Julia's Fairies
Informal Tournament Retros and Proof Games 2013/2014
Award by Hans Gruber (Regensburg, Germany), International Judge of the FIDE

In recent years, many parts of the retro genre have been strongly developing, including fairy retros and fairy proof games. As the specific characteristics of retros are quite distinct from those of other genres, it is advisable to judge them in separate tournaments. *Julia's Fairies* has proven to clearly attract retro composers so that a satisfying number of originals (26 in total) competed in its first retros and proof games tournament.

In contrast to many other fields of chess composition, the role of computers for a full check of soundness is still limited (although some programs provide considerable help in testing). There is still space for the human mind to test and cook retro problems, like in the „good old times", when cook-hunting was one of the major fun activities at chess meetings. (Often very creative ideas emerged which led to the composition of quite a number of good new problems.) In this spirit I invited Dirk Borst (with whom I had organised a „Cook Tournament" some decades ago) and Ulrich Ring to join a „nostalgic retro-testing group" in Andernach 2015. We enjoyed a lot to rediscover the rewards of such a mental exercise, and to discover so many cooks. Almost 40 per cent of the entries proved to be unsound as the list below shows. The cooks demonstrate that there are still many ideas to be found in fairy retros and in fairy proof games.

I like to mention two problems which did not make it into the award although they are quite ambitious (their composers might deplore that I happened to be the judge). In retros, in particular in proof games, there always are two reference positions, the diagram position and the initial game array. The latter puts considerable constraints onto the composer, and it is one of the main quality features of retros and proof games to make something unusual happen during the solution. On the other hand, it is much less impressive if „the unusual" is not unfolded during the solution, but is already visible in the diagram position. (It goes without saying that nevertheless often considerable constructive skills are needed to complete the problem.) In a criminal story, much of the interest is gone if we read on the first page: „This is a story about a countess who was killed by the gardener." In 436, the diagram tells too much about the solution. (In my opinion, it would have been most appropriate to publish this problem in *Probleemblad*, where the reference problems had been published.) 589 is a quite impressive task, but again the diagram tells too much of the story.

List of participating problems

299, 306, 310, 312, 325, 436, 437, 480, 481, 495, 508, 509(5), 525, 528, 539, 550(1), 564(1), 583(1), 586, 589, 619, 622, 633, 652, 666(1), 667.

Cooks

306 Dual 2.Bh6 Bc5 3.Be3 Qh4 4.d5 Sf6 5.Sd2 0-0 6.B×c5-e7 etc. as in the authors' solution. (Hans Gruber)

312 Dual 2.d2-h6 Kf7 3.Qd6 Kb3 4.Sc3 g7-e6 5.Sd5 B×h6 6.Q×c8 etc. as in the author's solution. (Hans Gruber)

437 Phantastic cook in only 10 moves: 1.b3 g5 2.Bb2 Bg7 3.Sc3 B×c3 4.Sh3 d6 5.Rg1 B×h3 6.g×h3 B×b2 7.R×g5 B×a1 [+BPb2] 8.Q×a1 b×a1=B!! 9.Ra5 Bg7 10.Ra3 Bf8 [+BPg7]. (Dirk Borst)

495 Cook R 1.b2×Rc3 [Pc2]! Rc1-c3+! (1.– Rh8-h2+? or similar: 2.a×b [Pb2] & 1.Rg1#) 2.a5×Bb6 [Pb2] Rf8-b8+ (2.– Bc7-b6+? 3.Kf3-e3 Rc8-b8+ 4.Ke2-f3 Re8-c8+ 5.Rc3-g3 & 1.R×c1 [Ra1]#) 3.Ke2-e3 Re8-f8+ 4.c2×Pd3 [Pd2] d4-d3+ 5.d2×Sc3 [Pc2] S∼-c3+ 6.Rc3-g3 & 1.R×c1 [Ra1]#. (Hans Gruber)

508 Cook in 9 moves: 1.Ra1×Pa4 [Rh1] a5-a4+ 2.Kc2-b3 d4-d3+ 3.Kd2-c2 Bb2-c3+ 4.Sb1×Pc3 [Sg1] c4-c3+ 5.Kd3-d2 c5-c4+ 6.Ke3-d3 d5-d4+ 7.Rh1×Bc1 [Ra1] c2-c1=B+ 8.Ke4-e3 d7,d6-d5+ 9.f7×Q,Re8=S [Sb1] & 1.Kf5+ Q,Re1#. (Hans Gruber)

509(5) Extremely complex cook with with a cyclic Platzwechsel of a different triple of black pawns!! 1.d3 (Tempo) d5 2.d4 Bh3 3.g×h3-c8=Q e6 4.Q×b8-a6 Sh6 5.B×h6-f5 Ba3 6.b×a3-f8=Q K×f8-b4 7.e3 e×f5-d7 8.Bc4 Qg5 9.Qe6 f×e6-e7 10.f4 d×c4-f7 11.Sd2 Kc3. (Dirk Borst)

525 Dual 4.Ke1×Bd2 [Ke1] Bc1-d2+! (4.– Kf8-e7+? 5.Ka5×Bb5 [Ke1] & 1.g7+ K∼#) 5.Ke1×Bd2 [Ke1] Kf8-e7+ 6.Ka5×Bb5 [Ke1] & 1.g7+ K∼#. (Hans Gruber)

564(1) b) 1.d4 e5 2.c4 Qh4 3.Qa4 Kd8 4.b3 e×d4 [Pe7] 5.Ba3 Q×c4 [Qe8] 6.Bd6 e×d6 [Pe7]. (Ulrich Ring)

583(1) Dual 4.– Ba3 6.– B×b2 [Bc8] 11.– Ra5 12.Q×a5 [Qe1]. (Dirk Borst)

619 Dual 5.Ke1-e2 Rf2-b2+ 6.Ka6×Pb7 [Ke1]! and now for example 6.– c6×Pb5 [Pb7]++ 7.Se6-g5 & 1.Sc7#. (Hans Gruber)

1st Prize: 528
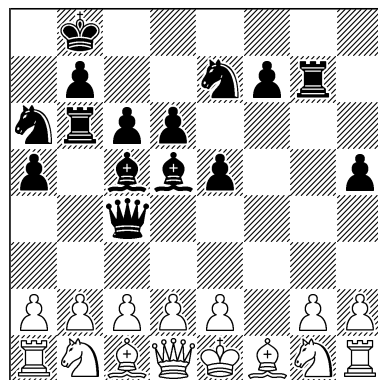**Nicolas Dupont**
Julia's Fairies 2014

PG 16   14+14
Disparate
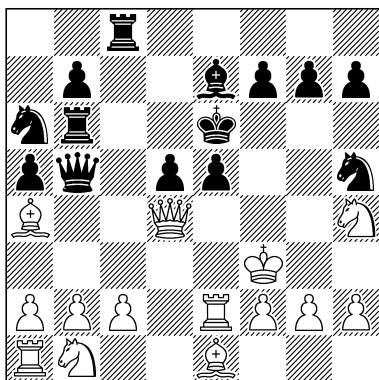
2nd Prize: 480
Nicolas Dupont
Julia's Fairies 2014
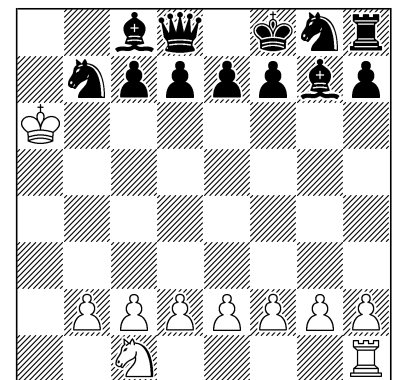*Dedicated to Jacques Dupin*

PG 21.5   C+ 15+15
Back Home

1st Honourable Mention: 550(1)
Henryk Grudziński
Julia's Fairies 2014

PG 10.5   10+12
take&make

(1st Prize: 528) 1.d4 Sf6 2.d5 Sh5 3.Qd4 a5 4.Sf3 Ra6 5.d6 Rb6 6.d×c7 Sa6 7.Bd2 d5 8.Sh4 Bg4 9.c8=Q B×e2 10.K×e2 e5 11.Kf3 Qd7 12.Bb5+ Ke7 13.Ba4 Ke6 14.Re1 Be7 15.Re2 Qb5 16.Be1+ R×c8

A particularly clever and interesting example of a Schnoebelen queen. Although the author remarks that this problem shows the „the first plan which came into my mind", it is a fine demonstration of the potential of the fairy condition „Disparate". In the solution, a white promotion (into piece X) occurs on square c8 before any move of [Qd8] or [Ke8]. The following move Qd7 proves that X is not a rook (it can still be a queen because of the fairy condition!). The immediately following move Ke7 proves that X is not a knight. Then Ke6 is played, followed by a move by Qd7 which proves that X is not a bishop. X thus can only be a queen! (We still have to show that the position is legal.) Only after completion of the proof, the promoted queen is captured. It is admirable that the author managed to compose a move sequence obeying all mentioned constraints concerning the move order. A rich demonstration of the fairy condition, exciting to solve.

(2nd Prize: 480) 1.f4 e5 2.f5 Qg5 3.f6 c6 4.Sh3 Qh4+ 5.Sf2 Qc4 6.Se4 Kd8 7.Sd6 Kc7 8.Sf5 Bc5 9.Se7 d6 10.Sg6 h5 11.Sf8 Rh6 12.Sh7 Rg6 13.Sf8 Be6 14.Sd7 Bd5 15.Sb6 a5 16.Sc8 Ra6 17.Sa7 Rb6 18.f×g7 Sa6 19.Sb5+ Kb8 20.Sd4 R×g7 21.Sf3 Se7 22.Sg1

What an innocent white position, a complete homebase with just one pawn missing – how on earth did White spend 22 moves? Well, there is much work to do: Each black piece which leaves its original square in the initial game array must be prevented from immediately returning. There are a few possibilities to do so, either interfering the move line just used (so that the piece can continue onto a safe square), checking to black king (potentially supporting him to block the return square of another piece), attacking

the king's return square (making the switchback illegal) and allowing the king to continue onto a safe square, or just waiting until the last move. Each of these strategies is used here, and it is an indefatigable white knight who is doing the job while performing an 18-move capture-free circuit! (Be aware that the knight itself must be prevented from switchbacking after its first move! The introduction Qg5-Qh4+ is a very interesting manoeuvre to keep the knight under control.) A brillant demonstration of the condition although there are no major secrets, and there is no „surprise effect" like in the 1st Prize.

(1st Honourable Mention: 550(1))   1.d4 Sc6 2.Bh6 g×h6-c1=S 3.Qd2 S×a2-a3 4.Qb4 S×b1-d2 5.R×a7-a5 Sf3+ 6.e×f3-d2 Bg7 7.Ba6 b×a6-f1=B 8.Se2 S×b4-b7 9.Sc1 R×a5-e5+ 10.K×f1-a6 Kf8 11.d×e5-e2

The *Platzwechsel* of WPd2 and WPe2 (d2-d4×e5-e2; e2×f3-d2) is well disguised, and it is nicely arranged with a plenitude of fairy effects that help to increase the safety. The cook found in the more ambitious cyclic *Platzwechsel* of three pawns in 509(5) (see introduction) shows how endangered such positions are, in particular when many pieces return to their homebase. Here most pieces are close to their home square. The pattern WKa6-BSb7-BBc8 is very clever and helps to avoid many cooks. (Still, there is some danger.) The white king is far away from home concerning distance but not concerning time: Using a black Schnoebelen bishop, it is just a big leap of the king. The Ceriani-Frolkin knight is a nice add-on.

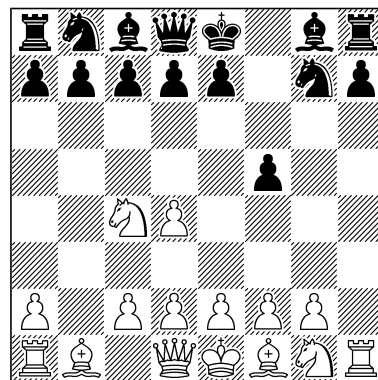**2nd Honourable Mention: 539**
Vlaicu Crişan
Julia's Fairies 2014
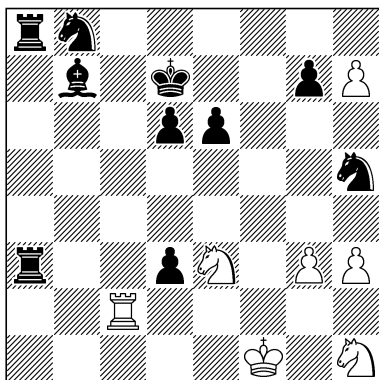
-6 & S#1   7+10
Proca Retractor
Circe Assassin

1st Commendation: 586
Nicolas Dupont
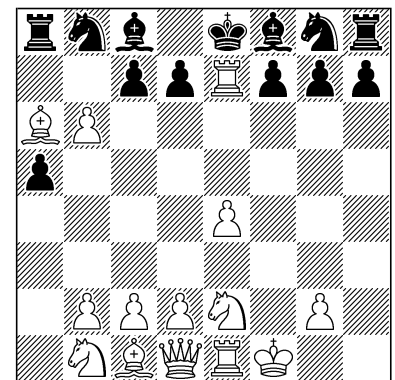**Paul Raícan**
Julia's Fairies 2014

PG 8.5   15+15
Back-to-Back

2nd Commendation: 325
Paul Raícan
Julia's Fairies 2013

PG 11.5   14+13
Multicaptures

(2nd Honourable Mention: 539)   R 1.Pg6×Rh7 [Ra8, -WBa8] Ba6-b7++ 2.Pf5×Pg5 e. p. [Pg7] g7-g5 3.Kf2-f1 e7-e6+ 4.Sf1×Pe3 [Pe7, -WSe7] e4-e3+ 5.Kg2×Sf2 [Sb8, -BSb8] Sf6-h5+ 6.Qb1×Sb8 [-WQb8] & 1.Rc8+ S×h1 [Sb1, -WQb1]#

An unbelievable wild west story! The solution makes such massive use of fairy elements that we were unable to cook this problem although it was, without doubt, the most suspicious entry. We are still convinced that the problem is not sound, but we failed to find a cook. We did, however, analyse a huge amount of possibilities. These show that the author was extremely efficient in the implementation of fairy effects. One surprise follows the next one, it's sheer lunacy! The fairy chess and retro creativity invested pays back in a deserved high distinction, although it is difficult to describe the (strategic) content. The authors says: „Passive suicides of the WB and of the WS, passive annihilation of the BS and active suicide of the WQ in the retro play forming a battery. Passive annihilation of the WQ in the forward play." Some notes might help to enjoy the solution: 5.Kg2×Sf2 [Sb8, -WQb8]?? does not work because the WQ attacks the BK via the BPd6. After 1.Rc8+, Black is checked, because the BK stands on the rebirth square of the BPd3 which is now threatened by the WQb1. The pawn cannot escape, because it would be captured by the WSf1. The BK cannot escape to e7, because the BPe4 is attacked by the WBa8.

Thus, Black has to capture the WSh1 which then is reborn on b1, thus passively capturing the checking WQb1! Now, White is check-mate, because the WK stands on the rebirth square of the WPg3 which is attacked by the BSh1. The pawn cannot escape, because it would be captured by the BSf6. The WK can neither escape to h2, because the WPh3 is attacked by the BRh7, nor to g1, because the WSe7 is attacked by the BKd7, nor to h1, because the WRc8 is attacked by the BKd7. We resigned from the task to find a cook, because we felt that a similar complexity would be necessary, and this was beyond our scope. (We do not believe that anybody will ever be able to solve this problem.)

(1st Commendation: 586)   1.h4 f5 2.h5 Sf6 3.h6 Sh5 4.h6-g8=Q! g7-c3 5.Sa3 Bg7 6.Sc4 c3-b1=Q! 7.b2-d4 B×g8 8.Bb2 Sg7 9.B×b1

Like in the 1st Prize, the Schnoebelen queen theme is shown here, even doubled with both a white and a black Schnoebelen promotion. The trick of the change of colour of the dark-squared bishops is nicely repeated in a quite short proof game with only the two thematic captures. This is a good achievement, compensating for the lack of depth.

(2nd Commendation: 325)   1.a4 e5 2.a5 e4 3.Ra4 e3 4.Re4 Qh4 5.Re7 e×f2 6.e4 b5 (6.– b6?) 7.a×b6 e. p. a5 8.Ba6 f1=S 9.Se2 S×h2 10.0-0 Qe1 11.R×e1 Sf1 12.K×f1

Without pomp and circumstances, the author demonstrates the Valladão task, nicely combined with the Donati-50 theme.