

Valeriu Petrovici – 90 JT

At this composing tournament – occasioned by my 90th anniversary, as well as by my 50 years of activity in the Chess Composition Committee of the Romanian Chess Federation – we have intended a larger expression of the thematic idea already proposed at the contest „RCF Cup 2015 (Cupa Federației Române de Șah 2015)”. The specific of the thematic content requested, then and now, resides in a particularity which can be separately found in several groups of themes, regarding the strategy of the imposed pawn promotions; we have called it „hereditary promotion”. But what we have considered to represent an innovation proofed to be – at the analysis of the entries in this tournament – only an interpretative version of the theme Bartel (see PDB 1107625).

The new look of the old content (laborious from the technical&creative point of view) is of real value, though its approach was available only to the composers of high class, producing very original and complex works. My gratitude to the tournament director Dinu-Ioan Nicula, which has done all his best to popularize abroad this contest.

Kudos to the International Judge Kjell Widlert, whose analytical competence in the fairy field is overwhelming; like always, his support given to the Romanian chess composition events was very impressive.

Valeriu Petrovici

AWARD

The set theme was fairly demanding: *Direct two-movers with black promotions to fairy pieces leading to mates with white promotions to fairy pieces*. So both black and white effects must be involved in every thematic variation. Moreover, two restrictions made it harder for composers: (1) *The key and threat (if any) must not be promotions*. (2) *The position must be legal, i.e. possible in a game with P promotions allowed to the fairy piece(s) used in the problem*. We suspect the latter restriction especially may have ruled out some ambitious matrixes.

The tourney was quite successful. On one hand there were only 10 problems, but on the other hand the quality exceeded our expectations: 9 of the problems deserve to be included in this award. Only one entry with a single thematic variation has been left out – in a strong competition like this, more content is needed (but it was a nice little problem).

1st Prize
Jean-Marc LOUSTAU &
Michel CAILLAUD



#2 ♖♗ = Lion (11+10)
♜♗ = Rose-Lion

1. Be4? [2. Lh4#]
1... e1=LI 2. b8=ROL# **A** (not 2. b8=LI+? L1e5!)
1... e1=ROL 2. b8=LI# **B** (not 2. b8=ROL+? ROLb4!)
But 1... hxg4! (2. Lh6+? Kxe4!)

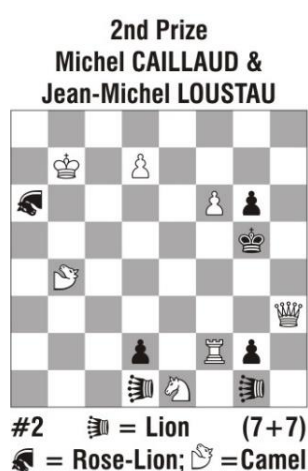
1 Rd2! [2. Lh4#]
1... e1=LI 2. b8=LI# **B** (not 2. b8=ROL+? L1b4!)
1... e1=ROL 2. b8=ROL# **A** (not 2. b8=LI+? ROLe5!)

By-play:
1... hxg4 2. Lh6#, 1... ROLd4 2. Rxd4#

We had expected someone to try – and succeed – to change two thematic mates reciprocally between two phases. And this really happened; three entries showed this difficult combination, and as they are the most complex mechanisms in the tourney, they receive the prizes.

Here, both thematic mates use black lion-type pieces as hurdles. They can escape via e2 if White promotes immediately, so the weakening effect of Black's promotions is to immobilize both hurdles. This of course would lead to mating duals, unless there were dual avoidance effects with Black's choice of promotion – all of them using white hurdles. In the try 1.Be4, a lion on e1 guards e5 via e4, and a rose-lion on e1 guards b4 via c2. In the solution 1.Rd2, a lion on e1 guards b4 via d2, and a rose-lion on e1 guards e5 via f3 – so the mates are reciprocally changed.

The construction uses no other fairy piece types than those of the thematic promotions. The refutation of the try is very fine, using the fact that the wB has given up the guard of e4. Another nice detail of the construction is the fact that the rose-lion b3, which guards f3 via d2 to provide the threat of the solution, is also necessary to guard g5 after 1. – ROLg7-g3.



Set Play:

1... d2xe1=LI 2. d8=LI# **A** (not 2.d8=ROL+? LIa5!)

1... d2xe1=ROL 2. d8=ROL# **B** (not 2 d8=LI+? ROLe7!)

Actual Play:

1 CAe5! [2. Qh4#]

1... d2xe1=LI 2. d8=ROL# **B** (not 2. d8=LI+? LIe7!)

1... d2xe1=ROL 2. d8=LI# **A** (not 2. d8=ROL+? ROLa5!)

This has several similarities to the 1st Prize: it features reciprocally changed promotions to two lion-type pieces but using white hurdles for the mates, which is easier to handle. Here too, the weakening effect of the black promotions is removal of a hurdle, but not for a black hurdle that we want to have immobile – instead, Pd2 is a hurdle for the black lion d1 which simply guards the promotion square d8. The dual avoidance effects in the black promotions again depend on guards over white hurdles, but there are only two hurdle squares involved: with a hurdle on b4, a lion on e1 guards a5 and a rose-lion guards e7; with a hurdle on e5, a lion on e1 guards e7 and a rose-lion guards a5. So the key-move from b4 to e5 reciprocally changes the set mates.

Compared to the 1st Prize, this is so much more elegant that we had difficulty deciding which one to prefer – the elegance here versus the deeper logic (removal of a hurdle for a black hurdle) there. Other factors are the somewhat greater unity here because all dual avoidance lines cross b4 or e5, but on the other hand the extra fairy piece type here (obviously, a camel is needed to move between b4 and e5) and the aggressive key-move bringing the camel in from an out-of-play position. Finally, the try and solution form of the other problem is preferable to the set-play form here: Black has a reason to play the thematic moves in both phases. So in the end, we decided to place the two problems in this order.

By the way, the composers are probably aware that it is possible to arrange for a better key CAe5-b4: +bLla4, +wPc4 and some further changes. This will even provide for a try leading to the set-play variations (1.c5? LIg4!), but all in all we need four pieces more than in the composer's position and the gain is hardly worth that.

3rd Prize
Ralf KRÄTSCHMER &
Franz PACHL



#2 ♘ = Zebra (14+10)
 ♘ = Rao; ♘ = Camel

1.g5 ? [2.Qd4#]
 1...dxe1=CA 2.cxb8=CA #
 1...gxf1=Z 2.e8=Z #
 but 1...Sc6 !

1.Qf6 ! [2.Qd4#]
 1...dxe1=CA 2.e8=Z #
 1...gxf1=Z 2.cxb8=CA #
 1...Sc6 2.Qxc6 #

Another reciprocal change, with more straight-forward effects than in the previous two problems. The two thematic fairy promotions guard the threat square d4, but open white lines towards the flight d5. This allows two double-check mates by fairy promotion, but they are separated by dual avoidance effects. The heart of the mechanism is in the fact that rao e1 guards b4 and c6 (over the hurdle c2), and rao f1 guards c4 and d6 (via d2). So when one of them is captured by the thematic defences, the bK has two potential flights. In the key-moves, the wQ either guards b4+c4 or c6+d6, so each defence actually gives only one flight, which determines which white battery must fire: Rc8 can control c4+c6, and Bf8 can control b4+d6. The mechanism is reminiscent of Rotenberg, Caillaud & Loustau, 4th Prize Rex Multiplex 2.TT 1984 (WinChloe 1714), where *three* pairs of bK flights are handled in a similar way, with white fairy promotions but without black promotions – so it wouldn't have fit in this tourney.

We should note that the threat mate Qd4# covers all actual and potential flights (even c6, because of RAc2), so Black must choose promotions that guard d4 directly. One small impurity is that in 2.e8=Z#, the double check is unnecessary: the zebra alone is enough for a mate (but Bf8's guard of b4 or d6 is of course essential).

1st Honorable Mention
Juraj LÖRINC



#2 ♖ = Rook-Lion (10+10)
 ♖ = Nightrider Lion
 ♖ = Nightrider Kangaroo
 ♖ = Bishop-Lion

1.dxe8=Q? [2.Qxa4#]
 1...BLd1 2.Qe4#
 1...e1=NL 2.g8=BL#
 but 1...fxg1=NK!
 1.a8=BL? [2.BLe4#] but 1...c1=BL!
 1.BLh1? but NLxh1!

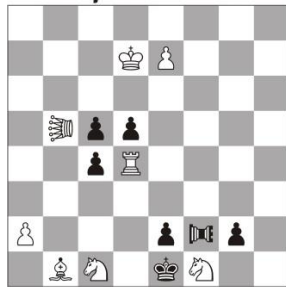
1.BLg2! [2.BLe4#]
 1...fxg1=RL 2.d8=NL#
 1...e1=NL 2.g8=BL#
 1...c1=BL 2.a8=RL#

The best of only two entries with three thematic variations in the solution. The mechanism is well unified: Black promotes to guard the mating nightrider kangaroo on g5, but thereby removes a hurdle for one of the pieces on a4-b4-c4. So that piece becomes immobile, and White can mate with a promotion using it as a hurdle. The try 1.a8=BL? is excellent, setting up the same threat as the solution but refuted by a thematic promotion as White gave up the possibility to promote to a rook lion there. The try 1.dxe8=Q? is half good, refuted by a thematic promotion because White gave up the possibility

to promote on d8 – but the capture on e8 is brutal. Unfortunately there is no analogous try where White gives up the possibility of promoting on g8.

The composer mentions that Pg4 could be replaced by a bS if legality turns out to be a problem. It is clear that all 8+8 pawns remain on the board, 4+3 of them in the form of promoted fairy pieces. 6+6 officers are missing and have been captured. This seems to be more than enough to allow the white and black pawns to pass each other to their present squares or promotion squares, even with the restriction that all bishop lions require promotions on white squares.

2nd Honorable Mention Marjan KOVACEVIC



#2 ♙ = Leo (8+7)
♙ = Doublerookhopper

1.Bh7? [2.LEb1#]
1...exf1=DK 2.e8=Q/R# 1...gxf1=DK 2.e8=LE# 1...Kxf1 2.Rd1# but 1...DKh8!
1.Bg6? [2.LEb1#] but 1...g1=DK+!
1.Bf5? [2.LEb1#] but 1...DKf4!
1.Bc2? [2.LEb1#] but 1...DKb2!

1.Be4! [2.LEb1#]
1...exf1=DK 2.e8=LE# 1...gxf1=DK 2.e8=DK# 1...Kxf1 2.Rd1#

There is a set-play with two pawns promoting on f1, leading to one thematic fairy promotion mate and one half-thematic orthodox promotion mate. This play can be forced by four different wB tries – all refuted by moves by the double-rookhopper on f2 or by a promotion to a DRH. The excellent key-move shockingly destroys both mates by closing the mating line, but replaces them with two new promotion mates, using the key-piece as a hurdle. So there are 1+2 thematic variations in set-play and solution, plus a half-thematic variation in the set.

1... Kxf1 is an excellent by-variation, using LEb5, Rd4 and Pg2 in new ways.

3rd Honorable Mention Ralf KRÄTSCHMER & Franz PACHL



#2 ♙ = Giraffe (13+11)
♙ = Nightrider
♙ = Pao; ♙ = Vao

1.PAc5 ? [2.Qe5 #]
1...d1=GI 2.dxe8=GI #
but 1...g1=N !

1.PAd5 ? [2.Qe5 #]
1...g1=N 2.cxb8=N #
but 1...d1=GI !

1.PAb5 ! [2.Qe5 #]
1...d1=GI 2.dxe8=GI #
1...g1=N 2.cxb8=N #

Two thematic variations separated not by dual avoidance but by different black errors: the black promotions open guard lines towards one of the flights c3/d5, making possible a promotion mate guarding the other one. An important feature is in the two thematic tries, where the white Pao obstructs one or the other of the thematic mates.

In addition to the thematic promotion pieces giraffe and nightrider, the composers use a pao, which is essential for the try-play, and a vao, which is not really necessary. We would have preferred to replace VAh1 with a wB, moving Pe4>e3 and adding a bPh3. Even with one bP more, this is more economical (and makes for better analogy between the thematic defences).

1st Commendation Jacques DUPIN



1.ELc3? [2.ELla3#]? b5!

1.DRLb8! [2.ELla3#]

1...f1=DRL+ 2.f8=EL#

1...e1=DRL+ 2.e8=EL#

1...d1=DRL+ 2.d8=EL#

#2 ♔ = Eagle-Lion (10+9)

♖ = Kangaroo-Lion

♜ = Double Rook-Lion

Three thematic variations with exactly the same logic: Black gives check (over b8) by promoting to a double-rook-lion, but White can then mate by promoting to an eagle-lion on the same file, using Black's promotee as a hurdle as it has become immobile. In two of the variations, Black could defend by closing the first rank with one of the other black pawns – but the kangaroo-lion on h1 prevents having two pieces between a1 and h1. So that fairy piece in the corner is clearly essential in the matrix.

Note that the white double-rook-lion guards b1 both from h5 and b8, so the check-provoking key does not take a flight. There are unusual fairy pieces here, but that is not a flaw – and they all belong to the lion family, so there is good unity. The only drawback of the problem is that the thematic variations are so similar that one gets the impression of seeing the same thing three times.

2nd Commendation Hubert GÖCKEL



1.Qd8! [2.Qxg5#]

1... c1=RO 2.c8=RO# (2.Qxg5+? ROxg5!; 2.c8=G+? ROe6!)

1... c1=G 2.c8=G# (2.Qxg5+? Gxg5!; 2.c8=RO+? Gc4!)

1... Kh4 2.Kxf5# (also setplay)

#2 ♕ = Rose (5+8)

♙ = Grasshopper

A neat problem with two thematic variations with echoed promotions and dual avoidance by guards of mating lines from the black promotees. The by-variation 1... Kh4 is a very nice feature: the rose b4, which motivates the play by guarding h4 when Pc2 promotes, suddenly gets a new function as the rear piece for a battery mate. This detail increases the value of the problem considerably.

3rd Commendation
Ralf KRÄTSCHMER &
Franz PACHL



1.Lf4 ? [2.Qd4 #]
 1...gxf1=Z 2.cxb8=CA #
 1...d5 2.f8=LI #
 but 1...dxc1=CA !

1.Lf8! [2.Qd4 #]
 1...dxc1=CA 2.e8=Z #
 1...gxf1=Z 2.cxb8=CA #

#2 ♖ = Lion (13+10)

♙ = Zebra ♘ = Camel 1...Be5 2.Qxe5 #

This looks like the little brother of the 3rd Prize above! In the solution, two promotions open guard lines towards the flight d5, but there are dual avoidance effects in that each promotion captures a white piece, giving a flight which the mate must cover by opening the right battery line. The try doesn't bring a reciprocal change of these mates, instead we have the repetition of one thematic mate plus a new half-thematic mate without a black promotion. Both thematic mates have the small impurity of an unnecessary double check (but the rear piece is of course necessary in both cases to guard the flight that Black's promotion created).

The thematic promotions are to camel and zebra, but the use of lions too is well justified by the dual avoidance mechanism and by the extra promotion in the try.

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Kjell Widlert (Sweden), International Judge

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N.B. *You can find here the definitions of the fairy pieces:*

<https://juliasfairies.com/fairy-terms/fairy-classification-project/search-key>