

THE MACEDONIAN PROBLEMIST

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AWARDS IN ALEKSANDAR POPOVSKI MEMORIAL TOURNEY 2023-2024

Special issue (№ 75-d)

Supplement to *The Macedonian Problemist* № 75, September – December 2024



**Aleksandar Popovski
(28.04.1932 – 28.12.2023)**

ALEKSANDAR POPOVSKI MT 2023-2024: MATE IN 2 MOVES

Judge: Hubert Gockel

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Charles Ouellet – 1, 2; Pavel Murashev – 3, 4; Nikola Stolev – 5; Miguel Urís and José Antonio Garzón – 6; Zoran Gavrilovski – 7, 8, 9, 10

PRELIMINARY AWARD

The tourney set theme required: #2 or #3 with *Popovski* theme, that is, reappearance of 3 or more mates from the set play as a multiple threat in another phase; reappearance of 2 set play mates as a double threat in another phase: or reappearance of the set play mates as single threats in 3-n phases or 2 phases.

I received 10 submissions from the tournament director for an assessment. However, the meager quantity was somewhat offset by the fairly decent quality.

Frankly speaking, I have some reservations about this theme, especially concerning the significance of the set play. Is it always needed? Does a solver miss anything when in addition a plausible try (or solution) triggers the same set play (*Nos* 2, 6, 2 (announcement))? The entries to this tourney give different answers to it. Pros in favour of set play are e.g., checks to the white king or flights of the black king in the diagram's home position, which are self-evident starting points for the solving process and thus less likely to be overlooked (*Nos* 8, 10). Set defenses provisioned with mates which will change in later phases (*Nos* 7, 8, 9, 10) or become refutations there (*Nos* 7, 10) certainly upvalue the starting phase. In few other (as such excellent) problems (*Nos* 3, 4) I actually consider the set play adequately covered by the residual phases but renouncing it of course means losing the "ticket" for participation in this tourney. And as the examples from the announcement do not serve as a distinguished role model in this respect, I tried to make the award free from any bias.

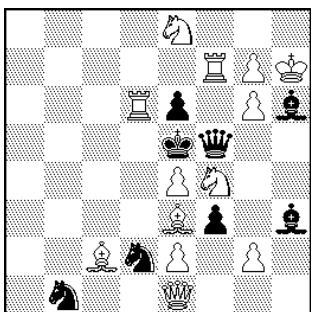
A few words about contributions that did not make it into the award:

- *Nó* 1: The only advantage over its annexed predecessor is the avoidance of the dualistic 2.♔f4# after 1...♚:d6 in the set play. The strong accent on checking moves in refutations and the additional try 1.♗e3+? is another difference, but not necessarily an enhancement.
- *Nó* 5: Anti-critical key with interference sets up a double threat. The strongest set defense, 1...♗:c7, unfortunately has no associated mate.
- *Nó* 6: The author emphasizes "threat separations, tries and key on the same square", but with a typical ♚/♔ *Grimshaw/Novotny* matrix, this is a matter of course.

Now, I suggest the following ranking:

1st Prize

Nó 3, Pavel Murashev



- 1...♗:e4 2.♘d3# A
 1...♚~ 2.♔d4# B
 1.g:f3? (2.♘d3# A)
 1...♚:f4, ♔:f4 2.♔d4# B
 1...♚:e4! a
 1.♗h4? (2.♘d3# A, ♔d4# B)
 1...♚:e4 a 2.♗f6#
 1...♔g4!

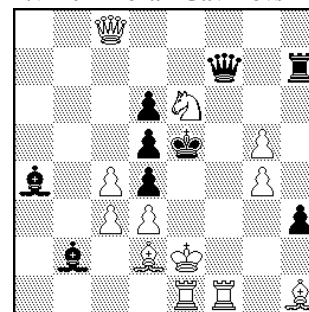
- 1.♗g3? (2.♔d4# B)
 1...♚:e4 a 2.♘d3# A
 1...♗b3!
 1.e:f3! (2.♘d3# A)
 1...♚:e4 a 2.♔d4# B
 1...♗:f3 2.♗a5#
 1...♚:g6+ 2.♘:g6#
 1...♚:f4, ♔:f4 2.♔d4# A

Popovski theme implementation based on two set mates recurring as double threat in try 2 and in all other phases as distributed single threats (*Barnes* theme). Try 1 and 3 exchange (A) and (B) as threats and variations mates following different defences (*Pseudo le Grand*). Try 1 threatens (A) but fails to (a),

which allows (A) in try 3 (*Dombrovskis* theme). Defence (a) does not refute the double threat of try 2, but leads to a new mate (*Dombrovskis* paradox), the 3rd one across all phases. So, in summary we get an impressive mix of paradox letter themes enabled by masked pin line, battery creation, self-blocks, direct and prospective guards. Both queens are extremely active. Well done.

2nd Prize

Nó 10 – Zoran Gavrilovski



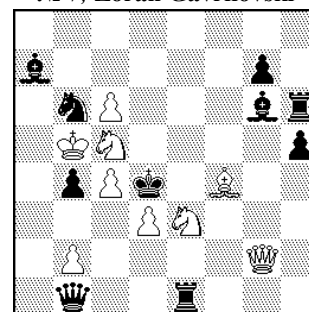
#2 * vvvvv [v] 12+9

- 1...♗f5 x ♗g6 y ♗f3+ ♗f2+ / ♗:f1+ / d:c3 z / ♔d1+
 2.♚:f5# / ♔f4# A / ♘:f3# B / ♘:f2# C / ♘:f1# D / d4# / ♘:d1#
 1.♘f4? (2.♘f3# B, ♘f2# C)
 1...♗f5 x 2.♗:f5#
 1...♗g6 y 2.♘:g6#
 1...♚:f4 / ♔d1+ 2.♔:f4# / ♘:d1#
 1...d:c3! z
 1.♚f6? (2.♔f4# A, ♘f3# B, ♘f2# C, ♘f1# D) ♗:f6!
 1.♚f4? (2.♘f3# B, ♘f2# C, ♘f1# D; 2.♔f4?? A) ♗g6! y
 1...♚:f4 2.♔:f4# A
 1...♗f5 / ♔d1+ 2.♚:f5# / ♘:d1#
 1.♚f3? (2.♘f2# C, ♘f1# D; 2.♘f3?? B) d:c4!
 1...♚:f3+ 2.♘:f3# B
 1...♗f5 / ♗g6 (♗f4) / ♔d1+ 2.♚:f5# / ♔:f4# / ♘:d1#
 1.♔f3? (2.♘f2# C, ♘f3?? B) d:c4!
 1...♚:f3+ 2.♘:f3# B
 1...♗f5 / ♗g6 (♗f4) / ♔d1+ 2.♚:f5# / ♔:f4# / ♘:d1#
 1...♗f5! x
 [1.♔c1? (2.♘d2#) 1...♔c1 / ♔c3! 2.c:d4#?]
 1.♚f2! (2.♘f1# D, ♘f2?? C) 1...♚:f2+ 2.♘:f2# C
 1...♗f5 / ♗g6 (♗f4) / ♔d1+ 2.♚:f5# / ♔:f4# / ♘:d1#

Set play imposes itself and so do the tries. Where to obstruct the ♗ on the f-file is the question. Two options exist for f4: ♚f4 and ♘f4, each releasing multiple battery threats by the ♘. With 1.♘f4? most appreciated changed mates follow 1...♗f5/♗g6 compared to set and solution, but 1...d:c3! refutes. If ♚f1 tries on f4, 1...♗g6! refutes due to self-block (2.♔f4#?). Now f3: The *Grimshaw* 1.♚f3?/♔f3? fails to the mutual line closures, exploited by 1...d:c4/♗f5! Finally 1.♔c1? completes the plethora of tries. (The author also states 1.♚f6? as a try, which I don't consider plausible: 1...♚:f6!) 1.♚f2! remains as a key with a modest single threat 2.♘f1#. A convincing implementation of the *Popovski* theme (*Barnes* included), even without the claimed *Sushkov* effects.

1st Honourable Mention

Nó 7, Zoran Gavrilovski



#2 * vvv 9+10

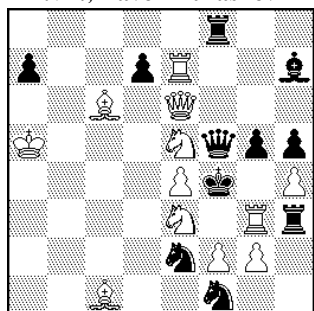
- 1...♔f5 2.♘:f5# A
 1...♚c2 2.♘:c2# B
 1...♔d3 x 2.♘b3# C
 [2.♘e6+? D]
 1...♚:d3 y 2.♘e6# D
 [2.♘b3+? C]
 1.♗f2? (2.♘f5# A, ♘c2# B)
 1...♚:b2 2.♗:b2#
 1...♚:e3 2.♗:e3#
 1...♗:c4! z
 1.♗g6? (2.♗:e5#)
 1...♔f5 2.♘:f5# A
 1...♚:e3 2.♔:e3#
 1...♗:c4 z, ♗d7 2.♗d5#
 1...♔b8!
 1.♗c2? (2.♘b3# C, ♘e6# D)
 1...♚:c2 2.♘:c2# B
 1...♔d3! x
 1.♗d2! (2.♘b3# C, ♘e6# D)
 1...♔d3 x 2.♘f5# A
 1...♚:d3 y 2.♘c2# B

Two of the 4 set mates, (C) and (D) reappear as double threat in the solution, whereas the other couple, (A) and (B) as mating answers to the self-pinning defenses (x) and (y). As (x) and (y), on the other hand, allow (C) and (D) in the set play (benefiting from self-blocks with dual avoidance), we see a realisation of *Dombrovskis* paradox here. Moreover, if try 1 threatening (A) and (B)

had (C) and (D) as mates in its variation play, we would even be faced with the *Odessa* theme (such was accomplished in Appendix-A with striking optical parallels due to the ♖♗♘♙-neighbourhood around the ♔). Further tries, 2 and 3, entail the set mates (A) and (B) solely and also introduce a 3rd changed mate after 1... ♖:e3. Rich contents with comprehensible tries.

2nd Honourable Mention

№ 4, Pavel Murashev



#2 * v 12+11

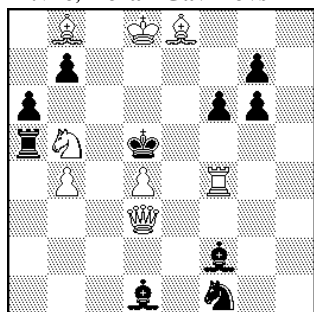
1... ♖~ 2. ♗d3# A
 1... ♖:e4! a 2. ♗d5# B
 1... ♖:e5+! 2. ♗:e5#
 1. ♘a6? (2. ♗d3# A)
 1... ♖:e4 a 2. ♗d5# B
 1... ♖:e5 2. ♗:e5#
 1... ♗:c1!

1. ♖c4! (2. ♗d5# B)
 1... ♖:e4 a 2. ♗d3# A
 1... ♗d4 2. ♗:f1#
 1... ♗:e3 2. ♗:e3#
 1... ♖:e6 2. ♗d3#

Random ♖'s moves in the set play allow (A), but which is not true of her correction (a). In the solution, however, (a) does allow for (A), so that a secondary *Dombrovskis* paradox is on hand. The (A, B) reversal of threat mates and mates following (a) between try and solution depict the *le Grand* theme, based on unpin and prospective pin after an attractive key. The additional battery mate after 1... ♗d4 is welcome. Pity that 1... ♖e6 makes thematic mate (A) appear a 2nd time, which dilutes the clarity of the letter theme. The author also claims the twomover theme of the 8th WCCT. But this demanded the correction play to be placed in the solution rather than in the set play.

3rd Honourable Mention

№ 8, Zoran Gavrilovski



#2 * v v v 8+10

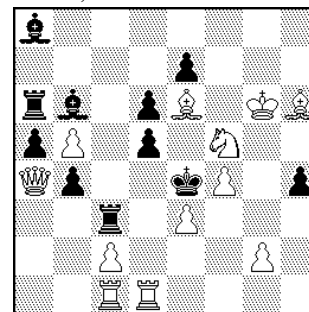
1... ♖e6 x 2. ♖c4# A & 2. ♖c4# B
 1. ♗d6? (2. ♖c4# A & 2. ♖c4# B)
 1... ♖e6 x 2. ♗f7# C
 1... ♗e2!
 1. ♗a7? (2. ♗f7# C)
 1... ♗g4 2. ♖b3#
 1... ♖e6! x

1. ♘c7? (2. ♗f7# C)
 1... ♖e6 x 2. ♖c4# A
 1... ♗g4 2. ♖b3#
 1... ♗:d4!
 1. ♖c3! (2. ♗f7# C)
 1... ♖e6 x 2. ♖c4# B
 1... ♗g4 2. ♖b3##

The ♖'s flight (a) in the set play introduces dualistic mates (A) and (B). Try 1 picks them up as double threat, but now (a) defends and (C) is mate. The next try as well as the solution turn (C) into the threat and (A) or (B) paradoxically follows as mate after (a), respectively. This built-in *Dombrovskis* essence incarnates the *Burmistrov* combination. Further paradoxical accent is added by the try 1. ♗a7?, again threatening (C), but this time being thwarted by the thematic (c). The building blocks of this problem are quite known, the author himself quotes some precursors (see Appendix-A2). However, one feature seems novel: In none of the former examples, where the ♖ is responsible for two of the three thematic mates (A, B), she also provides the key to threaten the third one (C) like here in the solution. In doing so, she gives up control of one of the mating fields, so that after the ♖'s escape (a), only the *Burmistrov* pattern compliant mate (B) remains. Simple, but efficient!

1st Commendation

№ 9, Zoran Gavrilovski



#3 * 12+11

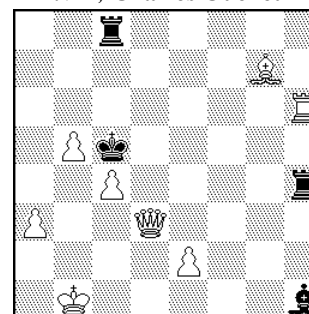
the ♖, ain't she strong enough to handle both quiet continuations in the solution alone (saving the ♗c1)?

1... ♖:e3 x 2. ♗:d6+ A [♗g3+?] 3. ♗f5#
 1... ♗:e3 y 2. ♗g3+ B [♗:d6+?] h:g3 3. ♗f5#
 1. ♖e1! (2. ♗:d6+ A e:d6 3. ♗f5# & 2. ♗g3+ B h:g3 3. ♗f5#)
 1... ♖:e3 x 2. ♖b3 (3. ♖d3#)
 1... ♗:e3 y 2. ♗cd1 (3. ♗d4#) ♗d3/♗c4 3. c:d3#/♖:e3#
 1... d4 2. e:d4+ ♖e3 3. ♖:e3#

The author writes: "The anti-dual W2 moves from the set play after self-blocking on e3 appear as threats in the solution. Self-pinning defenses on e3 allow change of W2 moves without check to the ♔. Both phases show *Dombrovskis* paradox with a double threat: 1... x/y 2. A/B; 1. Sol.! (2. A & B), 1... x/y 2. M/N." Satisfying contents, but the downside here is deficient economy:

2nd Commendation

№ 2, Charles Ouellet



#2 * 8+4

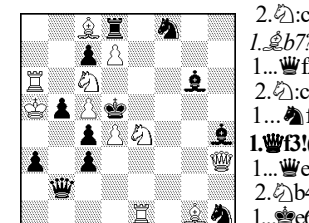
1... ♖e4 a 2. ♖d5# A
 1... ♗e4 b 2. ♗d4# B
 1... ♖:h6 c 2. ♖d4# C
 1. e4! (2. ♖d5# A, ♗d4# B, ♖d4# C)
 1... ♖:e4 a 2. ♖d5# A
 1... ♗:e4 b 2. ♗d4# B
 1... ♖:h6 c 2. ♖d4# C
 1... ♖d8 2. ♖c6#

I found 14 Merediths with three threats after *Novotny* key and *Fleck* separation in the Albrecht database, but none in conjunction with set play. A polished setting, which still had room for a total defence.

APPENDIX

A) Valery Shanshin

Problemblad 9-10/1999

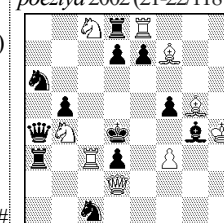


#2 * v v v 11+12 Odessa.

1... ♖e2 a/ ♗:e1 b
 2. ♗:c3# A/ ♗f6# B
 1. ♗b7? (2. ♗b4# C/ ♗e7# D)
 1... ♗f2 c/ ♗f2 d
 2. ♗:c3# A/ ♗f6# B
 1... ♗f2!
 1. ♖f3! (2. ♗:c3# A/ ♗f6# B)
 1... ♖e2 a/ ♗:e1 b
 2. ♗b4# C/ ♗e7# D
 1... ♖e6 ♗:e4 2. ♗g5# ♖:e4#

B) Vasyl Markovtsy

1st Pr. *Shakhmatnava poeziya* 2002 (21-22/1187)



#2 v 10+8

1... ♖e5 x 2. ♖e3# A & 2. ♖f4# B
 1. ♗d5? (2. ♖e3# A & 2. ♖f4# B), 1... e6!
 1... ♖e5 x 2. ♗f6# C
 1... ♖:c3 2. ♖:c3#
 1. ♗:e7? (2. ♗f6# C) ♖:e8!
 1... ♖e5 x 2. ♖e3# A
 1... ♖:c3 2. ♖f4# B
 1. ♗:e7! (2. ♗f6# C)
 1... ♖e5 x 2. ♖f4# B
 1... ♖:c3 2. ♖e3#

I congratulate the authors of the honoured problems and I thank all the authors. Congrats to all winners and good luck in 2025!

Hubert Gockel, in December 2024

ALEKSANDAR POPOVSKI MT 2023-2024: SELFMATES IN 2-10 MOVES

Judge: *Aleksey Oganesyan*

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

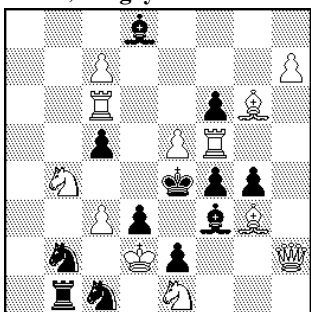
Yuri Arefiev – 1; Jozef Holubec – 2; Steven B. Dowd – 3, 5, 7, 23; Anatoly Vasylenko – 4; Sergey Borodavkin – 6; Anatoly Styopochkin – 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20; Zoran Sibinović – 15; Aleksandr Fica & Zoltan Labai – 16; Aleksandr Feoktistov – 17; Daniele Gatti – 21, 22; Sven Trommler – 24, 25; Frank Richter – 25*; Aleksandr Pankratiev – 26, 27, 28, 29, 30; Zoran Gavrilovski – 31, 32*

PRELIMINARY AWARD

From a MT Director, Zoran Gavrilovski, I have received 32 anonymous problems. In subsection s#2-4 there were only 5 entries (but of very high level) so I didn't separate an award in two subsections. Besides that, I decided to not give commendations for several problems because another judges (with their tastes and requirements that differs from mine) can evaluate these problems for more high distinctions.

1st Prize

Nº 6, Sergey Borodavkin



S#6^v 12+12

1. ♖h6? (2. ♖g5+ etc.) ♜d1!
1. ♖h4! (2. ♖g5+ f5 3. ♙:f5+ ♚:e5 4. ♙g6+ ♙:g5
 5. ♙:f4+ ♚:f4 6. ♖g3+ ♚:g3#)
 1...f:g3 2. ♖:f6+ ♚:e5 3. ♖f5+ ♚e4 4. ♖f:c5+ ♚f4
 5. ♖f5+ ♚e4 6. ♖c4+ ♜:c4#
 1...f:e5 2. ♖:e5++ ♚:e5 3. ♖h5+ ♙g5 4. ♙:f4+ ♚:f4
 5. ♖h2+ g3 6. ♖:g3+ ♚:g3#
 1...♙:c7 2. ♖:f4++ ♚:e5 3. ♖f5+ ♚e4 4. ♖f:c5+ f5
 5. ♖e6+ ♙e5 6. ♖c4+ ♜:c4#

♖'s cross is realized in s#6 possibly for the first time. Choice of a key. In this difficult task, the following little shortcomings can be forgiven:

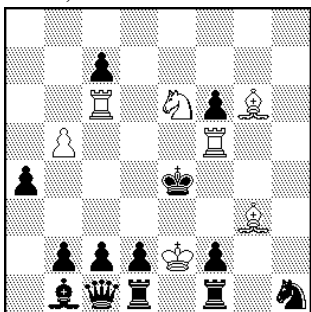
- repetitions of several 4th and 6th moves;

- three variations are ready initially, so it's all just a matter of finding of "launching" a threat.

It's just a pity that this threat and first variation are connected not as clearly as the last two variations with ♖'s switchbacks after an annihilation of black pawns. Nevertheless the problem deserves the highest distinction in the tourney.

2nd Prize

Nº 17, Aleksandr Feoktistov



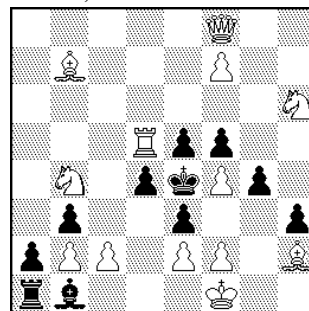
S#9^{vv} 7+13

1. ♜g5+? f:g5 2. ♖:g5+ ♚d4 3. ♙e5+ ♚d5 4. ♙f7+ ♚e4
 5. ♙d5+ ♚d5 6. ♙c3+ ♚e4 7. ♖e6+ ♚f4 8. ♙:d2+ ♚(♖):d2#
 7...♙d4!
 1. ♖f6+? ♚d5 2. ♖f5+ ♚e4 3. ♜g5+ ♚d4 4. ♜f3+ ♚e4 5. ♜:d2+
 5. ♜:d2+ ♚d4 6. ♜f3+ ♚e4 7. ♖c4+ ♚d4 8. ♜:d2+ ♚:d2+ ♚f1?!
1. ♙h7! (zugzwang)
 1...♙g1 2. ♖:f6+! ♚d5 3. ♖f5+! ♚e4 4. ♜g5+! ♚d4 5. ♜f3+ ♚e4
 6. ♜:d2+ ♚d4 7. ♜f3+ ♚e4 8. ♖c4+ ♚d4 9. ♜:d2+ ♚:d2#
 1...a3 2. ♜c5+! ♚d4 3. ♜b3+ ♚e4 4. ♖h5+! f5 5. ♙:f5+ ♚d5
 6. ♙c8+ ♚e4 7. ♙b7! ~ 8. ♖:c2+ c6 9. ♖c4+ ♚:c4

Excellent two-variation ninemover with elements of logic. In the first variation – switchbacks and opening of d-line, in the second – play by white batteries and opening of the c-file. But I felt a little lacking in clarity of unifying moments and homogeneity of play in the variations. There is a connection between the try 1. ♖f6+? (which fails due to 9. ♜:f1) and the variation 1...♙g1 (where White is doing well because ♖ goes away from f1); and if it would be the same clear connection between another try 1. ♜g5+? and another variation (1...a3), then the problem would look more logically complete. Nevertheless, in overall, everything is done in a very interesting and unusual way, with varied play and a mysterious key, from which you don't really expect zugzwang, given the extensive (albeit very limited in movement) black material.

3rd Prize

Nº 32, Zoran Gavrilovski



S#3^v 13+11

- 1.c4? [1.c:b3? (zugzwang)] 2. ♖:d4++ A ♚:d4
 3. ♜:f5+ ♜c2+ ♙:f5# ♙:c2#
 1...e:f2! x

1.c3! (zugzwang)

- 1...e:f2 x 2. ♖:d4++ A ♚e3 3. ♖d3+ ♙:d3#
 1...g3 2. ♖:e5++ ♚:f4 3. ♖:f5+ ♙:f5#
 1...e:f4 2. ♖d6+ ♚e5 3. ♜d3+ ♙:d3#
 1...d:c3 2. ♖c5+ ♚d4 3. ♜:f5+ ♙:f5#
 1...d3 2. f3+ g:f3 3. d3+ ♙:d3#

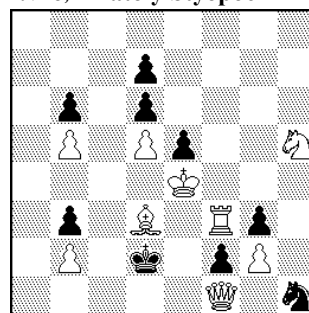
Combination of crosses by ♖ and ♚. This task is realized, for example, by Mikhail Khramtsevich, 1st-2nd Pr. *Zadachi i etyudi* 2000 (yacpdb/333580) with more complicated and interesting

content and also with more wide play. And in Nº 32 I noticed that the entire play is concentrated on a small area in the center of the board. However, a task remains a task, and the originality of this composition in comparison with the said Khramtsevich's problem, in my opinion, is undeniable:

- it has a form of "zugzwang" (not "threat");
- synthesis 2+2, where in each pair different white pieces play on the same square (d3, f5);
- additionally – *Dombrovskis* theme when choosing the key.

1st Honourable Mention

Nº 8, Anatoly Styopochkin



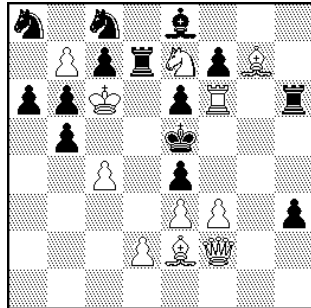
S#9^v 9+9

1. ♜:g3? (zugzwang), 1... ♜:g3+! 2. ♖:g3?!
1. ♙e2! (zugzwang)
 1... ♚c2 2. ♖f8!! ♚b2 3. ♖a8 ♚c2 4. ♖d1+ ♚c3
 5. ♖c1+ ♚b4 6. ♖a3+ ♚c3 7. ♖c8+ ♚d2 8. ♖c1+ ♚:e2
 9. ♜:g3+ ♜:g3#
 [(4... ♚b2 5. ♖a1+ ♚c2 6. ♖c8+ ♚d2 7. ♖c1+ ♚:e2
 8. ♜:g3+ ♜:g3#);
 (3... ♚c3 4. ♖c1+ ♚b4 5. ♖a3+ ♚c3 6. ♖c8+ ♚d2
 7. ♖c1+ ♚:e2 8. ♜:g3+ ♜:g3#);
 (2... ♚d2 3. ♖h8 ♚c2 4. ♖a8 ♚b2 5. ♖a1+ ♚c2
 6. ♖c8+ ♚d2 7. ♖c1+ ♚:e2 8. ♜:g3+ ♜:g3#;
 4... ♚d2 5. ♖a1 ♚c2 6. ♖b1+ ♚d2 7. ♖c1+ ♚:e2
 8. ♜:g3+ ♜:g3#)]

A logical problem with a rather unusual idea. By a foreplan, White move away the rook that interferes with the main plan, but thereby release this square for the ♚ and destroy the Black stalemate box. Then White slightly transforms the main plan so that ♜:g3# becomes not a zugzwang mate, but a forced response to check, for which White shifts the ♚ to e2, where the king successfully guards the f3 square.

2nd Honourable Mention

Nº 10, Anatoly Styopochkin



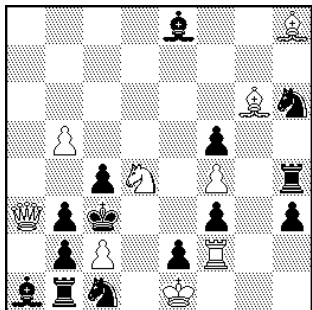
S#3 11+14

1. ♖h4! (2.d4+ e:d3 e.p. 3. ♗d4+ ♜:d4#)
 1... ♜d6 2. ♗:e4+! ♞:e4 3.d4+ ♜:d4#
 1... b:c4 2. ♜:e6++! ♞:e6 3. ♗:c4+ ♜d5#
 1... ♜:h4 2. ♞g6+! f:g6 3. ♜f4+ ♜:g7#

A simple but solid problem with an excellent key. Motives of the possibility and impossibility of *en passant* capture (the threat and the first variation), as well as the play of the white battery, albeit on different moves (the last two variations). All variations are united by mates of the ready Black battery with moves to three different squares.

Special Honourable Mention

Nº 31, Zoran Gavrilovski



S#3 v [v] 9+14

1. ♗e7? (2. ♞:f5+ ♜:c2 3. ♗e4+ ♞d3#), 1... ♗c6!
 [1.c:b3? (2.b4+ ♞b3#), 1... ♗d3!]
 1. ♗a4! (2. ♞:b3+ ♞:c2 3. ♞c5+ ♞b3#)
 1... ♗:b5 2. ♞:f5+ ♜:c2 3. ♞:h6+ ♞d3#
 1... ♜:f4 2. ♞:e2++ ♞:c2 3. ♞:f4+ ♞e2#
 1... ♞h~ 2. ♞:e2+ ♞:c2 3. ♗:f5+ ♞d3#

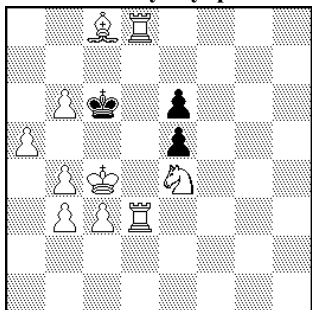
Three-fold play by a *Siers* knight battery, with a new white battery playing on the 3rd white move each time, involving the same white knight and a new rear piece, and the ready black knight battery mates with moves to different squares.

A very integral content of the problem, but the rank and “speciality” of its distinction are determined by two factors:

- in the already mentioned earlier Khramtsevich’s problem (yacpdb/333580) – not three, as here, but four variations with a similar play by the *Siers* battery (though not with three, as here, but only with two different back pieces);
- unpleasant concurrent variation 1... ♞h~ with a repetition of the 2nd white move and the mating black move.

1st Commendation

Nº 19, Anatoly Styopochkin



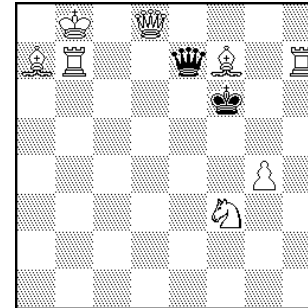
S#9 v 10+3

- Main plan 1. ♜d5? (zugzwang)
 1... e:d5+! 2. ♜:d5?!
 1. ♗d7+! ♞b7 2. ♗e8 ♞a6 3. ♗h5 ♞b7 4. ♗e2 ♞c6 (♞a6)
 5. ♜a8(+) ♞b7 6. ♜dd8 ♞c6 7. ♗d3 ♞b7 8. ♜a7+ ♞c6
 9. ♜d5 e:d5#

A logical problem with wide reorganisation of white pieces and cyclic permutation of their functions: ♗c8 blocks d3 instead of ♜d3, which plays on d5 instead of ♜d8, which guards b7 instead of ♗c8.

2nd-3rd Commendation

Nº 5, Steven B. Dowd



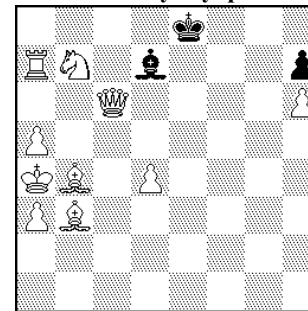
S#9 * 8+2

- 1... ♗:d8#
 1. ♗c4! (zugzwang)
 1... ♞g6 2. ♗d3+ ♗e4! 3. ♗g8+ ♞f6 4. ♜f7+ ♞e6
 5. ♜f5+ ♞d6 6. ♗c5+ ♞c6 7. ♞d4+ ♗:d4 8. ♗e8+ ♗d7
 9. ♜a7! ♗:e8##
 [2... ♞f6? 3. ♗b1! ♞e6 4. ♗a2+ ♞f6 5. ♗f7 ♗:d8#]

Fata morgana with a change of mate and blocking-piece and also with echo-chameleon shifting of locations of both queens and the black king. It is nice to have some quiet moves in the solution, including a flight-giving-key.

2nd-3rd Commendation

Nº 14, Anatoly Styopochkin



S#10 * 10+3

- 1... ♗:c6#
 1. ♞d6+ ♞d8! 2. ♞f7+ ♞e8 3. ♞h8! ♞d8 4. ♜a8+ ♗c8
 5. ♗c5! ♞d7! 6. ♜a7+ ♞e8! 7. ♗h5+ ♞d8 8. ♞f7+ ♞e8
 9. ♗b5+ ♗d7 10. ♗c6 ♗:c6#
 [6... ♞d8 7. ♞f7+ ♞e8 8. ♗b5+ ♗d7 9. ♗c6 ♗:c6#;
 5... ♞e8 6. ♞f7 ♞d7 7. ♜a7+ ♞e8 8. ♗b5+ ♗d7 9. ♗c6 ♗:c6#]

Fata morgana again, now with unchanging mate, but with wide ♗’s movements (reminded me of the old “first swallow” of the logical school – the classical #4 by Johannes Kohtz & Carl Kockelkorn, *Festschrift des Akademischen Schachklubs Munchen 1911* (yacpdb/62629) and its ensuing switchback on the initial square. And again, the quiet moves in the solution are pleasing; and the key, albeit with a check, gives the ♗ as many as three free squares!

ALEKSANDAR POPOVSKI MT 2023-2024: H#2-4 WITH EQUIPOLLENT CIRCE

Judge: Hans Gruber, International Judge of FIDE

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Kenneth Solja – 1, 2; Sebastián Luce – 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Stephan Dietrich – 9, 10, 11; Dieter Werner – 12*, 13*; Ralf Krätschmer – 12*, 13*, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46; Juraj Lörinc – 14, 15, 19, 59, 60; Hubert Gockel – 16, 17, 18; Misha Shapiro – 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32; Yuri Arefiev – 33, 34; Theodoros Giakatis – 35, 36; Sven Trommler – 37*, 38*, 39, 40, 41; Michael Barth – 37*, 38*; Ivo Tominić – 47; Ingemar Lind – 48, 49; Kjell Widlert – 50; Themis Argirakopoulos – 51, 52, 53, 54; Hans Uitenbroek – 55; Ricardo de Mattos Vieira – 56, 57; Maryan Kerhuel – 58

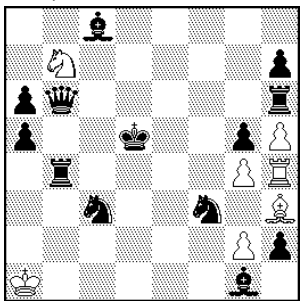
PRELIMINARY AWARD

Theme: H#2-4 with Equipollent Circe, no other fairy conditions, no fairy pieces, both kings present. (Equipollent Circe: After a piece is captured, it is immediately replaced on the square which is the same distance and direction from the square of its capture, as was that square from the square upon which its captor commended its move.)

A total of 60 entries was received on anonymous neutral diagrams by the Tournament Director, Zoran Gavrilovski. One problem was not thematic as the white king was missing (no. 59). Three problems were unsound (№ 22: cook in c) 1. ♖b8 ♗b5 2. ♗:b5 [♗b2] ♗:a2/♘:b1#; № 33: cook in b) 1. ♗d1+ ♘g2 2. ♗d4 ♗e6#, 1. ♗c4 ♗:f4 [♘e4]+ 2. ♘d5 ♗d6#; № 34: cook in a) 1. ♗g2 d5 2. ♗:d5 [♘a8=♗] ♗:f8/♗e8+ 3. ♘h7/♘h6 ♗g7/♗g6#. All other submissions were sound (C+).

It was a pleasure to see a large number of submissions with a fairy condition that so far only had been explored by a small number of composers. Equipollent Circe is easy to understand but provides a lot of surprising effects. It is natural that many problems were just playing with these effects – in particular the characteristic that pieces can quickly be transported to distant squares. Inconspicuous pawns all the sudden can be promoted. Another effect is that pieces can self-guard themselves, and they can do so much more powerfully than in Circe. Exploring effects is important to get an understanding of the potentials of a fairy condition and thus may develop into elements of ambitious problems. Such exploration, however, usually is not sufficient to enter an award – even a multitude of effects does not compensate for a lack of a clear strategic or aesthetic idea! Nevertheless, such problems can provide a lot of entertainment and can be most instructive for beginners. It is acceptable that in an exploratory phase helpmates with a fairy condition only rarely reach the level of complexity and density that are shown by outstanding modern orthodox helpmates. I am confident, however, that this award will inspire future developments by creative composers. Such inspiration was a great strength of the late Aleksandar Popovski, and his few explorations of Equipollent Circe served this purpose in an excellent way.

1st Prize
№ 56, Ricardo de Mattos Vieira



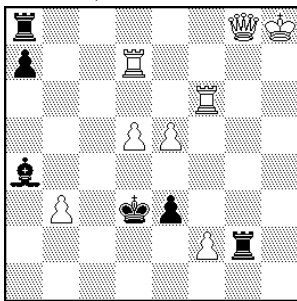
H#3 Equipollent Circe 7+13
2 solutions

1. ♗:g4 ♘:g4 (♗f5) 2. ♗:e5
2... ♘d7 3. ♗e3! ♗d4#
1. ♘:g4 ♗:g4 (♘f4) 2. ♘:e5
2... ♗c4 3. ♗g6! ♘e6#

1st Prize: Ricardo de Mattos Vieira, № 56

Change of focus on different lines – first the pair of lines aiming at square g4 (orthogonal-diagonal), second the line observing the mating square. A fine *Anti-Bristol* safeguards the effectiveness of the (triple) fairy mate. This is excellent and fine in all details, including the blocks on square e5.

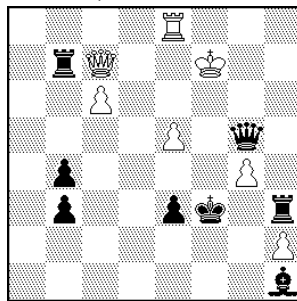
2nd Prize
№ 16, Hubert Gockel



H#2 Equipollent Circe 8+6
b) ♗f6→c7

- a) 1. ♘e4 ♗b8 [1... ♗e7? ...
3. ♗:e5 (♘e6)!] 2. ♘:b3 (♘c2)
[♗:f2 (♘e2)?] ♗f4#
b) 1. ♘d4 ♗e7 [♗b8? ...
3. ♗:d5 (♘d6)!] 2. ♗:f2 (♘e2)
[♘:b3 (♘c2)?] ♗c4#

1st Honourable Mention
№ 17, Hubert Gockel



H#2 Equipollent Circe 7+8
2 solutions

1. ♘e4 ♗d8 [1...c:b7(♗a8)? ...
3. ♗:e5 (♘e6)!] 2. ♘f3 [♗f3+?]
2... ♗d4#
1. ♘f4 c:b7(♗a8) [1... ♗d8? ...
3. ♗:e5 (♘d6)!] 2. ♗f3 [♘f3+?]
2... ♗c4#

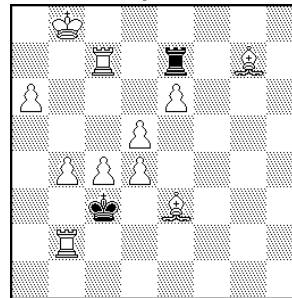
2nd Prize: Hubert Gockel, № 16

Who guards the square e5? Who keeps guarding the square d5? Who blocks the square f3? The answers to these questions lead to a 2×2 dual avoidance, making ample of fairy specific effects. The wrong white choice offers Black a fine fairy flight. The wrong black choice spoils the mate. A pity that the mate in b) is an orthodox mate.

1st Honourable Mention: Hubert Gockel, № 17

A close relative to the 2nd Prize, again with white and black dual avoidance with fairy specific effects. It conflicts a bit with the clarity of the effects that each of the white thematic pieces is also used to give the mate. The black choice is less fairy specific than in the 2nd Prize. Again only one fairy mate.

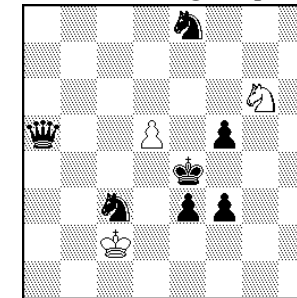
2nd Honourable Mention
№ 50, Kjell Widlert



H#2 Equipollent Circe 11+2
b) ♘e3→c4

- a) 1. ♗f7 ♗c5 2. ♗:g7 (♘h7)
2... ♗b3#
a) 1. ♗d7 ♘e5 2. ♗:c7 (♗b7)
2... ♗c2#

3rd Honourable Mention
№ 51, Themis Argirakopoulos



H#2½ Equipollent Circe 3+7
2 solutions

- 1... ♘b3 2. ♗a8 ♘:c3 (♗d3)
3. ♗:d5 (♘g2) g:f3#
[1... ♘b2? ... 2. ♗:c3 (♗d4)?
... 4. ♗:f3 (♘h2)!]
1... ♘b2 2. ♗d8 ♘:c3 (♗d4)
3. ♗:d5 (♘d2) d3#
[1... ♘b3? ... 2. ♗:c3 (♗d3)?
... 3...d3?? is illegal]

2nd Honourable Mention: Kjell Widlert, № 50

The black rook carefully prepares the thematic capture, the white piece provides a specific fairy block of a flight. The minimal setting of this harmonically presented idea is elegant.

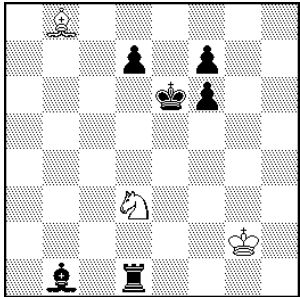
3rd Honourable Mention: Themis Argirakopoulos, № 51

The fine reciprocal tempo choice of the white king nicely fits to the choice of queen paths to capture the pawn d5. A good orthogonal-diagonal transformation, unfortunately again with only one fairy mate.

4th Honourable Mention: Theodoros Giakatis, № 35

Reciprocal battery creation through capture of both white pieces, both of which first actively move onto the capture square. The manoeuvre of the knight is a bit more attractive than the one of the rook.

1st Commendation
Nº 39, Sven Trommler



H#3 Equipollent Circle 3+6
 2 solutions

1. ♕:d3(♗f5) ♗g3 2. ♕f5 A
 2... ♗:f5(♕e7) 3. ♖d5 B
 3... ♗g7#
 1. ♖:d3(♗d5) ♗c3 2. ♖d5 B
 2... ♗:d5(♖e7) 3. ♕f5 A
 3... ♗f4#

1st Commendation: Sven Trommler, Nº 39

A nice ensemble with the knight manoeuvres, a change of the self-blocks on square e7, and an exchange of arrival squares of second and third black moves. The mates are orthodox.

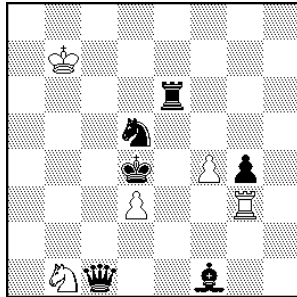
2nd Commendation: Ricardo de Mattos Vieira, Nº 57

The first black move is the star move – a good choice.

3rd Commendation: Sven Trommler, Nº 37

A small gem, the third black move safes the commendation.

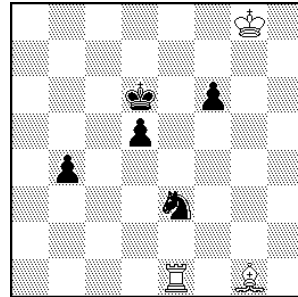
2nd Commendation
Nº 57, Ricardo de Mattos Vieira



H#2 Equipollent Circle 5+6
 2 solutions

1. ♖f6! [♗~?] ♖e3
 2. ♗:e3(♖g5) ♖d5#
 1. ♖g6! [♗~?] ♗c3
 2. ♗:c3(♗c5) ♗e6#

3rd Commendation
Nº 37, Sven Trommler

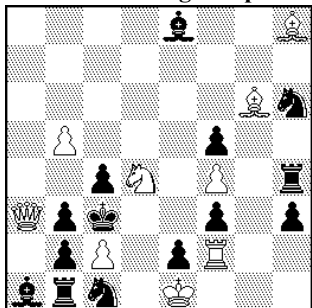


H#2½ Equipollent Circle 3+5
 2 solutions

- 1... ♖:e3(♗e5) 2. ♗c6
 2... ♖e7 3. b3 ♕c5#
 1... ♕:e3(♗c5) 2. ♗d7
 2... ♕b6 3. f5 ♖e6##

4th Commendation

Nº 54, Themis Argirakopoulos



H#3 Equipollent Circle 3+6
 b) rotate 180°

1. ♕:f4(♕d6) ♗b7 2. f:e4(♖d3) ♕e7#
 1. ♗:d5(♖c3) ♗g1 2. d:c5(♕b4) ♖e3#

Reciprocal battery formation by turning the board. Once more only one fairy mate.

I thank all participants for their support to the MT and the judges for their prompt and efficient work. Anticipation claims should be submitted to the Tourney Director (zoran.gavriloski@gmail.com) until 10.02.2025, when the awards in Aleksandar Popovski Memorial tourney will become final.