

Obituary

Hamlet Gehamovich Amiryan

(11xi1934 – 1x2013)

BY KAREN SUMBATYAN

My friend and colleague Hamlet⁽¹⁾ (1) Amiryan passed away at Sochi Airport while returning to Yerevan, Armenia's capital, after a break and therapy. His heart... Some years ago he had had a cruel infarct. Armenia has lost its second (after Henrikh Kasparyan) prominent study composer, full of original ideas which could be realized in the future by young ambitious Armenian Didukhs, Pervakovs and Vysokosovs (where are you, guys?)

He was born into a typical family of Yerevan intellectuals: his father was a lawyer and his mother a teacher of Armenian language and literature. Hamlet studied polytechnics, became a planning engineer and worked all his life in various research institutes. Apart from chess, which was evidently his real passion, Amiryan was very strong at table tennis and in that even achieved the second rank of Soviet Master of Sports!

The happiness of Hamlet's life, as he used to say, was his family. He was a careful father

for his two daughters and as grandfather for his two grandsons, already Muscovites, who came to Yerevan for long vacations. His elder daughter, Anush, says that the principal subject of their father's lessons was honesty. He often played with her and her sister in different games including, of course, chess but he but never insisted that they studied because he always respected their right to choose their own way (as a result, both girls chose the medical profession and are working in Moscow). Nothing could really bother the head of an Armenian family, but if you have two little children something can happen, can't it? Anush remembers how the whole family was trying to find the chess pieces which were suddenly missing, and how Hamlet was upset to see the destroyed position on his chessboard...

It is really impossible to say how many studies Amiryan composed. At the end of his life he had time to publish his selected works (over 400 studies and some problems), but I'm sure that the content of his numerous and famous scrap books is much richer. When, once in Yerevan, I was showing him some new Russian studies, Hamlet used to say "I've got the same thing" and after checking his scrap books he found it! This heritage should certainly be studied and corrected.

Hamlet Amiryan and the PC is a special topic. He composed all of his life without the assistance of computer programs. And that explains why the publication of a new composition by Amiryan was a real gala day for Russian and EG "study killers". Did he really care? I don't think so. All the incorrect studies took their worthy place in his personal Album.

We met for the first time during the summer of 1984: I will never forget that day. I gathered

(1) Hamlet – of course, from Shakespeare. Foreign names are very popular to my compatriots who never miss the opportunity to show that they belong to European civilization. That's why Armenians usually thank by saying *merci* instead of the much longer local *shno-ra-ka-lu-tsun*, and you can easily meet a Napoleon or a Medea in an up-country Armenian village. Our great poetess Silva Kaputikyan explained in one of her famous rhymes that Armenians love the name of Hamlet because his "*to be or not to be*" became the main question of our people who survived in spite of awful historical circumstances. OK, but what about poor Ophelia? A lot of Armenian girls have this name and it's really hard to understand the intention of their parents and let's not forgive some Armenian Laertes's (as I remember, the destiny of Ophelia's brother wasn't happy either but this name also sounds good); what about them? I guess that my grandparents didn't admire Shakespeare. That's why they named my uncles Alexandre and Romain in honour of Alexandre Dumas and Romain Rolland and my mother Jeanna – in honour of Jeanne d'Arc.

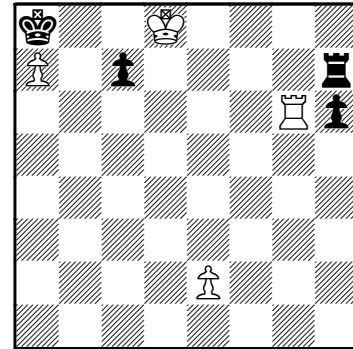
up all my courage before visiting the Yerevan Chess Club in order to see Henrikh Kasparyan who was teaching young chessplayers there. To my surprise, Henrikh Moiseevich knew my first studies and we talked a lot about life and studies. He contacted somebody by phone and within an hour I had the opportunity to meet other Armenian composers who were invited to a cup of coffee with “a prominent visitor from Moscow”. Kasparyan was the Mount Everest there and it was easy to sense the large common respect for him. Hamlet was really happy to live at the same time and place with Henrikh the Great; he collected all of his books and always asked his opinion.

Henrikh Kasparyan, Serguei Varov, Hamlet Amiryan... Who will replace them in my Armenia?

(The author is grateful to Anush Amiryan for the information presented)



S.1. H. Amiryan
2nd prize 3rd Birnov MT 1977, correction

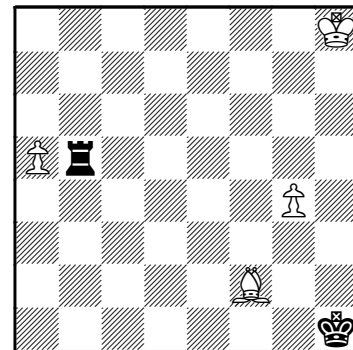


d8a8 0400.22 4/4 Win

1.e4 h5 2.e5 h4 3.e6 h3 4.e7 h2 5.Rh6 Rxb6 6.e8Q h1Q 7.Kxc7+ Kxa7 8.Qa4+ Ra6 9.Qd4+ Ka8 10.Qd8+ Kb8 11.Qb8 mate.

Hamlet's “visiting card”: a laconic introduction leads to the real point. I remember Tolya Kuznetsov showing this study, making no comment on 5.Rh6!., but that move really doesn't need it. Unbelievable.

S.2. H. Amiryan
special prize Herbstman-100 MT 2001



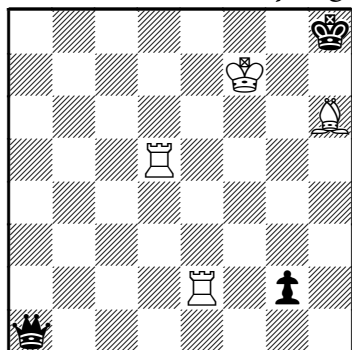
h8h1 0310.20 4/2 Win

1.a6 (Bb6? Rg5;) 1...Rb8+ (Ra5; a7) 2.Kh7! Kg2 3.a7 (3.g5? Kxf2 4.g6 Rb3 5.g7 Rh3+; 3.Bc5? Ra8 4.a7 Kf3) 3...Ra8 4.Bb6! (Thematic try: 4.Bc5? Kf3 5.g5 Ke4 6.g6 Kd5 7.g7 Kc6 zz 8.Be7 Kb6! 9.Kh6 Rg8! 10.a8Q Rxa8 11.Bf8 Ra1 draws) 4...Kf3 5.g5 Ke4 6.g6 Kd5 7.g7 Kc6 8.Bc5! zz Kb7 9.Bf8 wins.

This is my favourite Hamlet study: OK, now we can find the “computer zz”, but what harmonic play, and what a fine refutation of the thematic try! Of course, the correct move 4.Bb6 is less paradoxical than 5.Bc5 with the wB is running

away as far as possible. I tried to do it vice versa several times, but without success.

S.3. H. Amiryan
2nd hon. ment. *Shakhmaty Riga* 1984

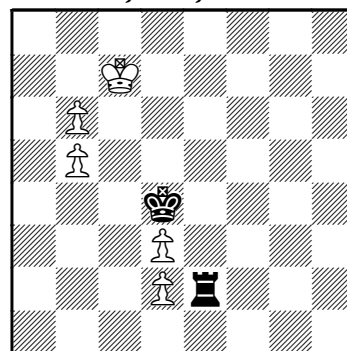


f7h8 3210.01 4/3 Win

1.Rh5 Qa7+ 2.Re7 Qa2+ 3.Re6 Qa7+ 4.Kg6 Qh7+ 5.Kf6 g1Q 6.Re8+ Qgg8 7.Bg7 mate.

Amiryan loved different final pictures with mates and stalemates. This colourful study is very characteristic of his work.

S.4. H. Amiryan
Zadachy i Etyudi 2009



c7d4 0300.40 5/2 Win

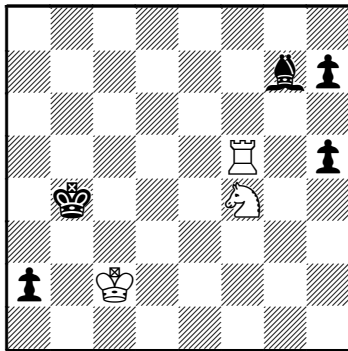
1.b7 Re7+ 2.Kb6 Re8 3.Ka7 Kc5 4.b6 Kc6 5.d4! Rd8 6.b8Q Rxb8 7.d5+! Kb5 8.Kxb8 Kxb6 9.d4! wins.

Witty, and very useful for Armenian school-boys. I know that they now have two obligatory chess lessons per week. Why not publish a school textbook with Amiryan's *children* studies?



From left to right: Sergey Kasparyan, Ashot Egiazaryan, Aleksandr Manvelyan, Albert Grigoryan and Hamlet Amiryan.

S.5. H. Amiryan
8th prize Korolkov 100 MT 2008

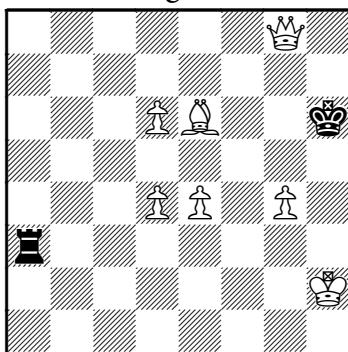


c2b4 0131.03 3/4 Win

1.Sd3+ Ka2 2.Sb2+ Kb4 3.Rf4+ Kb5 4.Rf1 Kb4 5.Ra1! Ka3 6.Rh1 Kb4 7.Rh4+ Kb5 8.Rxh5+ Kb4 9.Rh4+ Kb5 10.Rh1 Kb4 11.Ra1! Ka3 12.Rg1! Kb4 13.Rg4+ Kb5 14.Rg5+ Kb4 15.Sd3+ Kc4 16.Rc5+ Kd4 17.Ra5 wins.

A fine systematic manoeuvre based on the move Ra1!

S.6. H. Amiryan
Original



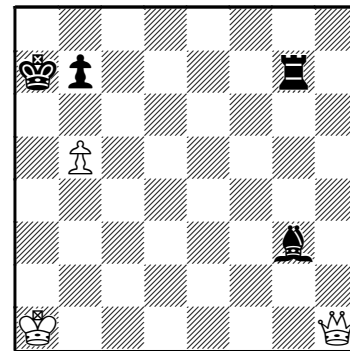
h2h6 1310.40 7/2 BTM, Win

1...Rh3+ 2.Kg2 Rg3+ 3.Kf2 Rf3+ 4.Ke2 Re3+ 5.Kd2 Rd3+ 6.Kc2 Rc3+ 7.Kb2 Rb3+ 8.Ka1! Rb1+ 9.Ka2 Rb2+ 10.Ka3 Rb3+ 11.Ka4 Rb4+ 12.Ka5 Rb5+ 13.Ka6 Rb6+ 14.Ka7 Rb7+ 15.Ka8 Ra7+ 16.Kb8 Rb7+ 17.Kc8 Rc7+ 18.Kd8

Rd7+ 19.Ke8 Re7+ 20.Kf8 Re8+ 21.Kf7 Re7+ 22.Kf6 Rf7+ 23.Ke5 Rf5+ 24.gxf5! wins.

This was Amiryan's contribution to the *rabid rook* theme; I like the wK's manoeuvre on the eighth move.

S.7. H. Amiryan
4th/5th prize *Shakhmatnaya Kompozitsia*
1993



a1a7 1330.11 3/4 Win

1.b6+ Ka8! 2.Qd5! Rg6! 3.Qd8+ Bb8 4.Qd4! Be5! 5.Qxe5 Rxb6 6.Qh8+! Ka7 7.Qd4 Ka6 8.Qa4 mate.

And, finally, Amiryan's best... unsound study. His beautiful idea is destroyed by the beautiful cook 4... Ba7!! (found by Jürgen Fleck and reported in EG124). Unfortunately, the problem is not just in the introduction. Could this study be corrected? (HH: There are more problems here: White can win by 2.Qh8+ Bb8 and now not 3.Qxg7 stalemate as intended, but the mysteriously looking move 3.Qh5! In the main line, on the 3rd move, there is a similar winning move with 3.Qc5. White will eventually check on a5 and a7, forcing the bK to c8, and then on a8, forcing the bB to b8. A sample line is: 3.Qc5 Bd6 4.Qa5+ Kb8 5.Qd5 Ka8 6.Qe4 Rg8 7.Qa4+ Kb8 8.Qa7+ Kc8 9.Qa8+ Bb8 10.Qa4! and Black cannot keep the position, e.g. Rd8!? 11.Qg4+ Rd7 12.Qc4+ Kd8 13.Qg8+).