai Restaurant, 39 White Rock, Hastings, on **Sunday August 8** from 1000 to around 2100. Prizes £200, £100, £50. Entries (fee £12) to C. K. Lai, 12 Haslam Street, London SE15 5GD, by **August 2**.

Postal tournaments

A **mixed tournament**? Malcolm Horne would like to see a postal tournament featuring a **mixture of variants**. He suggests maybe four players all-play-all, giving six games each, ideally all featuring

different variants. "Possible choices: Avalanche, Extinction, Knight Relay, Losing, Marseillais, Pocket Knight, Randomised, Chancellor 9x8, Janus, Chinese, Korean - or you may like to suggest others? You will be able to say no to three or four variants that you prefer to avoid."

If you are interested (UK or abroad), please write to Malcolm at 10B Windsor Square, Exmouth, Devon EX8 1JU, by **August 7**, giving a list of your preferred variants and some idea of your experience if any, plus your basic chess strength. Malcolm would like to start in September.

Individual postal play

Anthony Hornyak is looking for opponents ("snail mail not e-mail") at **XiangQi and Glinski's Hexagonal Chess** (see *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* pp 139-141). Write to him at 1118 So. 11th St., Manitowoc, WI 54220-5217, U. S. A.

Ivan Dirmeik gently reminds me that to take about a two-game match at **Alice Auction chess** (VC 31 p 48) is nonsense; the whole point of Auction Chess is that it permits the playing of a single game as opposed to the usual couplet. Sorry. *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* gives the relevant rules (pp 3-5 and 13); is anyone willing to help him try it out?

Looking for a postal opponent? We shall be happy to print your ad here. Please state the variants of interest to you and your approximate playing strength.

Solutions

Mutation Progressive (pp 50-1).

(1) 7 Qxe4(N), Nd6, c4, c5, h3, hxg4(B), f6.

(2) 8 Qxe6(B), Bd5, Bxh1(R), Rxh2(P), h1=Q, h6, hxg5(N), Rh2.

(3) 8 Qxg5(N), Nf3, Nxd2(B), Bxe3(P), e3xf2, Bg4, e3, f1=R. Italian pin mate: Rxf1+.

(4) 6 e5, Qb5, Qxf1(B), Nc6, Na5, Nc4.

(5) 8 c5, cxb4(B), Nc6, Nd4, either Rg8, gxf6(N), Kd6!, Ne4. Italian mate: Qxe4(N) checks BK.

(6) 7 Bxd3(N), Nb4, f6, Qxg4, Ke2, Nc3, Ne4. (Ke2 is not essential here.)

(7) 7 Qa6, Qc8, h5, h6, hxg7, gxh8(R), Rxf8(B).

(8) 7 Qe2, Qa6, Rb1, Rxb7(P), b8=N, Nc6, Nb5. Underpromotion and BQ shut-off.

(9) 7 Kf3, Kg4, Qa3, Qc5, Nc3, Ne4, Nf6‡ Italian mate.

(10) 7 d5, dxe6, Bxh6(N), Qf3, Qxf8(B), Bxg7(P), gxh8(R).

(11) 6 Ke8, Bb4, Qg5, Qxd2(P), d1=R, Re1.

(12) 9 Kg2, Qxf8(B), Bxg7(P), g8=Q, Qf8, d4, d5, Rf1, Rf7‡.

(13) 7 c3, fxe3(Q), exd5, Bh4, Bxd8(Q), Nf3, Ne5.

(14) 6 c6, cxb5(B). Nf5, gxf6(Q), Qe5, Nh4. (cxb5 is not essential.)

(15) 5 Qh3, Qxh6(N), b3, Ba3, Bf7.

(16) 9 a4, Bb2, Bxe5(P), exf6(N), Nxh7(P), h8=Q, Qd4, wait, Qxg2(B).

(17) 5 Nc3, Ne4, Ra3, Re3, Nf6++.

Alice backwards (p 55). The argument proceeds in stages.

1. A dark-square knight on board A goes to a light square when it moves to B and back to a dark when it returns to A. Both sides have two light-square knights on A, so each has knighted a pawn.

2. White has lost Bf1, captured at home, and Ra1/Ng1, captured by bPc5/d4. Black has lost only Nb8. Hence the a-pawns have passed each other on the way to promotion without making a capture! This is possible only if both started with a pawn-two (for example, a2-a4>B, a5>A, a6>B by White, then a7-a5>B by Black).

3. Hence wP was at a7:A just before its promotion. But it must have promoted on a dark square to produce a dark-square knight on B, so it captured bNb8. Black promoted from a2:A without capture.

4. Black's Pd4 must have started with a pawn-two, either d7-d5 or e7-e5 (else it would now be on B). So Black's pawn-captures were on either (i) c6:A and d4:B, or (ii) c5:B and d4:B, or (iii) d6:A and c5:B. But of these, only d6:A could have been occupied by the missing wN.

5. Hence the missing men were captured as follows: wBf1 at home, wNg1 at d6:A, wRa1 at c5:B, bNb8 at home.

6. White's king has been confined to d1-h1 and has made an even number of moves without changing square colour, so White has not played 0-0. It follows that White has played an odd number of moves (wRa1 was captured on B, his other men were captured on A or are back on A).

7. Since it is White's move, Black also has played an odd number of moves.

8. An odd number of simple moves would have left Black with a man on B.

9. So Black cannot now castle because he has already done so!

If anyone is making a collection of classic Alice problems, this should be in it.

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