



History

Study tourneys from the past - Catalonia (1914-1916)

BY ALAIN PALLIER

2014 is a crucial year for Catalonia: a self-determination referendum is announced for November (except if the crisis in Spain makes its postponement necessary). Why in 2014? Three centuries ago, in September 1714, Barcelona surrendered to the Bourbon army: it was the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) bringing the Habsburgs and their allies into conflict with the Bourbons. It was also the end of the first Catalan autonomy (Generalitat de Catalunya). Today, 11 September is the National Day of Catalonia.

By chance, exactly one century ago, the first study tourney organised in Spain was a Barcelona initiative. It was followed by a second one, in 1915-1916.

So far, study tourneys had mainly been the business of countries of Western and Central Europe, or of Scandinavia (with the notable exception of the Australian *Melbourne Leader* tourney in 1903-1905). In southern Europe, especially in Spain, there was a strong tradition of problem tourneys. The country had some leading composers, with problemists like Valentin Marin (1872-1936) – in Catalan Valenti Marín i Llovet – and José Paluzie y Lucena (1860-1938) – in Catalan Josep Paluzie i Lucena. There had been no study composer until in 1900 the Frenchman Henri Rinck moved to Catalonia, near its capital Barcelona, for professional reasons.

The first of these tourneys was announced in chess magazines (e.g. the *Deutsche Schachzeitung*, February 1914) and in *Stadium* no. 66 (April 30, 1914), a magazine published in Barcelona between 1911 and 1930 and devoted to sports, with a short-lived chess column. Its closing date was 15th May 1914. A tourney for two-movers was announced at the same time. Both were organized on the occasion of the

first chess championship of Catalonia (25th January to 12th April 1914). The judge of the study section, Esteban (Esteve in Catalan) Puig y Puig, was among the participants. In 1913, he had won the Barcelona championship.

The name of Puig y Puig is now well known to our readers if they can recall the articles about the *La Stratégie* 1912-1914 tourney (see EG192-194). The Spanish cook hunter had just fought a tough battle lasting for months with the organizing committee of that tourney trying to have Holm's study eliminated from the award to give priority to the study of his friend, Henri Rinck. Some weeks later, he exploded in anger in *Stadium* (no. 69, 30th June 1914, pp. 546-7 – remember that the final award had been published on 5th May 1914). He wrote that the tourney had ended with full triumph for Rinck but that the final result (Rinck's study, first-ranked in the award, but with a second prize) was contrary to the rules of the tourney. He also insisted on the presence of flawed studies by Kleindinst, De Villeneuve-Esclapon and Karstedt (see EG194) and concluded with a damning statement about Marcel Lamare that does not need to be translated from Spanish: the cause of all that was the “manifesta incompetencia del Director del Torneo”. With this new tourney, Puig y Puig had his hands free to act as he pleased.

There is some vagueness in the naming of the tourney. Caputto rightfully writes in *El Arte des Estudio de Ajedrez*, Vol. 3, p. 52): “Campeonato 1914 (Barcelona)”. Also Kasparyan is correct (*Domination*, Vol. 1 and 2) stating (in Russian): “Konkurs v Barcelone”. The tourney was linked by its organizers to the first chess championship of Catalonia; but for several authors (Bondarenko, T.R. Dawson, C.E.C. Tattersall), named it the “Barcelona Chess Club Tourney”. But *El Club de Ajedrez Barcelona* was

founded some years later, in September 1921. Even worse, Frédéric Lazard, in his 1929 collection, seems to have forgotten that he had sent his entry to Spain and gives the... *Chess Amateur* as the source for his prizewinning study!

The award was published by Thomas R. Dawson in his column of the *Chess Amateur*, in November 1914. Puig y Puig had received 18 entries from 9 composers (one remained anonymous). Participation was just satisfying: of course Henri Rinck was present. Maybe the outbreak of WWI explains why composers gave priority to other concerns. Tattersall, in the 1915-16 *Year Book*, was choosy and wrote: "We give five of the successful studies, and, of course, they are of great merit, but still the work as a whole cannot be considered to be as good as one expects in a competition of this magnitude".

1st prize: H. Rinck (France)

2nd prize: L.B. Zalkind (Russia)

3rd prize: F. Lazard (France)

4th prize (equal): H. Rinck (France)

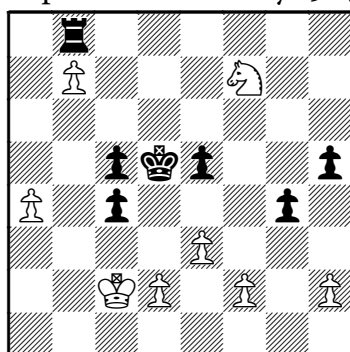
4th prize (equal): L.B. Zalkind (Russia)

1st honourable mention: W. Queckenstedt (Germany)

2nd honourable mention: H. Keidanz (USA)

P.1. H. Rinck

1st prize Barcelona ty 1914



c2d5 0310.65 8/7 Win

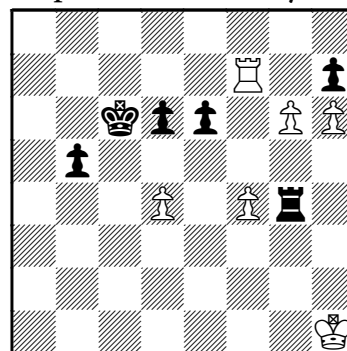
1.a5 Rxb7 (Kc6 2.a6 Kb6 3.Sxe5 Kxa6 4.Sd7 Rxb7 5.Sxc5+ wins) **2.e4+ Kxd4** **3.Sd8 Rb5** (3... Rb3 (Rd7, Rh7) 4.Se6+ Kxe4 5.Sxc5+ (Sxg5+) win) **4.a6 c3** (Rb6 5.a7 Ra6 6.Se6+ Kxe4 7.Sxc5+, or Kxe4 5.Kb7 Rb4 (Rb6) 6.a7 Ra4 (Ra6) 7.Sxc5+ win) **5.dxc3+ Kc4** (Ke4 6.Sb7 Rb6 7.a7 Ra6 8.Sxc5+ wins) **6.Sb7 (Sf7) Rb6** **7.a7 Ra6** **8.a8Q+ (Sd6+)** wins.

Dawson commented on this study as follows: "the domination of the Rook's cross (14 squares) in an economical way by ONE SINGLE KNIGHT was realised in a masterful way and for the first time".

The second prize was won by Lazar Borisovich Zalkind (1886-1945), a young Russian composer of problems and studies, who had begun a successful career some years ago (I will devote an article to him later this year). Some months earlier, none of his entries had been rewarded in the *La Stratégie* tourney, but here, like Rinck, he submitted two studies and both of them were prizewinners:

P.2. L.B. Zalkind

2nd prize Barcelona ty 1914



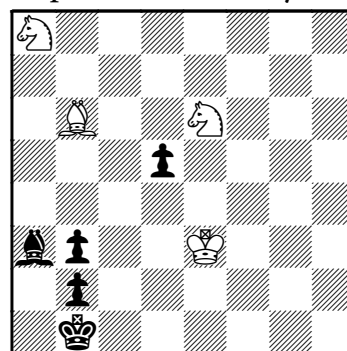
h1c6 0400.44 6/6 Win

1.g7 Rg6 **2.d5+ Kxd5** (exd5; f5) **3.f5 exf5** **4.Rf6!** (Now some sources give 4...Rg3 as the main line, with 5.Rf8 b4 6.g8Q+ Rxc8 7.Rxc8 b3 8.Rg7 Kc4 9.Kxh7, but there are duals: 5.Kh2 and 5.Rxf5+, found by Jarl Ulrichsen. In fact, Zalkind's solution simply ran **4...Rxf6** **5.g8Q** wins.

Frenchman Frédéric Lazard, once more time, mounted on the podium.

P.3. F. Lazard

3rd prize Barcelona ty 1914



e3b1 0042.03 4/5 Draw

1.Bd4 Kc2 2.Bxb2 Bxb2 3.Sb6! Bc1+ 4.Ke2 5.Sa4! and the mate threat allows White to save the day.

The second tourney in Catalonia was announced in 1915, in main chess magazines but also in *Stadium* (30th October 1915), two weeks after the announcement of a problem tourney for two-movers. The judges were two Spanish amateurs, don Juan Clusella and don Leopoldo de la Fuente (M. Clusella had invented a new problem theme for the two-movers tourney). These events are known as the *Sala Imperio* tourneys: it was the name of a performance hall (for theatrical plays and film projections), located in Diputacio Street, not far from the Plaça de Catalunya, and was in operation from 1909 to 1918. Its coffee room was attended by amateur chess players and by problem *aficionados* since solving contests were organized there. It was also the venue of the first Catalan chess championship the previous year as well as of the Barcelona championships in 1910 and 1912. The closing date was 1st April 1916 with the results to be published one month later. Each participant could submit a maximum of 3 studies. Three money prizes (50, 30 and 20 pesetas) were available.

Tattersall, in the same *Yearbook*, found that the *Sala Imperio* tourney was “unexpectedly interesting”. At least it was a tourney requiring studies with queen against two rooks. Tattersall did not stress this novelty: the *Sala Imperio* tourney was the first thematic tourney ever: with this kind of imposed material, it was *de facto* a domination theme tourney for win studies, even if draw studies were not forbidden. In his long career, Rinck composed ten studies with this kind of material (GBR classes 3200.00 or 1600.00), eight of which are win studies. In the 1920s there were some other tourneys with imposed material such as *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 1924 and 1925 or *Basler Nachrichten* 1924, all dominated by Rinck. It was not until 1931 that the first fully thematic (and specific) tourney for studies only but with a problem theme took place. However, the *Chess Amateur* 1923-1924 composition tourney, for asymmetric problems (i.e. problems with a symmetrical

position but an asymmetric solution), had a study section. Three endgame study composers participated: H. Adamson, T.R. Dawson and the specialist of *asymmetry*, Wolfgang Pauly – apparently his only foray into the field of study.

The award was published in May 1916 in *La Stratégie* which is why some authors, such as Kasparyan in ‘Domination’, give *La Stratégie* 1916 as the source. As usual, Rinck did not miss the date. His three entries won all three prizes (and the 100 pesetas), a perfect score. Only two other composers were rewarded: the Russian Lazar Zalkind again, with the second honourable mention, and the Frenchman Anatole Mouterde (1874-1942) with 1st and 3rd honourable mention.

Mouterde is one those minor composers for which one has ambiguous feelings : he began composing in the 1910’s and sent his first studies to *La Stratégie* for the 1912-14 tourney but to no avail. However, he quickly obtained some good results, with a prize and a mention in the 1914-15 *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* tourney. Another notable success was his second prize in the 1916-17 *Chess Amateur* tourney but he was less successful in the post-war years and it seems that he lost his inspiration. Rinck had a notable influence on him: Mouterde also tried to ‘exhaust’ a material balance by composing a series of studies but his attempts were not fully convincing. His analytical skills and his talent were clearly inferior. Mouterde simply could not rival Rinck. For instance, when he published a batch of 30 studies, with BSS versus R, in the *Schweizerische Schachzeitung* (*Revue Suisse d’Echecs*) of April 1921, no less than 16 of these 30 were seriously flawed (with duals, second solutions, cook and busts). Another series with heavy pieces (win studies, with level material, QR vs QR, in *La Stratégie*, in November 1922 and January 1923) gave results which were no better: only 6 out of 15 were sound. After 1924, Mouterde gave up composing.

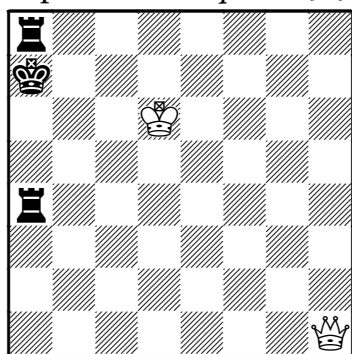
Mouterde was an industrialist and belonged to a wealthy family from the Lyon bourgeoisie. He had other interests: before his composing period, he had written and published three

collections of poems: *Les Mouettes Lyonnaises* (1907), *Chrysalide et Papillon* (1907) and *Les Bonnes Pensées* (1908). After WWI, he wrote another book, *Théâtre de guerre*, which was published in 1919. In a letter to Marcel Lamare, he compares chess composition with poetry. He also wrote articles about chess, mainly in *La Stratégie*. As a player, little is known about him but he did take part in the 1925 French Championship (subsidiary tournament). His death was announced after WWII.

Below, I give two of the prize-winners by Rinck together with the honourable mentions:

P.4. H. Rinck

1st/2nd prize *Sala Imperio* 1915-1916



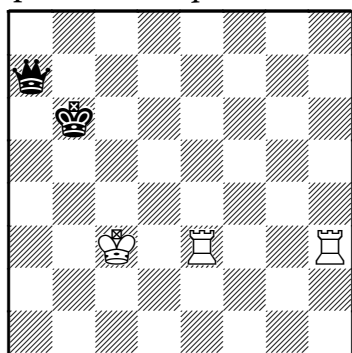
d6a7 1600.00 2/3 Win

1.Qh7+ Ka6 2.Qd3+ Ka7 3.Qb5 (3.Kc7? Rb8! 4.Qe3+ Ka8 draws) **3...Rf4 4.Qa5+ Kb7 5.Qd5+ Kb8 6.Qe5 Raa4 7.Kd7+ wins.**

In his 1918 collection, Rinck rotated the position (Kf5, Qa1; Kg8, Rd8, Rh8) so that Black's forces are on the 8th rank. Several losses of time are possible but anyway the wQ must go to d5 square and set a battery with Qe5 next move.

P.5. H. Rinck

3rd prize *Sala Imperio* 1915-1916

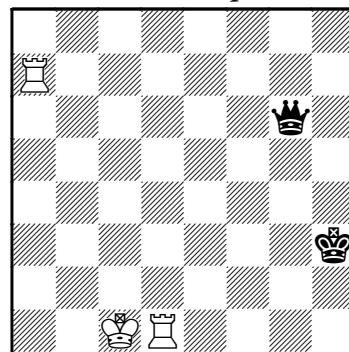


c3b6 3200.00 3/2 Win

1.Re6+ Kb5 2.Re5+ Ka4 3.Re4+ Ka3 4.Kc4+ the first battery. **4...Ka4 5.Kd5+** the second battery. **5...Kb5 6.Rb3+ Ka5 7.Ra3+** wins. Simple and effective!

P.6. A. Mouterde

1st hon. ment. *Sala Imperio* 1915-1916



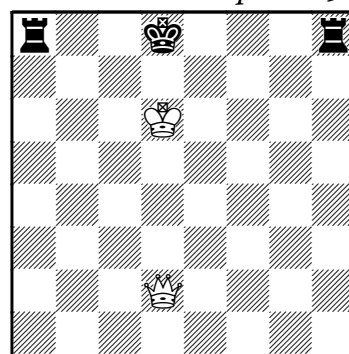
c1h3 3200.00 3/2 Win

Mouterde's solution runs: **1.Ra3+ Kg2 2.Rd2+ Kf1 3.Ra1! Ke1 4.Rh2 Qf6 5.Kc2+** (but here there is 5.Kb1! found by HH, EG147, 2003) **5...Qxa1 6.Rh1+** wins.

But the study can be saved if we amend the solution with a different third black move: **3...Qf6 4.Kb1! Qc3 5.Ka2+!** wins, but not 5.Rc2? Qb3+. Of course, this was not Mouterde's idea... [HH: and hence not a valid correction].

P.7. A. Mouterde

3rd hon. ment. *Sala Imperio* 1915-1916



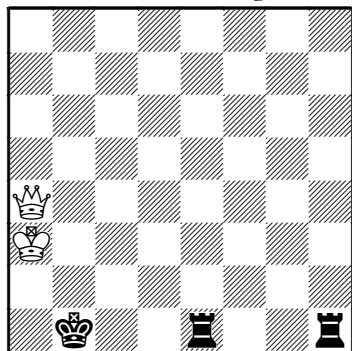
d6d8 1600.00 2/3 Win

1.Qd4! Rh7 2.Qf6+ Ke8 3.Qg6+ Rf7 4.Qg8+ Rf8 5.Qe6+ Kd8 and 6.Qd7 mate (the shortest win, but 6.Qe7+ Kc8 7.Qc7 mate and 6.Qd5 Rb8 7.Qa5+Ke8 8.Qh5+ Kd8 9.Qd5 etc. also win).

Alas, 2.Kc6+ is a second solution: 2...Ke8 3.Qe4+ Re7 4.Qg6+ Kf8 5.Qf6+ Rf7 6.Qh8+ and 7.Qxa8 (M. Campioli, *EBUR* 1999). And, in the main line, 4.Qe4+, winning bRa8, is obvious!

Thanks to the examination of the mottoes, we understand that Zalkind entered threes compositions ('A', 'B' and 'C'): here is the study that was considered as the best one by the judges:

P.8. L. Zalkind
2nd hon. mention *Sala Imperio* 1915-1916



a3b1 1600.00 2/3 Win

1.Qb3+ (1.Qb4+ ? Kc2 2.Qc4+ Kd2 draws)
1...Kc1 2.Qc3+ Kd1 3.Qd3+ Kc1 4.Kb3 Rh2
5.Qc3+ Kd1 6.Qa1+ and White wins.

Several years passed before any other tourneys were organized by Catalan newspapers: in 1929, *La Nau* and in 1935 *L'Opinio*. Of course, Puig y Puig was involved in both. Today, unfortunately, in Catalonia (and more broadly in Spain), study tourneys seem not to be ongoing stories...

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- Digitized issues of the magazine *Stadium* can be found here: bnc.cat/digital/arca

Special thanks to Dominique Thimognier (who runs the excellent website: heritagechecsfra.free.fr) and to Etienne Cornil for sending the relevant pages of *la Stratégie* (yes, there are still many missing awards in my collection!). Thanks also to Joaquim Travesset i Barba, to Harold van der Heijden for reminding me of the 1923-1924 Asymmetry tourney (*Chess Amateur*) and to Martin Minski for sending information about that tourney.