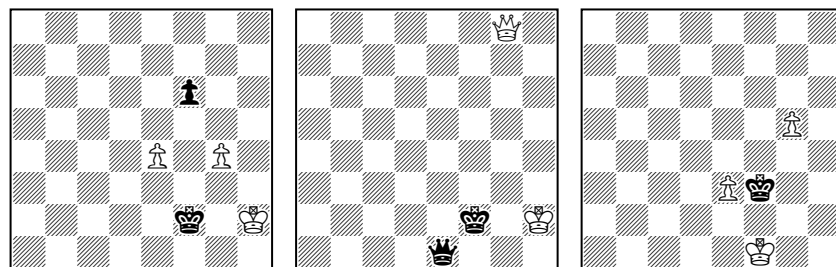


## From the world at large

Our front-page problem comes from a very attractive book *A study apiece* recently put together by Gerhard Josten. I say “put together” rather than “written” because it is a collection of articles in which each of sixty contributors writes about one of his studies. Many though by no means all of the usual suspects are represented, together with several figures less well known. There are for example no fewer than three studies from Mongolia, one of which (a delightful piece of systematic movement by Sonomun Chimedtseren) I had short-listed for quotation here until I remembered that Timothy Whitworth and I had included it in *Endgame magic*.

(These studies from Mongolia are in our own chess, but Mongolia had its own forms of the game which were played at least into the twentieth century and may be played still: Shatar, on an 8x8 board, and Hiashatar, on a 10x10. According to David Pritchard, quoting from *Mongolie - traditions de la steppe* by Giadda Ricci, Musée de l’Homme 1983, chessplayers occupied a place of honour in the community, and were not obliged to rise when their betters entered the yurt.)



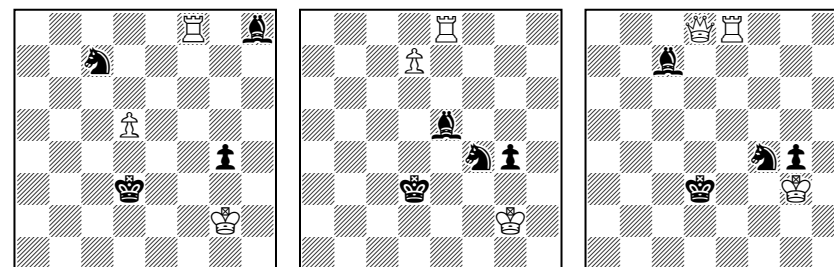
**1** - win

**1a** - 1 e5, after 5...e1Q

**1b** - 1 Kh1 Kf3, 5 Kf1

Our front-page study **1** (*Algemeen Dagblad*, 18 January 2003) comes from Harold van der Heijden’s contribution. Try 1 e5: no, 1...fxe5 2 g5 e4 3-5 g8Q e1Q (see **1a**), and the draw is clear. Try 1 g5: no, 1...fxg5, and if White persists by 2 e5 he will even lose. Try 1 Kh3: no, 1...Kf3 2 e5 fxe5, and White is no better off. So why is **1 Kh1** an improvement? Ah, because after **1...Kf1 2 e5 fxe5 3 g5** we shall come down to **1a** with the kings on f1/h1 instead of f2/h2, and **7 Qg2** will be mate. As for other Black moves, 1...Ke3 is no problem (2 e5 fxe5 3 g5 etc and he will obstruct his own pawn), nor is 1...Kg3 (again 2 e5 fxe5 3 g5 and White will promote with check), but what about 1...Kf3? Once again 2 e5 (not 2 g5 fxg5 3 e5, when 3...Kf2 wins), and after 2...fxe5 3 g5 e4 4 Kg1 e3 5 Kf1 (see **1b**) White’s king can stop the Black pawn.

Out of interest, I asked Rafael Andrist’s database-mining program Wilhelm for all the positions with K + 2P v K + P where Kh2-h1 was needed to win, and it reported just two: this one, and the 1933 Grigoriev study which I quoted in September 2000. I do not know whether Harold used some such tool to find **1** (Emil Vlasák wrote about Wilhelm in *Československý šach* in February 2003, and copies of the program may have been floating around earlier), but however it was discovered it is a lovely thing.



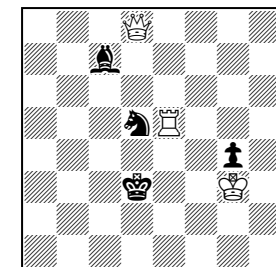
**2** - win

**2a** - after 3...Nf4+

**2b** - after 5 d8Q+

**2** (*Yediot Aharonot* 1979, version) was Amatzia Avni’s contribution. The original version started at the present move 3, and he recounts that the possibility of adding the first two moves occurred to him while his car was stopped at a red traffic light.

**1 d6** (1 Rxh8 Nxd5 is only drawn, so White saves his pawn first) **Be5** (the only chance) **2 d7 Ne6 3 Re8** (skewering knight and bishop) **Nf4+** and we have **2a**. “All these moves are forced. Sometimes, when people evaluate studies they measure the level of difficulty. This study is very easy and I’m proud of that. It flows naturally and as if effortlessly, from beginning to end.” It will be recalled that Levitt and Friedgood, in *Secrets of spectacular chess*, identified “flow” as one of the elements of chess beauty, and I would wholeheartedly agree. **4 Kg3** (if White does not go for the Black pawn, 4...Bc7 will draw easily) **Bc7** (if instead 4...Nh5++ then 5 Kh4 Bc7 6 Kxh5 g3 7 Rg8 and 8 Rxg3, or 4...Ne2++ 5 Kf2 g3+ 6 Ke1 Bc3+ 7 Kd1 Ba5 8 Rxe2 Kd4 9 Rg2 Kd5 10 Rxg3 Ke6 11 Rd3) **5 d8Q+** (see **2b**) and if 5...Bxd8 then 6 Rxd8+ Ke4 7 Re8+ and the knight will go, but Black thinks he has an answer in the cross-check **5...Nd5+!** However, White has a trick worth two of this: **6 Re5!!** (see **2c**).



**2c** - after 6 Re5

If now 6...Bxe5+ then 7 Kxg4, and Q v B + N is a standard win; if instead 6...Bxd8 then 7 Rxd5+, and everything will go.

*A study apiece* is published by Edition Jung ([www.schachagentur.de](http://www.schachagentur.de)) at 29.80 euros plus postage and packing, which for British readers is not cheap, but it is a lovely thing, attractively presented and full of content and character. Everything is in English, and a decision was made that contributions would be accepted as submitted even though only seven of the sixty contributors appear to have had English as their native language. The literary quality of the text is therefore a little variable, but only in two cases did I find difficulty in understanding it.

Will there be a successor? The workload will have been considerable and Gerhard has been carefully non-committal, but many well-known names are not represented and I hope a sequel will indeed materialise. Books like this are very well worth having. There will be more quotations next time, if things do not arise which clamour even more loudly for attention.