

Award 10° Maroc Echecs 2020
Section : h3,5-10 #
Judge : Marcos Roland
27/08/2020



First of all, I would like to thank Abdelaziz Onkoud for the confidence placed in my capabilities to take such a responsibility, which is the task of issuing a judgment of the works presented to the prestigious annual composition tournament of Maroc Echecs, section moreover helpmates. Maybe Abdelaziz is wrong about my capabilities, but I assumed his invitation as an honor, and took the charge with, at the same time, great sense of responsibility and enormous pleasure to analyse, the best I could, some outstanding pieces of the art of chess composition.

I think that every judgement of chess compositions presents unsurmountable difficulties to any single judge. This way of evaluating works of art only makes sense, in my view, if we compile hundreds of judgements made over time by numerous judges of different tastes, trends and styles. Some variety also in knowledge and experience is a contingency, because there are not hundreds of great specialists in any field of chess composition. Compiling the wide range of subjectivities manifested in such a variety and quantity of judgments, we may have a general result that comes close to a “collective” or “objective” judgment by the international community of lovers of chess composition on the quality of the problems issued in a given period, on the creative efforts of the composers. It is in this context that I believe I can make my contribution.

Now, I would like to make a few remarks about the specific difficulties presented by the judgement of moreover helpmates contests. The range (3,5 and more moves) is so wide, and we know there are differences in character between segments. How to compare very long eventful, colourful one-liners with strategically rich and harmonious h#3,5 to 4,5 with two solutions or more? Moreover, this tournament presented some surprising “extra-long” minimal h#n ($n \geq 6$) with two solutions and, as a bonus, model or even ideal mates.

How to rank these problems? Well, some points are clear to me:

- i)** in helpmates, harmony is achieved mainly by several solutions, so harmony is an aesthetical value always lacking in single-liners;
- ii)** however, in long single-liners the play can be very interesting and colourful, featuring deep, beautiful maneuvers and themes, hardly or impossibly feasible in two solutions;
- iii)** therefore, a good two solutions helpmate in, say, 3,5 or 4 moves will have always something the best h#7,5 will never have, and, conversely, a good single-liner #7,5 always will have something the best h#3,5 will never have; meaning that, although it can be hard to compare an excellent h#3,5 with two solutions with an outstanding h#7,5, the judge will have always to find a place in the award for both of them!

iv) in a White minimal “extra-long” helpmate with the Black King being mated in the middle of the board (I mean, not on a border), the play is almost always interesting, while, if there are two solutions, this kind of problem is always harmonic!

I hope my ranking and my comments on the problems will elucidate somehow how I handled with the difficulties I mentioned, but here I want just to outline the steps of my method: first I selected the problems to be in the award, next I broke them down by “shelves”, then I looked at all the problems I selected several times, in different days, in different parts of the day. I analysed them the most carefully I could, I tried to “improve” some of them just to have a feeling about the technical difficulties and the creative effort involved in the compositions. My subjectivity entered into scene with questions like these: “did this problem make me happy to have seen it?” Or “would I like to have composed this problem?”

I received from the Director 40 (forty) diagrams in anonymous form. I found the general level of the entries high. Of the 19 (nineteen) compositions selected for the award, three are fine “extra-long” helpmates ($n \geq 6$) with two solutions, very harmonic, two featuring ideal mates, the other one model mates. There are also two unusually beautiful one-liners $h \# 7,5$, which would be prized in any tournament. Besides those five clear prizewinners, I also rated highly eight not so long (3,5 to 4,5 moves) problems with two solutions, a single one with four solutions, all of them masterly constructed, varying from the enchanting to the intriguing. I added to these honoured works another simple line $h \# 7,5$ presenting the usual rich, colourful play so characteristic of this class of compositions.

I mentioned so far fifteen compositions, of which ten I qualified to prizes and five to honourable mentions. I selected four more works for commendations, four singleliners, not so rich as the others, but all containing something special, in my view.

Before I pass to my ranking, I would like to give some comments about problems not included in the award. Generally speaking, I didn't award twinned problems, unless they had an especially rich content that I supposed it would be very hard or nearly impossible to present without twinning. In fact, of the nineteen compositions selected for the award, just three are twinned: one with two pairs of solutions, another one featuring an improbable Zilahi in 4,5 moves, a third one very lightly twinned featuring very rich content and model mates.

In **nr. 9**, the passive sacrifice of the WB is rather artificial, given that a clean version with the same content, without the bishop, is easily feasible. I think the author should go for something more substantial, involving an active sacrifice of that bishop.

Nr. 2 is rather symmetrical (excepting for the two Bristols operated by BQ and BB), with a very characteristic flaw: the bishop on e6 is a passive blocker in the one solution and an idle piece in the other solution. I would suggest to the author to eliminate this second solution, making a try from it, if possible to do so introducing some subtle damaging effect.

Nr. 15 has no interplay at all. The White bishop just walks prosaically between the squares b7 and c6, while the Black pieces weave a mate net not so hard to see. A publishable problem, that's all, in my view.

Nr. 28 presents pleasant set play and solution, and nice promotions-connection between them, but I cannot ignore the fact that a tempo maneuver identical to that performed in the solution by the White promoted knight was already featured in a problem by Fadil Abdurahmanovic & Marko Klasinc, Special Prize, TT 239 of SuperProblem, award published on 16/04/2020. So, although I consider nr. 28 highly publishable, I don't consider it eligible for this award.

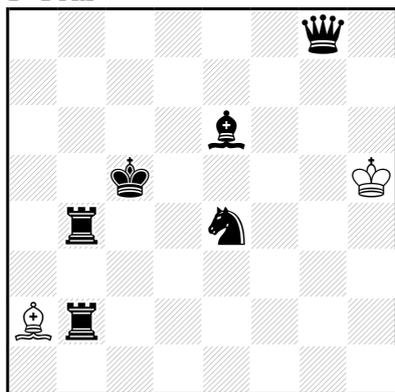
Nr. 27 presents four solutions with model mates, two of them really nice, but the position is heavy and the overall content rather chaotic and disharmonic, in my view. Especially the solution with mate on the border, I would suggest to the author to eliminate it, and he (she) would have, at least, a publishable work. Other problems not covered here have weak content, in my opinion. Nr. 26 is multi-cooked.

Having said that, my ranking is as follows:

Participants :

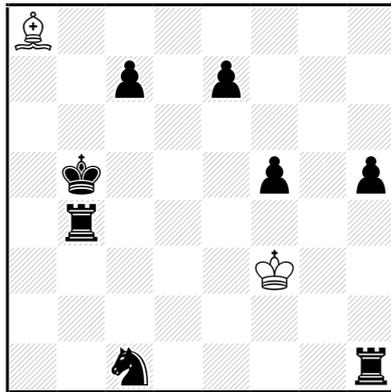
Barsukov Valery :23,24 ; Bidlen Anton :7,8 ;Bily Miroslav :18 ;Csak János : 2,3,4,14 ;Degener Udo :10* ;Degenkolbe Mirko :10* ;Evseev Vladimir :22 ;Fica Alexander :16*,17* ;Galma Mikhaïlo T. : 34 ; Gavrilev Evgeny 41 , 42* , 43* ; Gershinsky Mikhaïl :30* ,Ivunin Alexei V. : 26*,27*,28*,29,Kravtsov Nikita :19* ;Labai Zoltán :12,13,16*,17* ;Lins Torsten : 20,21 ;Mihajloski Zlatko :31,32,33,36 ;Mlynka Karol :1 ; Oganessian Alexei :15;Onkoud Abdelaziz : 5,6,11;Paliulionis Viktoras :19*,39,40;Pankratiev Alexandre :26*,27*,28*,30*, 42* , 43* ;Sizonenko Victor :9 ;Styopochkin Anatoly :25;Yakubovsky Cheslav :37,38 & Yuzyuk Victor : 35.

39 - Viktoras Paliulionis
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
1° Prix



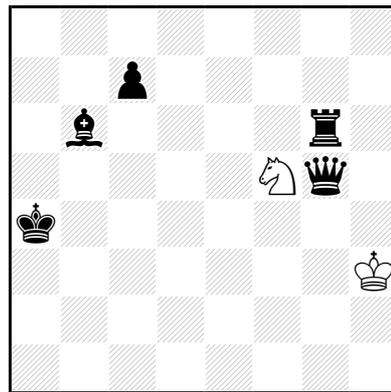
h†7,5 (2+6)
 2 solutions

31 - Zlatko Mihajloski
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
2°-3° Prix



h†6,5 (2+8)
 2 solutions

19 - Nikita Kravtsov & Viktoras Paliulionis
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
2°-3° Prix



h†6 (2+5) C+
 2 solutions

39 - Viktoras Paliulionis : 1° Prix

The mere opportunity to appreciate and commentate this masterpiece paid for my work in this award. One can appreciate the content of this problem looking at the final mate positions, and comparing them to the initial position. In neither of the mate pictures, the Black King is on a border of the board, that means, the Black King's field consists of nine squares, which must either be blocked by Black pieces or guarded by White ones. Well, in both solutions, just one piece remains passive: the BR on b4. All the other pieces move, nearly the whole mate picture is produced during the solution. Excepting for that rook, all the blocks are active. Moreover, five blocks are necessary, meaning that four blocks are active. It's a very long helpmate (7,5 moves) with two solutions, without twinning, something rare and commendable in itself. Two ideal echomates mirrored horizontally! Interesting play from both sides, rich interplay, although without any special effect. Just one move (Qc4) is repeated, in a different order. Perhaps the aristocratic form reflects some anticipated sense of superiority...I leave further comments for you in your weekly meeting with your problem friends!

Solutions:

1... ♖d5 2. ♜c8 ♜a8 3. ♚c4 ♙g6 4. ♜a6 ♙f5 5. ♚b5 ♙e5 6. ♞c5 ♙d6 7. ♜a2 ♙c7 8. ♜a5 ♜c6†
 1... ♜b1 2. ♞c3 ♜g6 3. ♜a2 ♙g5 4. ♚c4 ♙f4 5. ♜2b3 ♙e3 6. ♜a3 ♙d2 7. ♚b3 ♙c1 8. ♚c4 ♜c2†

31 - Zlatko Mihajloski : 2°-3° Prix

Another beautiful minimal long helpmate with two solutions, no twinned, with two echo-model mates, BK being in the middle of the board (not on any border, I mean). It's amazing how two identical mate positions are reached, mirrored vertically, by completely different sequences of moves, in which just the moves of the BK are repeated, in a different order. The two rooks alternate the first Black move and subsequent block on d8. Many ways by the WK. Nice interplay determines the order of moves. Comparing with the First Prize, however, the length is shorter, and just two blocks are active.

Solutions:

1... ♖e4 2. ♜d1 ♙×f5 3. ♚c6 ♙c8 4. ♜b8 ♙e4 5. ♜d8 ♙b7+ 6. ♚d7 ♙d5 7. ♜bc8 ♙c6‡
 1... ♙e3 2. ♜d4 ♙f3 3. ♜d8 ♙×h5 4. ♚c6 ♙f7 5. ♚d7 ♙d4 6. ♜hh8 ♙d5 7. ♜he8 ♙e6‡

19 - Nikita Kravtsov & Viktoras Paliulionis : 2°-3° Prix

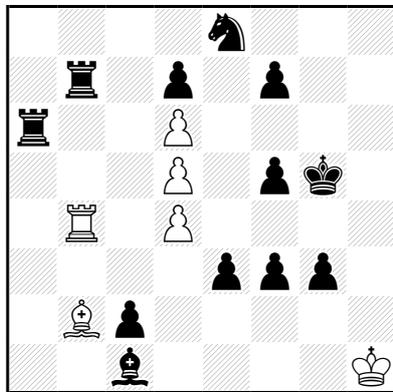
This problem deserves roughly the same comments I gave about the previous one: it can hardly be bad a minimal h#6 with two solutions, no twinned, with two echo-ideal mates in the middle of the board. It's amazing how two almost identical mate positions are reached, by different sequences of moves. Many ways and tempo move (in the first solution) by the WK. Lovely interplay, especially the Indian maneuver performed by BQ and BK in the second solution, allowing to the WK to access the f5 square. It makes some difference the higher quantity of repeated moves in this problem (here, besides the BK moves, the Black maneuver Rc6-c5 is repeated). However, when solving, we don't pay much attention to that, because the order of moves, the strategies, the motivations are totally different.

Solutions:

1. ♚g2+ ♙h4 2. ♚b7 ♙h5 3. ♜c6 ♙g5 4. ♜c5 ♙f6 5. ♚b5 ♙e6 6. ♚c6 ♙d4‡
 1. ♜c6 ♙h6 2. ♚a5 ♙g4 3. ♚b5 ♙f5 4. Tc5+ ♙e6 5. ♚c6 ♙f7 6. ♚b5 ♙d8‡

30 – A. Pankratiev

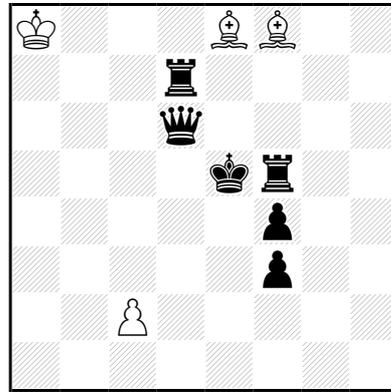
& M. Gershinsky
 10° Maroc Echecs 2020
 4° Prix



h‡3,5 (6+12) C+
 2 solutions

18 - Miroslav Bily

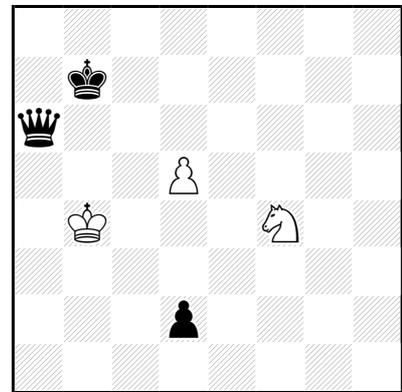
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
 5° Prix



h‡3,5 (4+6)
 b) ♜f3→f7 2 solutions

40 - Viktoras Paliulionis

10° Maroc Echecs 2020
 6° Prix



h‡4 (3+3) C+
 2 solutions

30 – A. Pankratiev & M. Gershinsky : 4° Prix

It's impossible to resist to the beauty, harmony and elegance this piece of work presents. In order to allow the capture of the focal White pawn on d4, a White piece vacates a square, backing off in the same line leading towards d4, for a Black piece of the same type to take position to take that pawn, while the other White piece moves one step ahead, escaping the guard of the Black similar piece, in order to act, without being captured, as the rear piece of the battery formed after the first White piece recaptures on d4. Everything occurs similarly in the other solution, with diagonal-orthogonal correspondence, reciprocal batteries, perfect exchange of functions between the pieces of both colours. Beautiful! I hope it's not anticipated.

Solutions:

1... ♙a1 2. ♙b2 ♜c4 3. ♙×d4 ♙×d4 4. ♚f4 ♙f6‡
 1... ♜a4 2. ♜b4 ♙c3 3. ♜×d4 ♜×d4 4. ♚f6 ♜g4‡

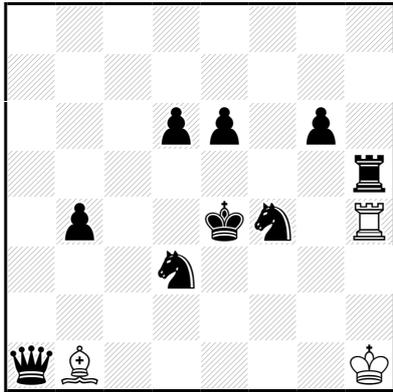
18 - Miroslav Bily : 5° Prix

Two pairs of solutions, one pair featuring mates by the two bishops, alternatively, the other featuring mates by the pawn, also in squares of different colors. Despite some lack of uniformity in the White's play, this is a very good and rare achievement for a long helpmate. The captures of Black's pieces are easily excusable in view of the four nice model mates!

Solutions:

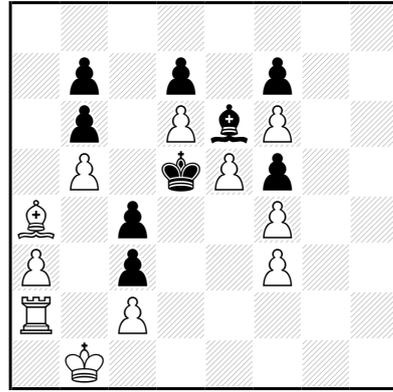
- a) 1... ♖f7 2. ♔é4 ♖ç4 3. ♚é5 ♖ç5 4. ♚d3 ç×d3‡
 1... ♖×d7 2. ♚d2 ♖×f5 3. ♔d4 ♖d3 4. ♔é3 ♖ç5‡
 b) 1...ç3 2. ♚é6 ♖ç5 3. ♚d4 ♖ç6 4. f6 ç×d4‡
 1...ç4 2. ♚f6 ♖b8 3. ♔é6 ♖ç8 4. ♚é5 ♖×d7‡

3 - János Csak 10° Maroc Echecs 2020 7° Prix



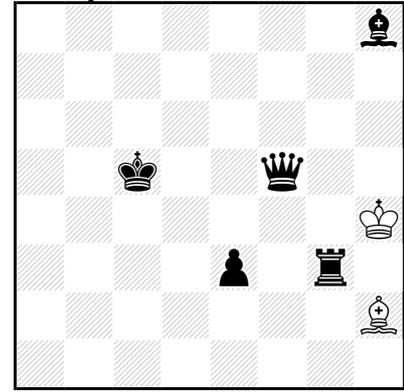
h‡3,5 (3+9) C+
2 solutions

11 - Abdelaziz Onkoud 10° Maroc Echecs 2020 8° Prix



h‡4,5 (11+9) C+
b)- ♖f3

20 - Torsten Linss 10° Maroc Echecs 2020 Prix spécial - I



h‡7,5 (2+5) C+

40 - Viktoras Paliulionis : 6° Prix

Lovely piece of work. Two beautiful, charming ideal mates, two underpromotions, two promotions to Queen. Very interesting play. The repetitions of two White pawn moves are absolutely excusable in such a promotion-based problem, and the promotions are in different squares. Perhaps the author would like to get an Allumwandlung, but the richness of the play of the three Queens, the ideal mates and the mixed Phoenix don't leave us to miss the promotion to bishop. This is pure Beauty, you just play the moves on the board while you have the best drink you can afford. I am aware of how much promotions have been explored in the helpmates genre, but I hope this is not anticipated!

Solutions:

- 1.d1=♚ d6 2. ♚g1 d7 3. ♚ga7 d8=♖ + 4. ♔b6 ♖d5‡
 1.d1=♚ d6 2. ♔ç6 d7 3. ♚ç8 ♖a5 4. ♚d6 d×ç8=♚‡

3 - János Csak : 7° Prix

This is a flawless problem, featuring exchange of functions of all active pieces, excepting for the Kings. The two Black knights alternate the two "legs" of the Chumakov theme. The two WK unpinning hideways are charming, and maybe are the original touch in this very explored field (h#3, mainly, and h#3,5 with WR + WB). Mates on the same square. Diagonal/orthogonal correspondence. I hope it's not anticipated!

Solutions:

- 1... ♖h2 2. ♚ç5 ♖×f4+ 3. ♔d5 ♖×b4 4. ♖é5 ♖é4‡
 1... ♖g1 2. ♚f6 ♖×d3+ 3. ♔é5 ♖×g6 4. ♖d5 ♖é4‡

11 - Abdelaziz Onkoud : 8° Prix

Elegance certainly is not the strong point of this problem, but we must take our hats off to a helpmate in 4,5 moves featuring a Zilahi performed by bishop and rook! This is not something you see every day, for sure. To accomplish this task, the author confined most of the play to the lower part of the left side of the board. But what a play! In so little space, the unities manage to make room for the others moving, producing a surprisingly varied, entertaining play. The promoted rooks will block on the same square (c5) in both solutions, being this move the only one repeated. Wonderful touch is the role of the White “c” pawn, guarding alternatively c4 and d4, performing a half-albino, and preserving some purity in the mate positions. The mate by the bishop is a model, the mate by the rook fails to be a model by one double-guard (most of the times, this is the best one can get in such diagonal-orthogonal alternations). WK hideaways. Light twinning. I really don’t believe in anticipation!

Solutions:

- a) 1... ♖b3 2. ♘×b3 ♘×b3 3. ♘2+ ♔b2 4. ♘1= ♚ ♚a1 5. ♚♗c5 ♚d1‡
- b) 1... ♚b2 2. ♘×b2 ♔a2 3. b1= ♚ ♘c3 4. ♚×b5 ♔d1 5. ♚♗c5 ♔f3‡

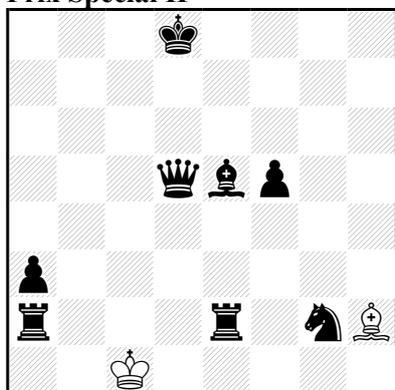
20 - Torsten Linns : Prix spécial - I

This other fine long one-liner presents a six moves tempo maneuver, a round trip, by the White bishop! The final, mating move is the same White first move (Meerane theme). In the initial position, the bishop is already positioned to deliver the mate, and it’s not bothering no one. If White could “pass” the first six moves, the bishop could sit comfortably and order a coffee, just waiting. However, White must move and, because the WK has no useful move to wait, the bishop must gain time while the Black side performs its part in the weaving of the mate net. But once the bishop starts moving, it cannot stop to move away, because, if it came back to h2 in the second move and then to g1 again, it would harm the subsequent Black’s play. Then the indefatigable piece is compelled to go through a curious zigzag route to get back to the starting point. Very impressive, and this is another problem which could easily win a prize in any other contest, I think. However, it must be noted that a very similar problem by Viktoras Paliulionis won recently the Second Prize in the TT 242, of SuperProblem (final award issued in 26th July 2020). One diagram is the vertical mirror of the other, only the positions of the BQ and BB being different, although their functions and moves in the solution are the same. The SuperProblem’s tournament demanded tempo maneuvers performed by two pieces of the same color in the same solution, and accordingly the White play in Paliulionis’ problem is somewhat different, with the WB and the WK sharing the tempo moves. The deadline of the SuperProblem TT was 11/06/2020, so that tournament has the priority, according to the Codex, then this problem nr. 20 must be considered partially anticipated. I think the degree of anticipation is considerable, but the six moves tempo round trip by the WB has its independent flavour. So, I conclude that this problem deserves a Special Prize.

Solution:

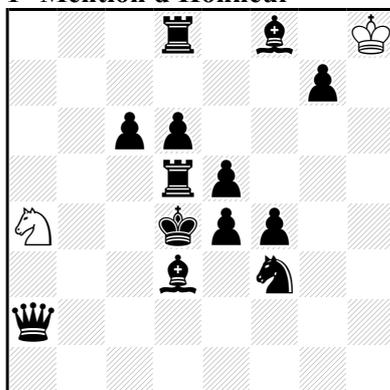
- 1... ♔g1 2. ♔♗c3 ♔f2 3. ♔d4 ♔é1 4. é2 ♔d2 5. ♚d3 ♔f4 6. ♔d2 ♔h2 7. ♔é3 ♔g3 8. ♚é4 ♔g1‡

32 - Zlatko Mihajloski
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
Prix Special II



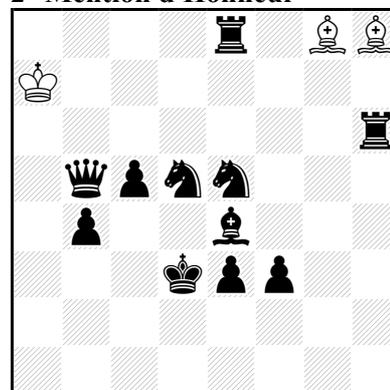
h‡7,5 (2+8) C+

7 - Anton Bidlen
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
1° Mention d'Honneur



h‡3,5 (2+13) C+
 2 solutions

4 - János Csak
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
2° Mention d'Honneur



h‡3,5 (3+11) C+
 2 solutions

32 - Zlatko Mihajloski : Prix Special - II

This is the first of two exceptionally beautiful single-liner h#7,5, of which I had difficulties to say to myself which one is the best. Finally, I decided to rate this problem higher than the other one, regardless of other considerations, because here both sides perform outstandingly beautiful, deep maneuvers, with very nice interplay in the first part of the solution. The White King initially is on c1, and he must reach e3. The order of the moves of both sides is determined by the royal need to walk. White bishop makes two moves to reach d2, where it will provide the King with a shield to cross the squares d1 and e2, protected against the fire of the BRa2 and the BQ. In the meantime, Black must make the room for the WK reach e2, and this involves first opening the line “e” by the BB, which goes to the blocking square f6, and then a very elegant Indian maneuver by BR and BK. So, WK reaches e2, and it’s time for the BS abandon the guard of e3, allowing the last step of the WK, and the precise square (f4) to which the knight jumps is determined by check-avoidance and the need to prevent the BP on f5 from moving. When the WK ends his walk to e3, Black side doesn’t need any more to worry about WK’s needs, and so it can freely complete its “development”, and this involves “just” a threemoves pseudo Bristol, in which the BK, while reaching his dying square e5 in two steps, makes room to the BR blocking on e6. As for White, the King now is closing the diagonal leading to f4, so the bishop must find its way around the square e3 using the route e1-g3, to finally mate on f4. This last maneuver wonderfully completes at the same time the very difficult and rare Mihajloski theme and a rectangular round trip by the WB, being the Kozhakin theme a plus! The only drawback I see in this problem is the final capture, but, as Butch Cassidy said, this is a small price to pay for beauty... The composer could easily avoid the capture by putting a BB on f5 (replacing the pawn), eliminating the knight on g2, and changing the stipulation to h#6,5. So White would mate on its 7th move with Bg3. But then we wouldn’t have neither of the themes completed in the last White’s maneuver.

Solution:

1... ♖f4 2. ♗f6 ♖d2 3. ♜é8 ♔d1 4. ♔é7 ♔é2 5. ♞f4+ ♔é3 6. ♔é6 ♖é1 7. ♔é5 ♖g3 8. ♜é6 ♖×f4‡

7 - Anton Bidlen : 1° Mention d'Honneur

Remarkable in this problem is how the Black play, involving in each solution the opening of a different diagonal, is determined by the WK plan to get to the squares g6 and f7 in three moves, using just light squares. When White starts with 1...Kh7, he announces his intention to continue with 2...Kg6 (not 2...Kg8?) and then Kf7; accordingly, Black must choose 2.Rc5, vacating d5, incidentally opening the diagonal a2- g8, to be closed in the next move. And when White starts with 1...Kg8, he is saying he’ll continue with 2...Kf7 (not 2...Kh7?) and then Kg6; accordingly, Black must choose 2.e3, vacating e4 and incidentally opening the diagonal b1-h7, to be closed in the next move. In other words, White King, with his first move, announces his “travel plan”, involving, in the first solution, two moves on the diagonal b1-h7 and one move on the diagonal a2- g8, and conversely in the other solution. Accordingly, Black must choose the plan involving the opening of the diagonal not occupied by White in its first two moves. Afterward, in his third move, the WK will make a further dual avoidance choice. The WK maneuver involves a curious paradox. Given that he goes to g6 and f7, alternatively, in three moves, although he could do it in just two moves, we could think this is a tempo maneuver. But it is not a tempo maneuver! It is not, because, if it were, the initial position would be also a h#3, and it is not. Besides, neither of the White moves, considered in isolation, is a tempo move. There is something new here, which one could call a “choice of maneuvers”. In one solution, White must guard e6 in three moves, and have a choice between three maneuvers: Kh7-g8-f7, Kh7-g6-f7 and Kh7-g6-f5; by dual avoidance effects, just the second maneuver works. (The first maneuver would be a tempo maneuver, but it doesn’t work.) In the other solution, White must guard f5 in three moves, and again have a chance between three maneuvers: Kg8-h7-g6, Kg8-f7-g6 and Kg8-f7- e6; by similar effects, only the second maneuver works. I think this is a remarkably original idea. Exchange of White’s second and third moves, exchange of functions (active and passive block) between BRd5 and BPe4, White minimal, model mates.

Solutions:

1... ♔g8 2.é3 ♔f7 3. ♔é4 ♔g6 4. ♜d4 ♞c3‡
1... ♔h7 2. ♜c5 ♔g6 3. ♔d5 ♔f7 4. ♞d4 ♞b6‡

4 - János Csak : 2° Mention d'Honneur

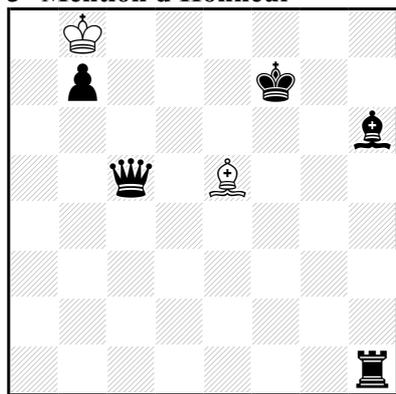
Another very well constructed problem, featuring “chameleon-echo play” from both sides. Strategy based on annihilations and interferences, long trips by the WB’s. Extensive exchange of functions, involving pairs of all the active pieces from both sides. Model mates. These positions with two bishops sometimes evoke sort of a symmetry, in which once we find one solution, the other comes easily. There is no easily visible

symmetry axis, but we find on the board, in different colored squares, the equivalents of most of the elements present in the first solution, and then we find quickly the second solution, mutatis mutandis. The only pair of thematic pieces in this problem which don't occupy different colored squares in the initial position is the pair BQ-BB, both in light squares. They alternate active-passive blocks in the solutions, and not surprisingly they cause a pleasant small geometric difference between the mating positions. Having said that, I don't think the "symmetry" in this problem, mitigated as described above, is in itself a serious flaw. In my view, the main flaw in most of symmetric helpmates is the wasted material from one solution to the other. Generally speaking, in this kind of problems, we see, say, 2 kg of material in each side of the symmetry axis (besides the technical material), and many times we don't use all this heavy material in both solutions. In this problem, we see that just the Black passive blocker pawns on b4 and e3 are used (alternately) in just one solution. This is largely satisfactory. As for the White play, considered in isolation, in one solution just the light squares bishop plays, in the other one just its dark squares colleague does the job. An interesting geometrical feature is that each White move of one solution has the same length as the correspondent (in order) move of the other solution. Maybe the author would like to have both bishops performing a rectangular round trip, but, unfortunately, the light squares bishop cannot stand on f7 in the initial position, because of cooks. Another small flaw is that the interplay is not impressive. Anyway, the two mate positions, viewed side by side, form a pleasant picture.

Solutions:

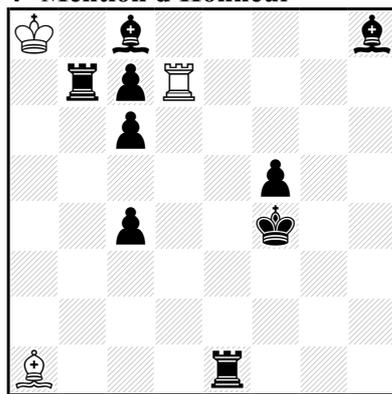
1... ♖×d5 2. ♘g6 ♙c6 3. ♗c4 ♙×e8 4. ♙d3 ♙f7♯
 1... ♙×e5 2. ♘e7 ♙f4 3. ♗d4 ♙×h6 4. ♗d3 ♙g7♯

21 - Torsten Linns
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
3° Mention d'Honneur



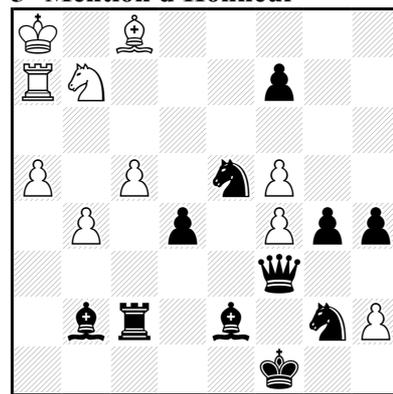
h♯7,5 (2+5) C+

37 - Cheslav Yakubovsky
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
4° Mention d'Honneur



h♯3,5 (3+9) C+
 b) ♗f5→e6

5 - Abdelaziz Onkoud
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
5° Mention d'Honneur



h♯4 (10+11) C+
 2 solutions

21 - Torsten Linns : 3° Mention d'Honneur

The Black King will be mated on the square initially occupied by his White colleague, after an incredible, prudently precise path, with clever avoidance of collision between the monarchs! We see pin-unpin of White bishop, switchbacks of both White unities, culminating in an Indian interference and mate.

Solution:

1... ♙c7 2. ♗a1 ♙c8 3. ♗a8+ ♙d7 4. ♗a7 ♙d6 5. ♙e8 ♙d5 6. ♙d7 ♙e5 7. ♙c8 ♙d6 8. ♙b8 ♙d7♯

37 - Cheslav Yakubovsky : 4° Mention d'Honneur

Elegant problem featuring diagonal-orthogonal correspondence, model-mates, switchbacks of White pieces after capturing defensive unities, exchange of functions of pieces of both sides, Chumakov theme. Light twinning.

Solutions:

a) 1... ♙c3 2. ♗g5 ♙×e1 3. ♗f6 ♗g7 4. ♙e6 ♙c3♯
 b) 1... ♗d8 2. ♗e4 ♗×c8 3. ♗d5 ♙d4 4. ♗e4 ♗d8♯

5 - Abdelaziz Onkoud : 5° Mention d'Honneur

Other problem which deserves honor for the considerable technical skill involved in the composition.

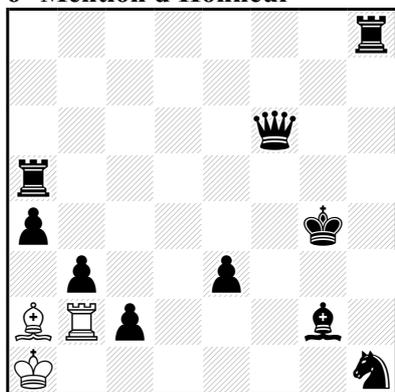
Generally speaking, this White material (rook, two minor pieces) is too heavy for long helpmates, making

them very “cookable”. In fact, the length of this problem (4 moves) seem to be a practical limit, or next to it. The two h#4 I saw in the FIDE Album 2010-2012 featuring this White material present very congested, closed positions, in which White must make its way by sacrificing one of its pieces (Kniest and Zilahi themes). One resource used by the author to keep solid this problem is the position of the White pawns, in this case used more to limit the scope of the White pieces, although they are not blocked. Just the White pawn on h2 does its “normal” job (to guard squares). In this way, keeping a curious “social isolation” between the two armies (in which the White unities are on the top of the diagram and the Black ones are at the bottom), the author manages to get two clean solutions (with just two captures of pawns in the second solution), with nice model mates, without repeating a single move, without sacrificing (it’s not that sacrifices are bad). What I like most is the “humble” role of the White rook, guarding just one square of the Black King’s field in each solution, while the minor pieces guard two squares each (interesting paradox, one always expects the most powerful piece to deliver more power). The White pieces alternate the use of the b7 square. Drawbacks are the total absence of exchange of functions and the almost inexistent interplay.

Solutions:

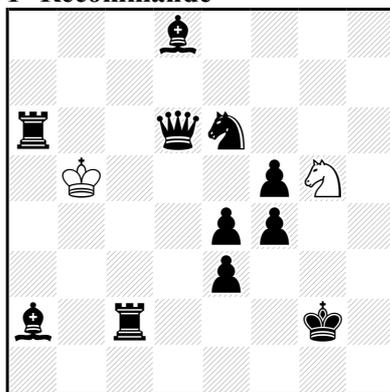
1. ♖b3 ♘d6 2. ♔é1 ♙a6 3. ♕d2 ♖b7 4. ♕ç3 ♘é4‡
 1. ♕é3 ♘d8 2. ♕f2 ♖×f7 3. ♕f3 ♙b7+ 4. ♕×f4 ♘é6‡

43 - Alexandre Pankratiev & Evgeny Gavriliy
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
6° Mention d'Honneur



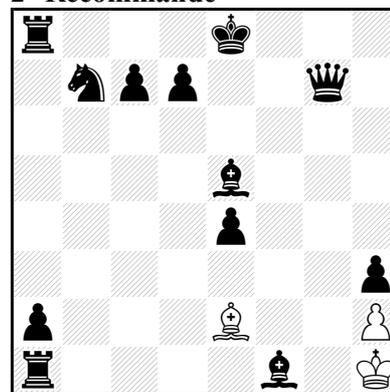
h‡3,5 (3+10) C+
 b) ♗a4→c3

33 - Zlatko Mihajloski
10° Maroc Echecs 2020
1° Recommandé



h#5,5 (2+11) C+

25 - Anatoly Styopochkin
Maroc Echecs 2020
2° Recommandé



h#5,5 (3+12) C+

43 - Alexandre Pankratiev & Evgeny Gavriliy : 6° Mention d'Honneur

This problem has some features in common with nr. 3 (7th Prize). Same white material, similar exchange of functions between the white pieces, diagonal-orthogonal correspondence, both mates delivered on the square initially occupied by the black King, pinning of white pieces in the initial position (in this problem, because of twining, just one piece is pinned in each diagram). There’s a difference in construction which favours this work: the squares occupied by the black King in the mate positions are not so close as they are in nr.3, and this allowed the author to get two model mates, which is a nice touch. But, as for the rest, the other problem is superior: it’s not twinned, has better economy, there’s also perfect exchange of functions between two pairs of black pieces (including Chumakov theme), the very elegant alternate unpinning of the white pieces in the first move. That’s why the two problems are in different “shelves” in this award.

- a) 1... ♙×b3 2. ♕f2 ♙é6+ 3. ♕f3 ♖b4 4. ♗g3 ♙g4‡
 b) 1... ♖×b3 2. ♖ah5 ♖b4+ 3. ♕g5 ♙é6 4. ♖8h6 ♖g4‡

33 - Zlatko Mihajloski : 1° Recommandé

Nice one-liner, in which the White knight does a great job, a round-trip marked by lovely interplay with Black’s moves. And the knight makes just one capture in the process, which is the first “leg” of the always welcome Kniest theme. Seeing the diagram, one hardly believes that the White King is going to cross the square c6 and stand finally on d6, while the knight will mate on its initial square g5, initially guarded by two Black unities, without capturing neither of them. One can easily excuse the industrious piece for not delivering us a second solution.

Solution:

- 1... ♘×é4 2. ♙b6 ♘ç5 3. ♕d3+ ♙ç6 4. ♗d4+ ♙d6 5. ♕f3 ♘é6 6. ♕é4 ♘g5‡

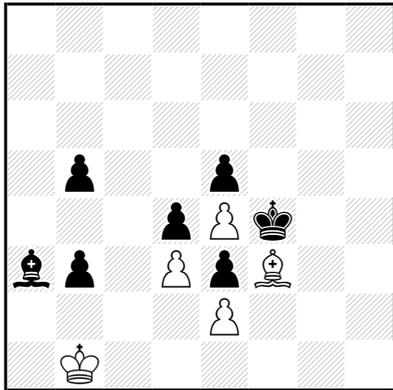
25 - Anatoly Styopochkin : 2° Recommandé

Another single White bishop adventure, featuring castling, long trips by both bishops, annihilations, Kniest and Kozhakin themes, switchbacks by the WB. The castling motive is quite obvious from the initial position, as it is most of the times, but the White Kniest on h2, giving a flight to the WK to escape from the pin, is an elegant touch.

Solution:

1... ♖a6 2. ♗×h2 ♗×b7 3. ♗g1 ♗a6 4. ♗a7 ♗×f1 5.0-0-0 ♔h2 6. ♗b8 ♗a6†

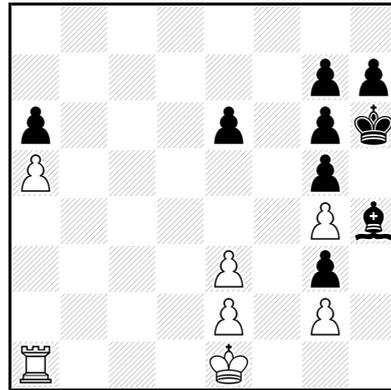
14 - János Csak 10° Maroc Echecs 2020 3° Recommandé



h#6,5

(5+7) C+

10 - Udo Degener & Mirko Degenkolbe 10° Maroc Echecs 2020 4° Recommandé



h#8

(7+9) C+

14 - János Csak : 3° Recommandé

Interesting combination of the Bukovina and Indian themes and underpromotion, making hard to foresee the mating position from the diagram. Poor interplay is a drawback. Maybe the author noticed that he could have the b3 pawn initially on b4, adding one half-move to the stipulation, but he preferred a h#6,5, to start with the elegant move 1.Bh1. I cannot censure him for that.

Solution:

1... ♗h1 2.b2 ♔c2 3.b1=♗+ ♔d1 4. ♗×d3 ♔e1 5. ♗×e4 ♔f1 6. ♗f5 ♔g2 7. ♔e4 ♔g3†

10 - Udo Degener & Mirko Degenkolbe : 4° Recommandé

This problem certainly doesn't bring anything new or spectacular, and have its drawbacks, but I selected it because it pleased me as a solver. I ran the solving process in two steps. The first is logical: the White rook must sacrifice itself to avoid Black being stalemated. But where? It could be in b5 or d3, but we see that castling is the move "asking" to be made, so we start with 1.e5 0-0-0 2.e4 Rd3 3.exd3 e4, and then comes the second step of the solving process, which is tactics. And we find the interesting motivation for castling, the icing on the cake, which is to allow the Black pawn to promote on e1. Maybe the author would like to start with the "e" pawn on e7, but, unfortunately, this is not possible (the problem would be demolished). It is not good that the Black King, in the initial position, is already trapped in a mate net only accessible to a knight, so the future White's promotion of a pawn to a knight is quite obvious, although the sacrifice of the White rook, after castling, and the tactics involved in the Black promotion to bishop and its subsequent sacrifice have their flavour. It would be better if the capture on a5 would serve only to allow Black tempo, but, unfortunately, there is no other path to d8.

Solution:

1.e5 0-0-0 2.e4 ♖d3 3.e×d3 e4 4.d×e2 e5 5.e1=♗ e6 6. ♗×a5 e7 7. ♗d8 e×d8=♗ 8.a5 ♗f7†