

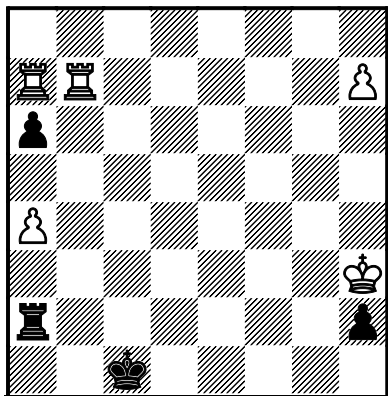
## Prizewinners explained

# HIS EXCELLENCY... THE ROOK!

YOCHANAN AFEK

Modern rook endings are almost instinctively associated with the Georgian school of chess composition. Previously, this type of ending was considered rather technical, a necessary dry piece of knowledge which every player needed to acquire just because it happened to be the most frequent one in tournament practice. The Georgian composers who learned to appreciate the unique qualities of the mighty piece have radically changed this traditional approach proving that rook endings can be as lively, as tactical, and as full of surprises as others. The rook is a powerful piece but, unlike the queen, can be restrained and controlled even with minimal additional material. Moreover, a well-coordinated pair of rooks, even on an almost empty board, is capable of creating miracles, namely those amazing systematic manoeuvres that somehow never occur in the realm of competitive chess.

A.1 V. Kalandadze  
1st-3rd Prize Gurgenidze JT 2004



h3c1 0500.22 5/4 Win

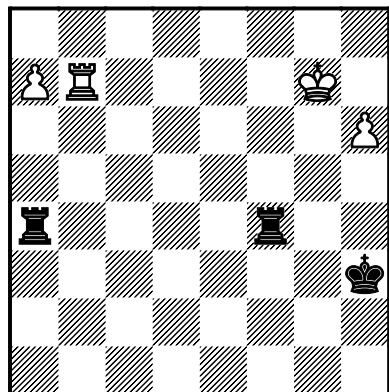
A representative *par excellence* of this rook cult is **Velimir Kalandadze** (72) who has successfully created dozens of such harmonious rook tangos, occasionally collaborating with compatriot composers, notably David Gurgenidze. Here is one of his such recent efforts (A.1).

The beautiful thing about this type of study is that there is not too much to explain. The moves usually speak for themselves: **1.Rc7+ Kd1 2.Rd7+ Ke1** The King cannot yet look back: **2...Kc1 3.Rac7+** with a consequent invasion of the first rank. **3.Re7+ Kf1 4.Rf7+ Kg1 5.Rg7+ Kf1!** Time to return home. The pawn that should not be blocked also guards the first rank. **6.Raf7+ Ke1 7.Re7+ Kd1 8.Rd7+ Kc1 9.Rc7+ Kb1 10.Rb7+ Ka1 11.Rg1+!! hxc1S+!** A vital tempo-check or else the black king is facing a deadly check since the lethal diagonal has just opened. **12.Kg3 Se2+ 13.Kg4 Rxa4+ 14.Kg5**

Caution is still required: **14.Kh5? Sg3+! 15.Kg5 Ra5+ 16.Kh4 Rh5+ 17.Kxg3 a5 18.Kg4 Rh2! 19.Ra7 Kb2** drawing. **14...Ra5+ 15.Kh6** wins.

A jubilee tourney was organized to celebrate Kalandadze's 70th birthday, with a special section for rook endings (what else?). It appeared that the level here was even higher than in the general section which probably did not upset the jubilant too much. He was especially delighted with the following charming miniature:

**A.2 V. Kartvelishvili**  
1st Prize Kalandadze 70 JT 2006,  
Special section



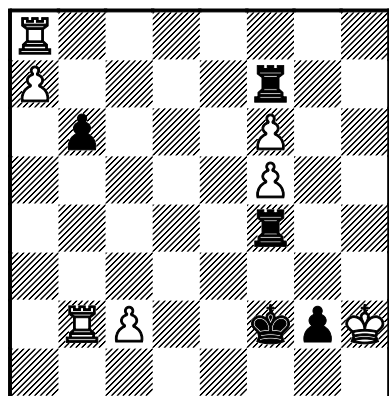
g7h3 0700.20 4/3 Win

**1.h7 Rh4 2.Kg8 Rhg4+ 3.Kf8 Rgf4+ 4.Ke8 Rfe4+** Here and later 4...Rh4 would allow 5.Rg7 followed by a king march back to g8 **5.Kd8 Red4+** Again 5...Rh4 6.Rg7 Rh6 7.Ke8 winning. **6.Kc8 Rdc4+ 7.Kb8 Rh4 8.Rg7! Raf4 9.Rg8 Rb4+ 10.Kc8 Rbc4+ 11.Kd8 Rcd4+ 12.Ke8 Rde4+ 13.Kf8 Ref4+ 14.Kg7 Rfg4+ 15.Kh8 Ra4 16.a8Q** wins.

On top of the systematic movement, the theme of return is also demonstrated in the simplest and most comprehensible form.

Much more original and sophisticated was this interpretation of the young Ukrainian composer:

**A.3 S. Didukh**  
4th Prize Kalandadze 70 JT 2006,  
Special section



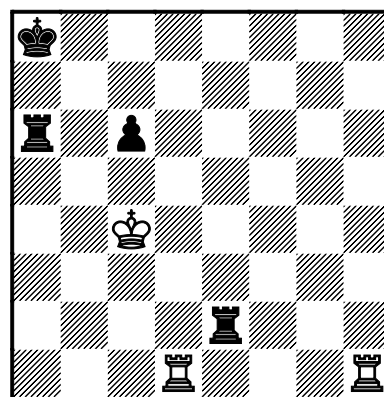
h2f2 0800.42 7/5 Win

**1.c3+! Festina Lente!** The reason to postpone the natural 1.c4+ is clarified as late as on move 14! **Kf1 2.Rxg2** While 2.Kg3? g1Q+

**3.Kxf4 Qc5 4.Rb1+ Kf2 5.Rb2+ Kf1 6.Rh8 Qc7+ 7.Kg4 Rg7+!** is just a draw. **Rf2 3.Rxf2+ Kxf2 4.Kh3!** Another long term plan, to become apparent on move 12! Instead following 4.Rh8? Rxa7 5.Rh4 Kf3 6.Rb4 Rc7 7.c4 Rc6 8.f7 Rf6 9.Rxb6 Rxf7 10.f6 Kf4 the draw is once again inevitable. **Kf3 5.Kh4 Kf4 6.Kh5! Kxf5 7.Kh4 Kf4** Not Rc7 8.f7! Rxf7 9.Kg3 wins. **8.Kh3 Kf3 9.Kh2 Kf2** Losing faster is Rh7+ 10.Kg1 b5 11.f7 Rxf7 12.Kf1 and wins. **10.Rh8 Rxa7 11.Rh5 Rf7 12.Rf5+!** Here it is! The king's tango was aimed at vacating this square for this vital Rook check. **Ke3 13.Kg3(h3) Kd3 14.Rf3+!** And now the first move choice becomes apparent as White can defend his pawn now. If 1.c4? then now after Kd4 14. Rf4+ Ke5 the f6 pawn is lost. Alternatively 14.Kg4? Kxc3 15.Kg5 Kc4 16.Kg6 Rf8 17.Kg7 Rb8 18.f7 b5 19.f8Q Rxf8 would also lead to a mere draw. **Ke4 15.Kg4 b5 16.Rf5! Kd3 17.Kg5** wins.

Let us conclude this selection with another lovely miniature demonstrating a duel between two pairs of rooks:

**A.4 Y. Bazlov**  
1st Prize *Uralsky Problemist 10 AT* 2003



c4a8 0800.01 3/4 Win

Here too there is no need for commentary except that one should select the right rook to start with: 1.Rh8+? Kb7 2.Rd7+ Kb6 3.Rb8+ Ka5 4.Rd1 Re4+ 5.Kd3 Ra4 draws. **1.Rd8+! Kb7 2.Rh7+ Kb6 3.Rb8+ Ka5 4.Rh1! Re4+ 5.Kd3! Rf4** (Ra4 6.Rh5+ c5 7.Rxc5 mate) **6.Ra1+ Ra4 7.Rxa4+ Kxa4 8.Rb1! Ka5 9.Kc4! Ra7** (Rb6 10.Ra1 mate) **10.Kc5! Ka6 11.Kxc6** wins.