

THE ROYAL CHESS COUPLE IN ACTION

by
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Typesetting
i-Press <www.i-press.pl>

Translated from the original Dutch edition 2014:
Wij presenteren De KONING en De KONINGIN.

First edition 2019 by Thinkers Publishing

The Royal Chess Couple in Action
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ISBN 978-94-9251-057-0
D/2019/13730/10

All sales or enquiries should be directed to Thinkers Publishing, 9850 Landegem, Belgium.

e-mail: info@thinkerspublishing.com
website: www.thinkerspublishing.com

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KEY TO SYMBOLS

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

FOREWORD

The Royal Chess Couple is a combined attempt to introduce the various traits of the most significant piece with the most powerful piece on the chessboard.

Following a short historic review of the development and metamorphoses of each piece over time, the reader is offered 240 positions (480 in total) from tournament practice as well as from the magic world of chess composition. In each position a royal piece plays either a crucial offensive or defensive role. These positions are subdivided into 60 themes, four positions per theme, arranged by their increasing difficulty. The reader may use the positions as training challenges to improve his understanding and playing skills or just to enjoy playing through them. In either case he will learn to appreciate the characteristic qualities of each piece alone and in collaboration with other pieces.

Special thanks are due to those without whom this book could not have its unique approach. We thank chess historian Leo Diepstraten for his important cooperation. We thank May and Ine Kloprogge for the special photos from their collection. We thank Dr. Harold van der Heijden, who used his database of around 80,000 studies to check the positions for accuracy, source and provided valuable advice. We thank all the chess players and composers for use of these examples to support this ode to the Royal Chess Couple.

Hans Böhm and Yochanan Afek

A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

Raya! Mantri! Hasti! Asva! Ratha! Padati! Excuse me?

These are the names of the chess pieces from the now virtually extinct Sanskrit, the mother tongue of most Indo-European languages. How and where did the game of chess begin? With this question before them fourteen chess historians from different countries met in Königstein (Germany) in 1991. In view of the gratifying flood of insights, the Max Euwe Center in Amsterdam organized a follow-up conference in 1993. These meetings were then repeated every couple of years with the last one taking place in 2005.

First it was decided that chess would be defined as a board game consisting of sixty-four squares on an eight by eight field with an equal number of pieces on both sides. The pieces have distinctive designs as well as their own characteristic movements. The main goal is to trap the main piece, the king, without capturing it. This is a broad definition that goes for chess as known today but also for its predeceasing versions. According to the historians, the history of chess can be divided into roughly four periods: (1) 4000–400 BC, the forerunners, (2) 400 BC–750 India, Iran, Arabia, (3) 750–1475 Europe in the Middle Ages, (4) 1475–today.

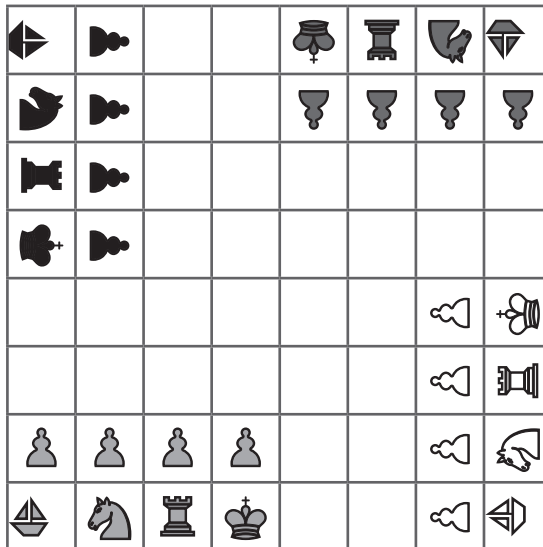
FIRST PERIOD: ESTIMATED PRECURSORS: 4000–400 BC

The first period is characterized by the requirement that the pieces would come from one side to the other side of the board. In that period the move was often determined by dice and the player who first brought all his pieces to the other side was the winner. Just like in checkers captured pieces could no longer remain on the board. Chess historian and composer Gerhard Josten (born 1938 in Duisburg) found the origin of the promotion in a ring game of the Sumerians. He points to the Gilgamesh epic of about 2300 BC, in which a man seeks his self-destination in relation to the gods.

The pieces at the bottom row represent the gods and the pawns represent man. By bringing his pieces to the other side of the board man could become equal to God thus fulfilling the urge for immortality. Philosopher chess players have sought meanings in the pieces across man's history and will continue to do so into the future across all cultures. We may attach as much value to these spiritual references in our chess culture as we wish, or we may attach no hidden meaning to the pieces at all.

THE DIRECT PRECURSOR

The direct predecessor of chess is the so-called 'Chaturanga for four people'. Chaturanga, a word in Sanskrit which means four-part, was a war game played on an 'ashtapada board', i.e. a game board of eight by eight squares. The moves were determined with the help of dice and therefore Chaturanga must be regarded as a game of luck. It is known that in 326 BC Alexander the Great was facing an army of 50,000 infantry soldiers, 1000 chariots, 130 elephants and 3,000 horses, the four-part Indian army.



Black: king a5; rook a6; knight a7; boat a8; pawns b5, b6, b7, b8.

Red (dark gray): king e8; rook f8; knight g8; boat h8; pawns e7, f7, g7, h7.

Yellow (light gray): king h4; rook h3; knight h2; boat h1; pawns g1, g2, g3, g4.

Green (white): king d1; rook c1; knight b1; boat a1; pawns a2, b2, c2, d2.

Thus, the model for Chaturanga become the four parts of the Indian Army. Each player had access to a Ratha, an Asva, a Hasti, a Raya and four Padati. The word “Ratha” is etymologically the same word as our word “wheel” signifying the chariot. Asva means horse in Sanskrit and it concerns ridden horses. It was the Hittites in Anatolia who, around 1700 BC, managed to tame wild horses so that they could be used for pulling and riding. Hasti stands for elephant and in India the elephants, an indigenous species, are used as the fourth division of the four-part army. Padati means ‘foot soldiers’ in Sanskrit and the infantry has always been the first division of war. It will not come as a surprise that ‘padati’ stands for ‘feet’. In the ancient times the king led the army to conquer a territory (offensive) or to prevent his own territory from being taken (defensive). The Raya is the Indian King. Chaturanga was played on an unchartered board (no white or black) of 64 squares and, according to chess historians, its first appearance was around 500 BC.

SECOND PERIOD: CHATURANGA FOR TWO PEOPLE 400 BC-750

At some point the coalition partners from Chaturanga for four people joined their two armies together. Because there can not be two kings, one Raya was replaced by a ‘Mantri’. We know this Sanskrit word in its Latin form as a ‘mentor’. They are etymologically related words and they have the meaning of ‘counselor’. The combination of the armies automatically led to a different arrangement on the ashtapada board, with all white pieces standing on one side while on the other side stood all black pieces. According to the historians it is unlikely that in the Chaturanga for two people the game could be decided by mating. According to a hypothesis by Johannes Kohtz, set out in the *Handbuch des Schachspiels* from 1916, there was still a “robbery” victory. In the heyday of early Arab Islam of 640–750, a huge spread of chess arose when the Arabs on their conquest discovered the ‘Shahtrang’ in Persia. Good chess players from that time were Al-Adli and Al-Suli, they also left considerable literature on the opening, middlegame and the endgame. The Arabs moved from Saudi Arabia to North Africa, where they conquered Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco. From there they crossed over to Spain around 711 and later moved

into France where they were finally stopped and driven back in 732 between Poitiers and Tours. Following this spread of Chaturanga the names of the pieces changed as did their design since the recognizable Indian and Persian pieces did not fit in the instructions of the Koran. Images, including playing pieces, were not allowed to resemble living beings thus the abstract pieces came into being.

THIRD PERIOD: EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES 750-1475

We have arrived at the period of the Christian Middle Ages, which would last from about 750 to about 1475.

Some historians believe that the game was already played in Spain before 800 and around 900 in Italy. Germany received chess after Italy and France and the Netherlands received chess from Spain, somewhere between 1050 and 1200. The game probably came to England around 1017 via William the Conqueror.

Variegated boards originated around 1100, as mentioned in the Einsiedeln Manuscript, a poem of 98 verse lines written in Latin, in the town of Einsiedeln in the Swiss Canton of Schwytz. The Middle Ages, when symbols were common, regarded the chessboard as the world, with light and dark representing good and evil. In many poems from that time these 'moralities' were discussed. The themes of life and death, heaven and hell, were symbolically seen in the game of chess. Yet the end of the game points to the equality of all people: we are born and live different lives but at death everyone is equal again. Just like the pieces at the end of the game they all go back into the same box.

In the early Middle Ages, the game in Southern Europe was almost equal to Arabian Chess. It was not until about 1200 that important changes began: the king moves from d1 to e1 (and from d8 to e8) and next to him comes the queen. That a female character was introduced in a male war game was revolutionary. The early queen was not a strong piece being allowed to move just 3 squares in her first move and she could not capture. Thus, the queen

starts her history as the weakest piece! The pawn could only promote to a queen, but if the queen was still on the board, then the promoted pawn remained inactive until the original queen was captured.

The Catholic Church then interfered with the game as dice were sometimes used to speed up the game and the church viewed the use of dice as calling upon demonic powers for their assistance. In 1254 King Louis IX (the Holy One) made things worse by forbidding his subjects from playing chess. Outside of those major impediments to the game the next problem on the board was pawn promotion. In religious terms the queen was the king's consort and the idea that a king would have more than one queen, even on the chessboard, was a pernicious thought.

From the Middle Ages the most widely read book dealing with chess is entitled "Liber de moribus hominum et officio nobilium ac podat man hiet dat Scaecspel'. pularium de Ludo Scaccorum" (Book on the conduct of people and the duties of the nobility and the common people: about chess). The author was the monk Jacobus Cessolius. The book was printed and reprinted as well as being translated into many languages. Much of what we know about the game of chess in the Middle Ages is laid down in poems, doctrines and moralities which were often written down by monks.

FOURTH PERIOD: FROM 1475 TO THE PRESENT – MODERN CHESS

The University of Göttingen (Germany) has preserved a manuscript from about 1471 that is entirely dedicated to modern chess as we play it today. About 33 pages in Latin text discuss 12 openings and 30 chess problems in diagrams are given. All pieces move as they do today and the pawn may be promoted to any piece. Only the castling and *En passant* rules are not yet the same everywhere. An example of castling in two moves is given in the Göttinger Manuscript: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙c4 f5 4.d3 f4 5.d4 ♔f6 6.♘c3 c6 7.h3 ♙e6 8.d5 ♙d7 9.dxc6 bxc6 10.b4 ♙e6 11.♙b3 ♘h6 12.♙b2 a6 13.♚f1 ♘f7 14.♙g1 ♙e7 15.♙xe6 ♔xe6 16.a4 g5 17.♘h2 h5 18.f3 ♘h6 19.b5 ♚g8 20.♔e2 g4 21.fxg4 hxg4 22. ♘xg4 ♘xg4 23.hxg4 ♚xg4 24.bxc6 ♘xc6 25.♘d5 ♙d8 26.c4 ♚a7 27.♚f2 ♚h7 28.♔d1 ♔h6 29.♙f1 ♔h5 30.♔f3 ♔g6

31. ♔d3 ♖h1+ 32. ♕e2 ♗xa1 33. ♘xa1 ♗xg2 and White resigned. This is the oldest noted game in the history of modern chess which contains the element for the Arabian and medieval times. It was not until the sixteenth century that castling in one move was established. The only changes introduced since 1850 are related to the thinking times per player per game. After the hourglass and the mechanical chess clock, the double chess clock was introduced around 1900. Along with an increase in the number of moves per hour the digital chess clock entered the tournament hall around 1990. On the advice of former world champion Bobby Fischer, the 30 second increment was added after completion of a move to avoid a player being “flagged” in a drawn position. Increment additions are now common at various time controls in serious tournament play and Internet “bullet” games.

THE LEGEND OF THE CEREAL GRAIN

The legend about the origin of the game of chess has many versions. The oldest is probably that of Mas’udi, in which he tells that King Balhit was so satisfied with the invention of the game that he asked the inventor, Brahmin Sissa, what reward he would like to ask for it. “Put only one grain on the first square of the board and then double it on each subsequent square” Sissa said. The king was in great anger, as he found the reward too modest and therefore an insult. But when he ordered the grain to meet the request it soon became apparent that not enough grain had been grown around the world to meet the request. It would take 18,446,744,073,709,551,615 cereal grains to do as Sissa had asked. If one were to make a row of camels, each carrying 140 kilos of grain, it would take a row of camels 23 billion kilometres long to carry the grain. “Not enough grain, not enough camels.” And this legend must have been concluded by the words: “...and the king did not know what to admire more: the invention of the game or the demand for the special reward.”

THE QUEEN’S HISTORY

The Chaturanga for four people had no queen and it was not till the introduction of the Chaturanga for two that a problem arose as there would be two white kings and two black kings. In order to keep the same number of pieces one king was renamed the Mantri (Mentor), or the king’s counsellor

(Raya). The power of the Mantri was halved: the Raya could move in the centre to eight squares, the Mantri could only move to four squares, and just diagonally. The Mantri therefore always remained on the same colour; it was in fact the weakest of all pieces. The Raya and the Mantri were both male figures. When the game became known in Persia, the Mantri was called Farzin which means 'wise man' or 'counsellor'. Sometimes people used the word 'Vesir' which stands for minister. As the right hand of the king, the new piece was also seen as a general, the one who had to execute the orders of the king and therefore he only was given a limited range of movement. When the Arabs became acquainted with the game, they used



Queen in a chess set from Gaudi's work; pottery with mosaic stones.

the word Firzan or Firz and later added the article “El” before the name thus Firz became El Firz. When the game came to Europe some confusion arose as the Arabs continued to use ‘Firz’ both in their own regions and in the European countries where they landed. In Italy, although the Arabs fell in various places, they were soon driven out so that the Italian chess culture remained intact. In addition, a different culture developed in Spain because the Arab / Moorish culture had a greater influence in Spain. The oldest written sources about the earliest chess game in Europe come from many Latin and some Spanish texts.

THE MALE COUNSELLOR

The oldest manuscript, probably from about the year 1000, is the story of a Knight with the name Ruodlieb who played chess. There is a testament from 1010 by Count Ermengaudus from Urgel near Barcelona, in which crystal chess pieces were left. Around 1098 Petro Alfonsi described in his work *Disciplina Clericalis* (which is still for sale) the seven virtues of the knight, including chess (!). From the period thereafter the chess game appears in Latin poems, French novels, various moralities and in a Spanish written work by King Alfonso X, (nicknamed ‘De Wise’), from 1283. Remarkably enough he describes both the piece ‘El Alferzo’ and ‘Ell Afferza’, which points to a male and then a female figure. Clearly the names are taken directly from Arabic but with a Spanish touch. In two Latin texts (Reims MS from 1275 and *Bonus Socius* from 1300) we encounter the expression ‘Fercia’, a Latinized term and a female figure. In most Latin texts, the oldest being the *Einsiedeln Gedicht* from 1050, the interpretation ‘Regina’ (literally: queen) is used. The oldest text written in English, with problems from the old medieval version of chess, appear in the manuscript of the politician John Porter around 1450. While roughly 200 years have passed the new piece is still referred to as ‘Ferz,’ the male counsellor or general. In most French texts the terms ‘Fierce’ and ‘Royne’ and ‘Reyne’ can be found and later ‘Reine’. In the famous *Roman de la Rose* of Jehan de Meung from 1270, which still serves as a moral lesson, “...? Car on n’have pas les Garcons, Fols, Chevaliers, Sergent ne Rocz”, which literally means translated: We cannot have chess as we have no pawns, bishops, knights, sergeant or rooks. The sergeant can only stand here for the queen.

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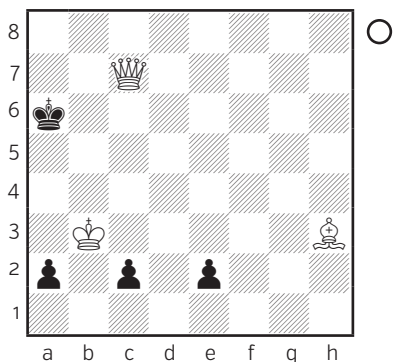


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68

E. Gize
Arbejder Skak 1958



Mate in three

Because those three free pawns are close to promotion some attempts do not end well: 1. ♔a4? a1 ♖+! or 1. ♔b4? e1 ♖+! or 1. ♔c4? c1 ♖+!.

Since the king moves fail to work, White has to be a little more subtle...

1. ♘f5!

2. ♘d3# is threatened. In view of the threat only knight promotions are adequate:

1... a1 ♞+

1... c1 ♞+ 2. ♔c4!; 1... e1 ♞ 2. ♔b4!.

2. ♔a4!+-

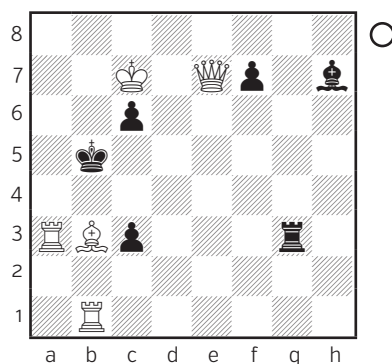
Concluding the siege on the black king with a bishop mate to follow.

THE PARADOX PREVAILS

When the Cretan philosopher Epimenides said 2600 years ago: “All Cretans always lie”, the paradox was clear to everyone: an apparently contradictory situation that seems to go against the sense of logic. Here are four brilliant two movers where the least logical move is the one to lead to the solution.

69

G. F. Anderson
Il Secolo 1919



Mate in two

You expect a dull solution “something” by the queen, the rooks or

the bishop but not the stunning king move.

1. ♔d6!!

Threatening 2. ♖b7#.

1... ♖b4

There is no escape: 1... ♖b6 2. ♕c2#;
1... ♖d3+ 2. ♕d5#; 1... ♖g6+ 2. ♕e6#

2. ♕xc6#

An attractive diagonal mate in aristocratic fashion.

rook on f1 and bishop on e5 are under attack.

1. ♔c2!!

Threatening 2. ♖b3#.

1... ♖1g2+

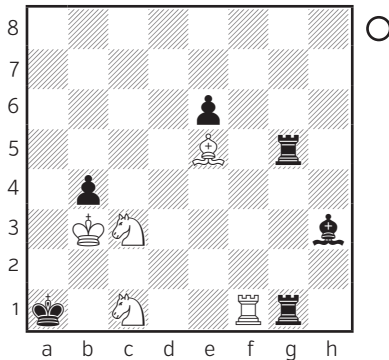
1... ♖5g2+ 2. ♗3e2#; 1... ♕f5+ 2. ♗e4#

2. ♗1e2#

With a diagonal mate after the lines are closed.

70

O. Wurzburg
Chess Review 1942

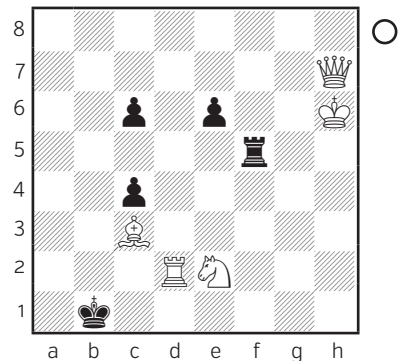


Mate in two

You examine every possible move but nothing works because both the

71

N.A. Macleod
Parallele 1951



Mate in two

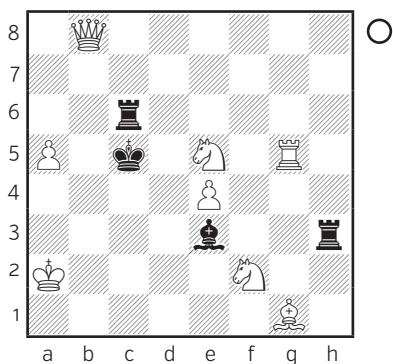
The black king has no refuge and if White could just check it would be easy. What is that waiting move that holds everything together?

1. ♖g6!!+-

How paradoxical can a key move be? Unpinning the black rook with no threat! However Black is in zugzwang. Any Black move is met by an immediate mate which is up to you to see.

72

B. P. Barnes
BCPS 1959



Mate in two

The black king still has a flight square on d4 and White must take it away.

1. ♖b3!!+-

Threatens 2. ♖b4#.

The variations display diagonal mates combined with self-pins: 1... ♙c1+ 2. ♗fd3#; 1... ♙xg5+ 2. ♗fd3#;

1... ♙xf2+ 2. ♗f3#; 1... ♙d4+ 2. ♗ed3#;
1... ♖d4 2. ♗c6#; 1... ♖b6+ 2. ♗xb6#.

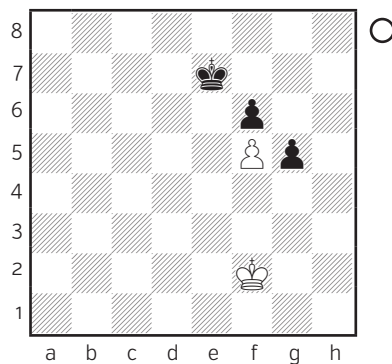
DEFENSIVE MECHANISMS

The king can play a vital role in defending difficult positions, following are four examples.

73

▷ A. Galliamova
▶ N. Gurieli

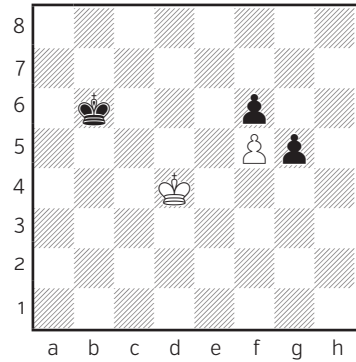
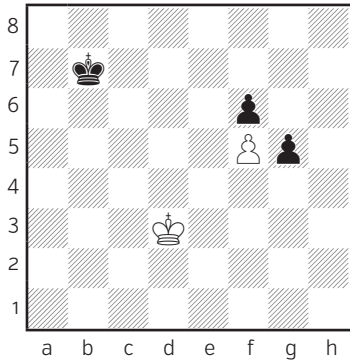
European Women's Championship
1992



87. ♖e3!

The key here is in maintaining the distant opposition.

87... ♖d7 88. ♖d3! ♖c7 89. ♖c3 ♖b7
90. ♖d3!



Caution! Keep an eye on the passed pawn!

Diagonal opposition is essential here.

90...♔a6 91.♔c4 ♔a7 92.♔c3 ♔b7
 93.♔d3 ♔b6 94.♔d4 ♔c7 95.♔c3
 ♔b6 96.♔d4!

96...♔a5 97.♔c5 ♔a6 98.♔c4



A king in a chess set with figures from the Hindu epic Ramayana. The king represents Rama. The set came from Bali circa 1950.

The black king is kept out of the pawn zone.

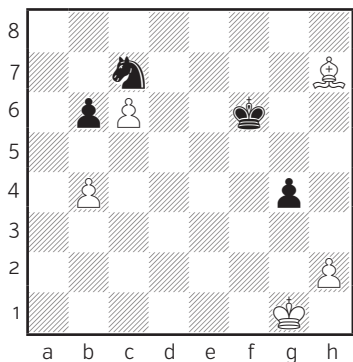
½–½

74

▷ Y. Seirawan

▷ B. Gelfand

Istanbul Olympiad 2000

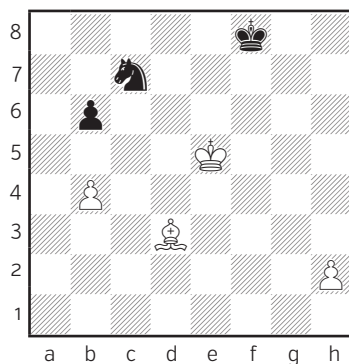


If Black sees the right general plan the draw is not difficult to hold.

56... ♖e5!

The plan is simple: pick up the c-pawn, return to the kingside and give away the knight for the remaining queenside pawn leaving White with the wrong bishop.

57. ♖f2 ♖d5 58. ♖g3 ♖xc6 59. ♖xg4 ♖d6 60. ♗d3 ♖e7 61. ♖f5 ♖f8 62. ♖e5



63...b5! 63. ♖d4 ♗a6 64. ♖c3 ♗xb4
65. ♖xb4 ♖g7 66. ♖xb5 ♖h8

Mission accomplished.

67. ♖c5

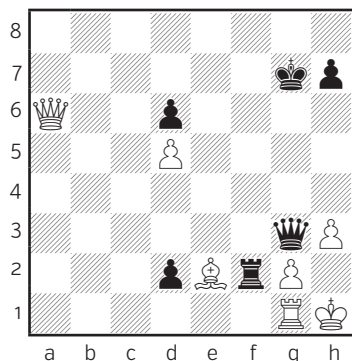
½–½

75

▷ M. Fehling

▷ U. Rutschi

Biel 1983



Black is a bit behind and d1 is under White's control. What should Black play? If you know the pattern, the

moves follow each other at lightning speed:

1... ♔h6!! 2. ♖d3 d1 ♕! 3. ♖xd1

Or 3. ♖xg3 ♖xg1+ 4. ♔xg1 ♖xg2+
5. ♔xg2 stalemate!

3... ♖xh3+! 4. gxh3 ♖h2+!

Stalemate.

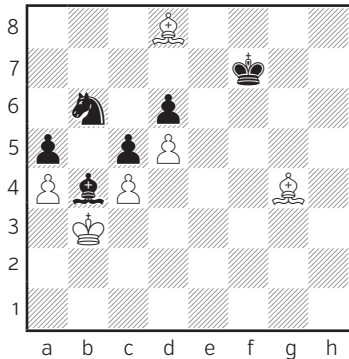
½–½

76

▷ T. Kobaidze

▷ M. Tsereteli

USSR 1970



The first try 1... ♖a8 fails after 2. ♔h5+ and the white king can penetrate via e6 while the ♖a8 is trapped due to the bishop on d8. Suddenly Black sees the light of salvation.

1... ♔e8!! 2. ♔xb6 ♕e7!

It's a fortress alright! The dark-squared white bishop cannot escape the cage while his king cannot enter to rescue it as the entrance is guarded by the black king. Black simply repeat moves with his bishop to e1 and back.

½–½

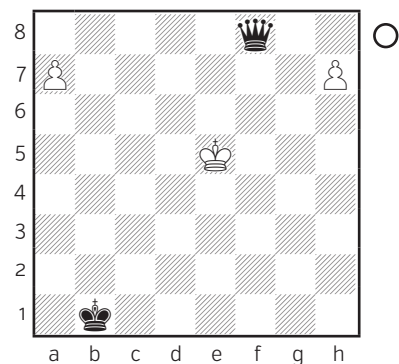
THE QUEEN IS TAMED

It is not often that the king has to compete against the queen. This seems like a hopeless fight that the king can never win but there are situations where the fight remains undecided. Here are four educational examples in which the king is equal to the queen.

77

V. Chekhover

Shakhmatny Bulletin 1963



White must be extremely careful. The situation would be hopeless after 1.♔e6? ♕b2.

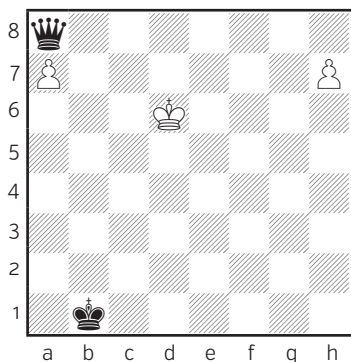
1.♔d5! ♚c8

1...♕b2 2.♔c6 ♚a8+ (2...♔b3 3.♔b7)
3.♔b6 ♕b3 4.h8♚! ♚xh8 5.♔b7
draw.

2.♔e5 ♚h8+ 3.♔d6!

3.♔d5? allows a skewer after 3...
♚xh7 4.a8♚ ♚h1+.

3...♚a8



4.♔e6

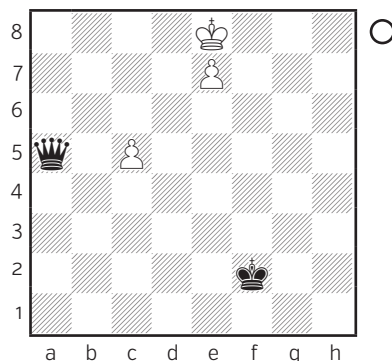
4.♔e5? is met by another skewer following 4...♚xa7 5.h8♚ ♚a1+.

4...♚h8 5.♔d6! =

With a draw.

78

N. Rezvov
Shakhmaty Vestnik 1992



White's drawing method relies on the c-pawn thus he moves to protect it.

A mistake would be 1.c6 ♚c7.

The correct way is to use the king:

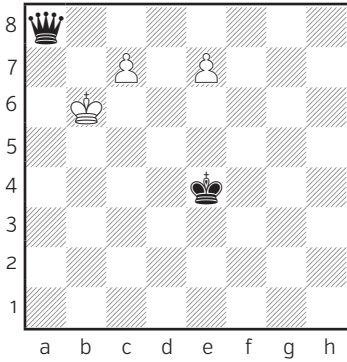
1.♔d7! ♚a7+! 2.♔d6 ♚b8+ 3.♔d7
♚b7+ 4.♔d6 ♚c8 5.c6 ♕e3 6.c7
♚e8!

After 6...♔d4 7.♔c6! ♕e5 8.e8♚+!
♚xe8+ 9.♔b7 White achieves his goal.

7.♔c5! ♚g6! 8.♔d5!

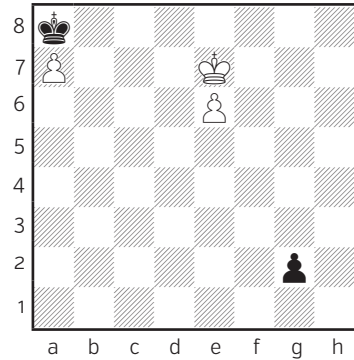
Other tries do not work: 8.c8♚ is met by ♚c2+ while 8.♔b5 fails to 8...♚e6.

8... ♖e8 9. ♔c5! ♕e4 10. ♔b6 ♖a8!



The battle of king against queen starts after the following moves.

1. ♔b6 ♔b8 2. a7+ ♕a8 3. ♔xc6 g4
4. ♔d7 g3 5. ♔xe7 g2



11. e8 ♖+!

Last chance!

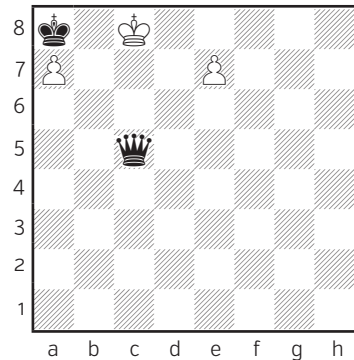
11... ♖xe8 12. ♔b7=

6. ♔d8!

White reaches the theoretical draw with a bishop's pawn.

6. ♔d7? loses to 6... g1 ♖ 7. e7 ♖xa7+ winning.

6... g1 ♖ 7. e7 ♖d4+ 8. ♔c8 ♖c5+

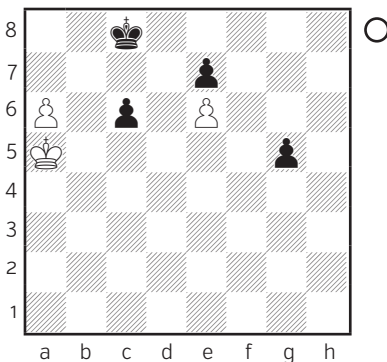


9. ♔d8! ♖d6+ 10. ♔c8! ♖xe7=

Stalemate!

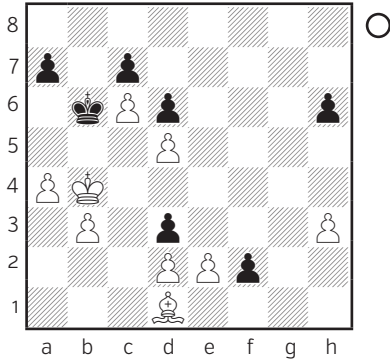
79

G. Zakhodyakin
Bulletin Central Chess Club
USSR 1969



80

D. Gurgenzidze
Bulletin Central Chess Club
USSR 1970



White first locks in the black king.

1.a5+ ♔a6 2.e3!

2.exd3? fails to 2...f1 ♖ 3.♙g4 ♗f4+
4.♙c3 ♙xa5 winning.; 2.e4? loses
to 2...f1 ♖ 3.♙g4 ♗f8 4.♙a4 ♗h8!
(4... ♗b8? 5.b4 ♗b5+ 6.♙b3 draws)
5.♙c8+ (Or 5.e5 ♗b8 6.b4 ♗b5+
7.♙a3 ♗xd5 wins.) 5... ♗xc8 6.b4
♗b8 winning.

2...f1 ♖ 3.♙g4 ♗f8 4.♙a4! ♗h8
5.♙c8+! ♗xc8 6.b4 ♗b8 7.e4! ♗b5+
8.♙b3! h5 9.h4 ♗b8 10.♙a4 ♗b5+
11.♙b3=

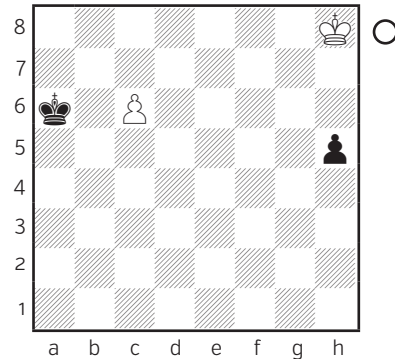
Resulting in a positional draw!

RETI MANEUVER

This theme looks like White is performing magic. By threatening to support his own passed pawn the defender manages to gain the tempo needed to restrain his opponent's passed pawn. Richard Reti (1889–1929) was an Austro-Hungarian world class player and theoretician who also composed a number of classical endgame studies.

81

R. Reti
Deutsche-Osterreichische
Tageszeitung 1921



The black pawn seems unstoppable while its counterpart looks hopeless. Is there any salvation for White?

1.♙g7!

The only way is to open a second front and to play for both goals.

Naturally not 1. ♖h7? h4 2. ♖h6 h3 etc.

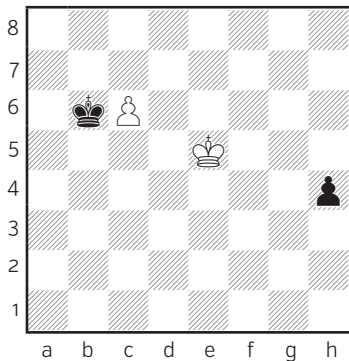
1...h4

1... ♖b6 transposes to the main line after 2. ♖f6!.

2. ♖f6! ♖b6

Since 2...h3 3. ♖e6 h2 4.c7 draws!

3. ♖e5!



3...h3

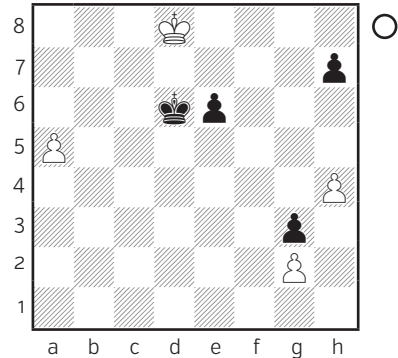
After 3... ♖xc6 4. ♖f4 h3 5. ♖g3 the h-pawn will be captured.

4. ♖d6! h2 5.c7 ♖b7 6. ♖d7=

Now the alternative goal has been reached. Mission accomplished!

82

M. Zinar
Galitzky MT 1987



How can White tame the black passed pawn? There is a ray of hope shimmering from the a-file.

1. ♖c8! ♖c6 2. ♖b8! ♖b5 3. ♖b7!

The point! By threatening to advance the edge pawn White gains critical tempos.

3... ♖xa5 4. ♖c6 ♖b4 5. ♖d6 ♖c4 6. ♖xe6

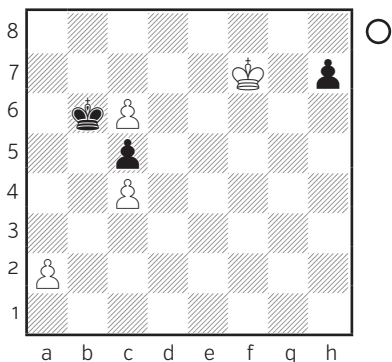
White is out of the danger presented by the black e6 pawn but the game is not yet over.

6... ♖d4 7. ♖f5 ♖e3 8. ♖g4 ♖f2 9. ♖h3! h5=

Stalemate!

83

M. Zinar
Review "64" 1982
First Prize



Just like the previous example demonstrated, taming the passed pawn only gets White halfway to salvation.

1. ♖g7!

The direct attempt 1. ♖f6? fails to 1... ♗xc6 2. ♖g5 ♗b6 3. ♖h6 ♗a5 4. ♖xh7 ♗b4 5. ♖g6 ♗xc4 6. ♖f5 ♗c3 7. ♖e5 c4 8. a4 ♗b4 9. ♖d4 c3 10. ♖d3 ♗b3 and Black wins.

1... h5 2. ♖f6! h4 3. ♖e5 ♗xc6

3... h3 4. ♖d6.

4. ♖f4 ♗b6!

A new front has been opened.

5. ♖g4 ♗a5 6. ♖xh4 ♗b4 7. ♖g3!

Precision is still required!

After 7. ♖g4? ♗xc4 8. ♖f3 ♗d3! 9. a4 c4 10. a5 c3 11. a6 c2 12. a7 c1 ♗ 13. a8 ♗ White loses to a skewer: 13... ♗h1+ 14. ♖f4 ♗xa8.

7... ♗xc4 8. ♖f2!

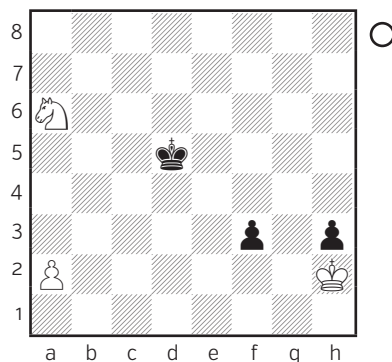
While 8. ♖f4? fails to 8... ♗d3 9. a4 c4 10. a5 c3 11. a6 c2 12. a7 c1 ♗+ check!.

8... ♗c3 9. ♖e2! c4 10. a4=

Draw!

84

Y. Afek
Reti MT 2009



How can White handle the black pawns and secure the march of his own passer?

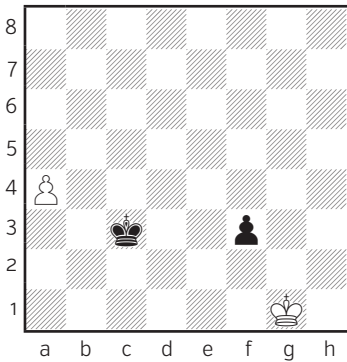
1. ♖g3!!

The natural idea of eliminating the black pawns misses by a hair as Black draws with the help of the Reti manoeuvre: 1. ♖xh3? ♜c4! 2. ♖g3 ♜b5! 3. ♜c7+ ♜b4 4. ♜d5+ ♜a3 5. ♜c3 ♜b2 6. a4 ♜xc3 7. a5 ♜d4! 8. a6 ♜e3 9. a7 f2 with a draw.

1...h2! 2. ♖xh2 ♜c4 3. ♖g1!

Similar to the previous variation 3. ♖g3? fails to 3... ♜b5! 4. ♜c7+ ♜b4 5. ♜d5+ ♜a3 6. ♜c3 ♜b2 7. a4 ♜xc3 8. a5 ♜d4! with the same result.

3... ♜b5 4. ♜c7+ ♜b4 5. ♜d5+ ♜a3 6. ♜c3 ♜b2 7. a4 ♜xc3



8. a5 ♜d4! 9. a6 ♜e3 10. ♖f1!+-

Vive la petite différence!

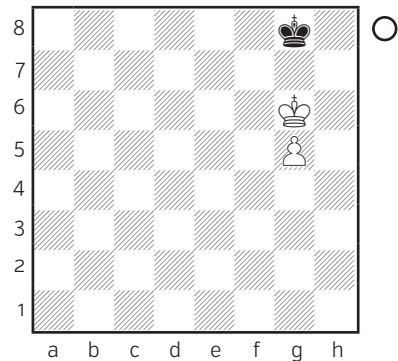
The black pawn is now blocked. The example shows the Reti and the Anti-Reti at the same time.

ASYMMETRY

Asymmetry is what we call two halves that are not each other's mirror image. Our four examples are not symmetrical in terms of position, but the asymmetry is in the solution. It does not seem to matter which way the king is going and yet there is a big difference.

85

Basic endgame



At first glance it does not seem to matter whether White starts with 1. ♖h6 or 1. ♖f6 yet one move wins and the other draws.

1. ♖h6!

The correct way.

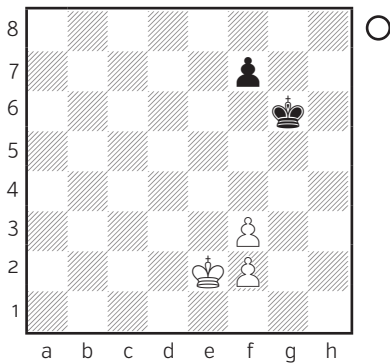
After 1. ♖f6?! ♜h7! 2. g6+?? ♜h8! Black escapes due to stalemate.

1...♔h8 2.g6 ♖g8 3.g7 ♖f7 4.♔h7+-

And the promotion cannot be stopped.

86

N. Grigoriev
Review "64"1936



The asymmetry appears after the following moves.

1.f4! ♖f6! 2.♖f3! ♖f5 3.♖g3!

Not 3.♖e3? ♖e6! 4.♖e4 f6 5.f5+ ♖d6! 6.♖f4 ♖d5 7.f3 ♖d6 8.♖g3 ♖e7! 9.♖g4 ♖f7 10.♔h5 ♖g7 with a draw as the board has ended and White cannot play to the non-existent square "i6".

3...♖g6 4.♖g4 f6

Or 4...f5+ 5.♖f3 ♖f6 6.♖e3! (6.♖g3? ♖f7!) 6...♖e6 7.♖d4 ♖d6 8.f3 where it is Black to play and lose.

5.f5+ ♖h6 6.♖f4 ♖h5 7.f3! ♖h6 8.♖e3!

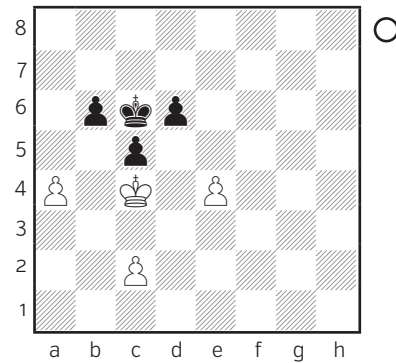
8.♖e4? ♖g5!.

8...♖g7 9.♖e4 ♖f7 10.♖d5 ♖e7 11.♖c6!+-

And Black cannot defend the f6-pawn.

87

J. Kling & B. Horwitz
The Chess Player 1851



The famous duo presents a fine example of the theme.

1.c3! ♖c7 2.♖d5!

Following 2.♖b5? ♖b7! 3.c4 ♖c7 4.♖a6 ♖c6 White has no waiting move on the sixth rank and thus after 5.♖a7 ♖c7 6.♖a8 ♖c8 he can make no progress.

2...♔d7 3.c4 ♖c7 4.♔e6 ♖c6 5.♔f6!

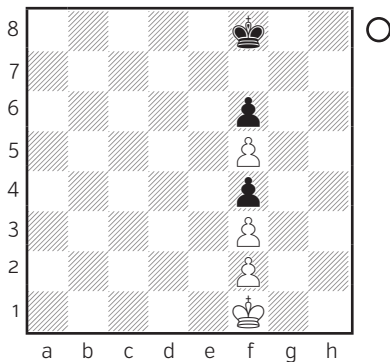
The decisive waiting move!

5...♔d7 6.♔f7 ♖d8 7.♔e6 ♖c7
8.♔e7 ♖c6 9.♔d8! ♖b7 10.♔d7+-

Winning the pawn and consequently the game.

88

E. Asaba
Bulletin Central Chess Club
USSR 1971



The old dilemma is presented to White. Which way should the king go?

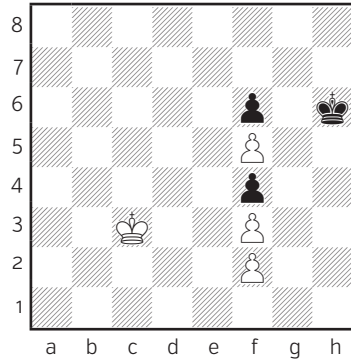
1.♔e2!

1.♔g2? ♖e7 2.♔h2 ♔d7! is just a draw as there are no more files left for the white king on his right.

1...♔g7 2.♔d2 ♖h7 3.♔c3!

This available waiting move makes the difference!

3...♔h6



4.♔d3!

But not 4.♔d4? ♖h5 5.♔d5 ♖h4
6.♔d6 ♖h3 7.♔e6 ♖g2 8.♔xf6 ♖xf2
9.♔e6 ♖xf3 10.f6 ♖g2 11.f7 f3 12.f8♚
f2 with a theoretical draw.

4...♔h5 5.♔d4 ♖h4 6.♔d5! ♖h3
7.♔e4 ♖g2 8.♔xf4+-

And wins.

THE HAND OF THE KING

Every game, even every move, of the world champions is analysed in all the professional periodicals around the world. Most of the world champions have been interested in end-game studies both as a fine art and as an excellent training tool. Here