

## IN MEMORIAM: PETKO A. PETKOV (27.2.1942–11.8.2024)

The chess world lost Petko A. Petkov (born 82 years ago in Dobrich), who on 11.8.2024 passed away in Sofia. Petko was the author of more than 6,100 problems, of which c. 2,400 problems were honoured (including 415 1<sup>st</sup> prizes), and nearly 10% entered FIDE Albums (with 524.74 points until the 2019-2021 period, he is by far the most successful author). He was a World Champion for selfmates (1989–1991 and 1998–2000), a quadruple World Champion for fairsies (1998–2000, 2007–2009, 2010–2012 and 2019–2021), and an Olympic Tourney winner (for h#2/1972 and s#/1990).



Petkov learnt chess rules and principles at the age of 14 by reading the magazines *Shakhmatna misl* from Bulgaria and *Shakhmatv v SSSR*. In 1956 his first problem was published in the Russian newspaper *Pionerskaya Pravda*; and in 1958 he scored his first victory in the tourney of *La voc da Badallona* that was organised by the Spanish magazine *Problemas*. During his military service from 1959 to 1962, Petko continued publishing problems in the western newspapers and magazines, in spite of being under the threat of sanctions because the Bulgarian authorities banned and monitored correspondence with western countries.

In 1962 Petkov started university studies in Sofia, where he met the composers Mikhail Popov, Venelin Alaikov, Krasimir Gandev and Ivan Ignatiev. In 1966 he published the booklet “*Kak da reshavame shakhmatny zadachy i etudy*” (“How to Solve Chess Problems and Studies”). He organised solving contests in Bulgarian periodicals and worked as a reporter for the newspaper *Naroden sport* and *Shakhmatna misl* (as its editor-in-chief from 1979 to 1991). From 1991 Petkov worked as a lawyer in Dobrich and after retirement returned to Sofia. In the 2000s and onwards Petko edited columns of original problems in *Shakhmatna misl*; original selfmates and fairsies in *StrateGems* (USA); and original fairsies in *Uralsky problemist* (Russia). Petko was a regular collaborator of *The Macedonian Problemist* for more than 2 decades and collaborated with *Quartz* (Romania). From 2020 he edited and published 6 issues of his fairy chess leaflet *Anda Fairy Planet*.

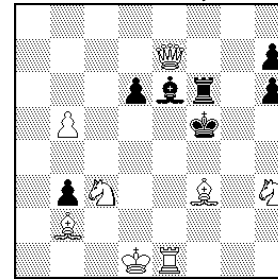
Petko Petkov’s selected chess problems were published in the eponymous book “Petko Petkov: Izbrany shakhmatny zadachy” (1982), and in Mike Prcic’s book “*Petkov: Selected compositions*” (2000, with 237 problems and 68% prize-winners). In 2007 Petko published his book “*The Art of Composing Selfmates*”, and in 1996 the French magazine *Diagrammes* issued two booklets with his selected problems. Petko published more than 100 articles in *Shakhmatna misl* and foreign magazines, explaining his composing views and possibilities to develop existing themes or his fairy chess discoveries. Petkov preferred “well-conceived and planned composing activity” rather than “chaotic creativity” and “randomness”, which he tried “to minimize” (“*The Art of Composing Selfmates*”), by using his own methodology of composing which he named PAPGS.

№ 1 is one of his problems with rich and unified strategic play. Its white-black correction duel, which shows *Petkov-1* theme, reflects his view that “a modern twomover is unthinkable without an organic unity between virtual and actual play as a whole” (p. 13 of his 1982 book). № 2 shows *Petkov-2* theme: “A black piece’s initial control of two squares that are attacked by two white half-pinned pieces *A* and *B* is attacked by *A* or *B*, but the black piece’s decoy fails because *B* or *A* is now pinned. In the solution Black is forced to allow continuations by pieces from the white half-pin with dual avoidance.” № 3 shows two groups of variations, labelled as *Adabashev synthesis*. (Petko preferred to call such problems “selfmates of the future” or “anti-identity” (ANI) problems). № 4 has chameleon echo model mates. № 5 is one of Petko’s typically elegant helpmates. Petko was a tireless propagator and promoter of fairy chess. His adventures in this *terra incognita* resulted in invention of many fairy conditions (*Anti-Andernah*, *Eiffel*, *Chameleon Chess*, *BGL chess*, *Bolero* and *Bolero-related* conditions (see № 6), *Masand* (see № 7), *ANDA* and *ANDA Inverse*) and fairy pieces (half-neutral pieces, Bulgarian hoppers (see Nos 8 & 9)), etc.

Petko “approached chess composing with utmost seriousness and dedication” and was “very generous in helping others” (Mike Prcic (the *StrateGems*’ General Editor), “Petko Andonov Petkov: The Composer, the Man”, *The Problemist* Nov. 2024, pp. 477–490). “His death leaves a huge gap” (Hans Gruber, “Petko A. Petkov (27.2.1942–11.8.2024)”, *Die Schwalbe* Dec. 2024 p. 709).

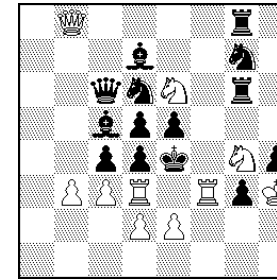
## Selected problems of Petko A. Petkov (Nos 1-6)

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Pr. Bulgarian Chess Federation tourney 1966



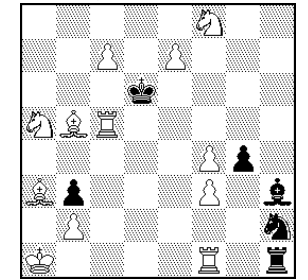
#2 vv[v] 8+7

2. Shakhmatna misl 1969



#3 vv 10+14

3. Comm. Z. Gavrilovski-50 JT (TMP 57-a) 2018



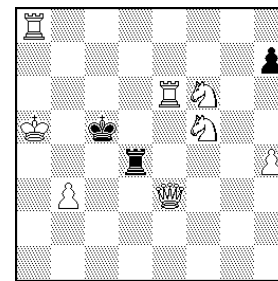
S#3 vv 12+6

№ 1: 1. ♘c3~? (2. ♖:f6#), 1... ♜f6~ 2. ♖:e6#, 1... ♜g6!; 1. ♘e2?! (2. ♖:f6#), 1... ♜g6 2. ♘d4#, 1... ♜f6~! 1. ♘d5! (2. ♖:f6#), 1... ♜f6~ 2. ♖:e6#, 1... ♜g6 2. ♘e3# [1. ♘e4? ♜g6 ♜f6~! 2. ♘:d6#/?].

№ 2: 1. ♘f6+? A ♜:f6 2. ♘g5??; 1. ♘g5+? B ♜:g5 2. ♘f6??; 1. ♖b4! (2. ♜de3+ d:e3 3. d3#), 1... ♜df5 2. ♘f6+ A [2. ♘g5+?] ♜:f6 2. ♘g35# B, 1... ♜gf5 2. ♘g5+ B [2. ♘f6+?] ♜:g5 3. ♘f6# A, 1... ♘:b4 2. ♜:d4+ e:d4 3. ♜f4#. *Petkov-2* theme and dual avoidance owing to black line opening.

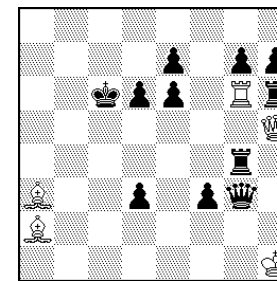
№ 3: 1. ♘b5~? (2. ♖b5+ ♖:c7 3. ♖c1+ ♜:c1#), 1... ♖:e7! 1. ♘a6!? (2. ♖b5+ etc.), 1... ♜:f1!; 1. ♘e8! (2. ♖b5+ etc.), 1... ♜:f1+ 2. ♖c1+ ♖d5 3. ♖d1+ ♜:d1#, 1... ♖:e7 2. ♖f5+ ♖:e8 3. ♖c1+ ♜:e1# 1... ♜:f1 2. ♖c2+ ♖d5 3. ♖d2+ ♜:d2#, 1... ♘:f1 2. ♖c3+ ♖d5 3. ♖d3+ ♘:d3#.

4. 1<sup>st</sup> Pr. Schach-Echo 1974



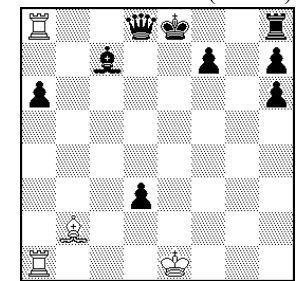
S#7 8+3

5. 3<sup>rd</sup> Pr. Schach-Aktiv 2009



H#2½ 2 solutions 5+11

6. StrateGems 2019 (scheme)



H#2 Bolero 4+9

№ 4: 1. ♖b6! (zz), 1...h5 2. ♖e7+ ♜d6 3. ♖b4 ♖c6 4. ♖a6+ ♖c5 5. ♖a7+ ♖b6 6. ♖a4 ♖c6 7. ♖e7 ♜:a6#, 1...h6 2. ♖a7 h5 3. ♖b5+ ♖c6 4. ♖e8+ ♜d7 5. ♖a8+ ♖b7 6. ♖b4 ♖c7 7. ♖e8 ♜:a7#.

№ 5: 1... ♘:e6 2. ♖b4 ♘h3 3. ♖b7 ♖c5#, 1... ♘:d6 2. ♖f2 ♘h2 3. ♖b6 ♖d5#. Unpin of ♖.

№ 6: 1.0-0 0-0-0 2. ♖e7 ♜g4#. ♜f8 must be pinned in the mating position, to prevent 3. ♜f8-g7!, and the black queen cannot play 3. ♖g5? because from e7 it can play only as a king. *Bolero*: A piece “x” (except for all kinds of kings and pawns) making capturing moves plays in the usual way, according to the rules of movement for its own nature. When making non-capturing moves, “x” plays like a rook if located on the “a” & “h” files; a knight if located on the “b” & “g” files; a bishop if located on the “c” & “f” files; a queen on the “d” file; a king on the “e” file (to all neighboring squares, but without acquiring a royal status). Castling is permitted if the K and R are on their starting positions, or with Circe-reborn K and R and the squares between them (except for squares b1/b8 at long castling) are not attacked by enemy pieces according to the *Bolero* condition.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF PETKO A. PETKOV MEMORIAL TOURNEY 2024-2025

The *Macedonian Problemist* organizes a formal tourney in memory of its regular collaborator Petko A. Petkov in the following sections and with the following judges:

1) **Mate in 3 moves**, free theme (however, special recognitions in the award are envisaged for #3s with the *Petkov-2* theme). Judge: **Zoran Gavrilovski**.

2) **Selfmate in 2-n moves**, free theme. Judge: **Hartmut Laue**.

3) **Helpmate in 2 moves**, free theme. Judge: **Velko Aleksandrov**.

4) **Fairies** of any kind with “Bulgarian Hoppers” in combination with “Masand” or “Bolero” (or related “Bolero” family) conditions, or with both conditions. Any other fairy chess element is allowed, but fairy chess inventions by P. A. Petkov would be most appreciated. Judge: **Hans Gruber**.

Entries should be sent to [zoran.gavrilovski@gmail.com](mailto:zoran.gavrilovski@gmail.com) until **11 August 2025**.

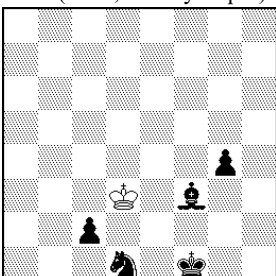
Links and examples for the thematic fairy pieces and conditions:

More information about “Masand” and “Bolero” are available in issue 2 of *Anda Fairy Planet* (<https://julfairies.com/wp-content/uploads/ANDA-Fairy-Planet-No-2-2020.pdf>). Bolero, Bolero Inverse, Bolero Rex Inclusive and Bolero Inverse Rex Inclusive are explained in Petko’s article “Four new fairy conditions called ‘Bolero’”, *StrateGems* 2019 (<http://www.kotesovec.cz/articles/bolero.pdf>).

For more information about “Bulgarian Hoppers”, please see issue 1 of *Anda Fairy Planet* (available at: <https://julfairies.com/wp-content/uploads/ANDA-Fairy-Planet-No-1-2020.pdf>).

### 7. Ivo Tominić

*The Macedonian Problemist*  
2021 (№ 64, January–April)

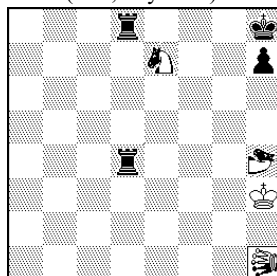


H=3 Masand 1+5

b) ♖d1→f5

### 8. Petko A. Petkov

*Anda Fairy Planet* 2020  
(№ 1, July 2020)

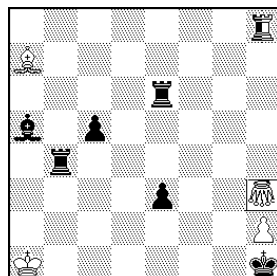


H#2 2 solutions 1+4+3

♚ = Bulgarian neutral leo  
♘/♙ = neutral knight/camel

### 9. Petko A. Petkov

*Julia’s Fairies* 2020  
Dedicated to Christian Poisson



H=4 2 solutions 4+6+1

♚ = Bulgarian grasshopper  
♖ = neutral rook

№ 7: a) 1. ♙e2+(d1=w) (g4=w) ♚:c2 2. ♙c4 ♘e3+(c4=w) (g4=b) 3. ♙e1 ♘:g4=; b) 1. ♙e4+(f5=w) ♚e3 2. g3 ♘:g3+(e4=w) 3. ♙e1 ♙:c2=. *Masand*: A moving piece which directly attacks the opposite king changes the colour of the pieces it guards or attacks, except the kings. A rook becoming white on a1 or h1, or black on a8 or h8, can castle.

№ 8: 1. ♙a4 ♘d5 2. ♙aa8 ♚:a8(♘f7)#, 1. ♙a8 ♙g1 2. ♙a1 ♚:a1(♙g5)#. Reciprocal creation of neutral batteries using a neutral *Bulgarian leo*, which moves like a leo, but the hurdle must also make a leo move (otherwise the move is impossible). *Leo*: the Chinese queen, which moves like a normal queen, but captures like a lion (which moves and captures like a grasshopper, but its arrival square may be any number of squares beyond the hurdle, provided the line is free). *Camel*: 1:3 leaper. *Neutral piece*: belongs to which-ever side chooses to use it.

№ 9: 1. ♙c8 ♙c7+ 2. ♙d6 ♙:c5+ 3. ♙c7 ♙:c2+ 4. ♙b2 ♙:e3=, 1. ♙g8 ♙g3+ 2. ♙f4 ♙:e3+ 3. ♙e5 ♙:e2+ 4. ♙d2 ♙:c5=. Model pin-stalemates with 4 pinned pieces in each solution. *Bulgarian grasshopper*: moves like a grasshopper ((0,1) + (1,1) hopper, defined below at p. 53), but the hurdle must also make a grasshopper move (otherwise the move is impossible).