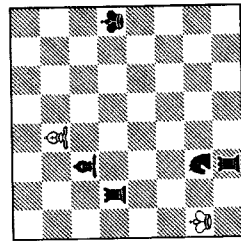


## DOM Springaren H#>2 2015

I was honoured to be asked to judge the orthodox helpmates in more than 2 published in 2015, and it has proved to be an enjoyable task. The overall standard was high: perhaps not many problems that will make it into the anthologies, but a great many that will only very narrowly miss out! This is reflected in the number of awarded problems. I did try to reduce the number awarded, but without much success. Even as it is, there are numerous problems that would have appeared in the award of a less strong tourney. As a consequence of the length of the list of awarded problems I must try to be more succinct than usual in my comments!



H#7 B Tc1>c3

**1st Prize: 13447 by Mečislavas Rimkus**  
**A** 1.Lc4 Lxb5 2.Kg4 Kb3 3.Kf3 Kc4 4.Ke2 La6 (tempo) 5.Se1+ Kd4+ 6.Kd1 Ke3 7.Lc2.Le2#  
**B** 1.Tb4 Lf5 2.Th4 Kb2 3.Se3 Kxc3 4.Sg4 Kd4 5.Sh6+ Ke5 6.Lf3 Kf6 7.Lg4 Lg6#

As with so many Lithuanian long helpmates, we have two distinct mechanisms, wittily twinned, working like clockwork to reach two distinct but related mates. There is enough strategy in the play to merit top Prize.

**2nd Prize: 13508 by Christer Jonsson**

1.Lxb5+ Kxb5 2.Kd4 Lh6 3.Te3 Lxg7#  
 1.axb4 Kxb4 2.Td6 Lb2+ 3.Kd5 Sc7#

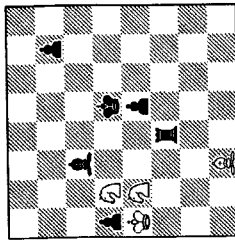
The capture of the wSs to bring the wK closer to the action is a pleasing motif, and the remainder of the play, using all the material on the board both times in strategically harmonious solutions, has the elegance that is the hallmark of this composer.

**3rd Prize: 13363**

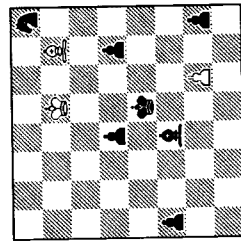
by **Aleksei Ivunin and Aleksandr Pankratiev**

1.a2 Kf6 2.a1L+ Kxg5 3.Ld4 Kg4 4.Le3 f3#  
 1.h1L Lh6 2.Ke5 Lxg5 3.Lf5 Le3 4.Lhe4 f4#

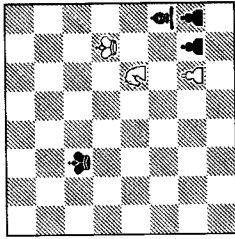
A quirkier problem; but with the two promotions, the two different captures of Pg5, the two different moves of the f2P, and some nice nuances in the move order, this was one of the problems that seemed to have the greatest quality of freshness.



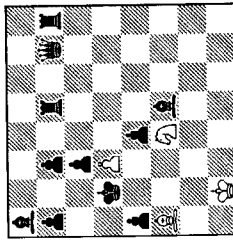
H#3 2 solutions



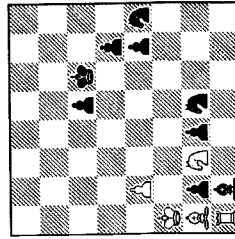
H#4 2 solutions



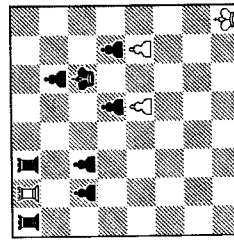
H#5,5



H#4 2 solutions



H#3 3 solutions



H#4 2 solutions

**1st Honourable Mention: 13443 by Horst Böttger**  
 1.-Sxg2 2.Kd5 Sf4+ 3.Ke4 Sxb3 4.Kf3 Sg1+ 5.Kg2 Se2 6.Kh3 Sf4#

A switchback and a round-trip by the wS motivated by the Knist theme. Familiar material, but presented particularly attractively.

**2nd Honourable Mention:**

13511 by Abdelaziz Onkoud

1.Lc1 Ka2 2.Lxa3 Kxa3 3.Ka6 Kxa4 4.Lb7 Sb4#  
 1.Dg6 Kc2 2.Dxd3+ Kxd3 3.Ka5 Kc4 4.a6 Lb4#

As in the 2nd Prize winner, we have captures of white officers to bring the wK within range of the bK. I didn't like this example quite as much as 13508, but the fact that two black moves are required to make the captures adds piquancy.

**3rd Honourable Mention:**

13435 by Christer Jonsson

1.Lxc2 Th1 2.Sg6 Th7 3.e5 Tf7#  
 1.Lxa2 Te1 2.Sf4 Txe6 3.Kf5 Sd4#  
 1.bxa1L Se3 2.Le5 Sd5+ 3.Kf5 Lxb1#

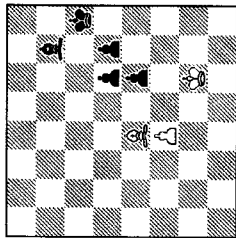
Excellent cyclic Zilahi. The only tiny detraction is that 1.bxa1 is differently motivated from the other two black first moves.

**4th Honourable Mention:**

13286 by Eugene Fomichev

1.Lc7 Tg8 2.Te8 Txe5 3.Te6 Tg8 (SB) 4.Tce7 g5#  
 1.Tg8 Te8 2.Tg6 Txe5 3.Tag8 Te8 (SB) 4.Tg8 e5#

Excellent lineplay, and pleasingly interchanged roles for the black and white Rooks, so that the risk of undue symmetry in arriving at the two nice mate positions is counteracted.

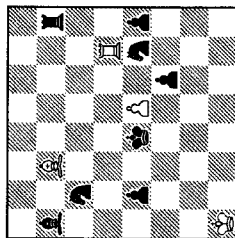


H#4,5 B Ld4<>d2

5th Honorable Mention: 13364 by Mike Prcic

- A 1. - Kf3 2.g4+ (Le5?) Kxf4 3.Le5+ Ke3  
 4.Kg5 Kf2 5.Kf4 Le3#  
 B 1. - Lxf4 2.Le5 (g4?) Lg3 3.g4 Kg2  
 4.Kg5 Le1 5.Kf4 Ld2#

It's quite difficult to decide whether these are two closely related or two significantly diverse solutions. I like problems that pose that question!



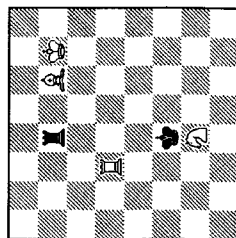
H#3 B Kd4<>be4

6th Honorable Mention:

13278 by Aleksei Ivunin and Aleksandr Pankratiev

- A 1. Th5 Tg7 2. Tb5 Le5+ 3. Kc5 Tc7#  
 B 1. Lb8 Ld8 2. Lg3 Te5+ 3. Kf4 Lg5#

Well known H#3 territory with familiar mates by wR and wB, but I think that this very well-made problem still manages to make its mark with the perfect strategic correspondences centring around the squares c7, e5 and g5.



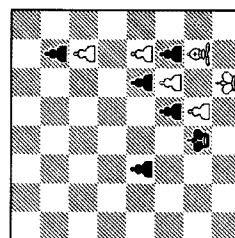
H#3 5 solutions

7th Honorable Mention: 13436

by Viktoras Paluionis

1. Td6 Le6 2. Kd4 Tc4+ 3. Kc5 Tc4#  
 1. Ke3 Kf6 2. Td3 Sf1+ 3. Kd4 Tc4#  
 1. Kd4 Tc8 2. Ke5 Kf8 3. Kd6 Sc4#  
 1. Tc7 Tb5 2. Tc2 Sf3 3. Kc3 Th3#  
 1. Ke2 Tf5 2. Txd2 Lc4+ 3. Ke1 Tf1#

Very good: five good-quality mates fully using three white officers. Getting this untwinned miniature setting sound is a fine achievement. Only the repeated move Kd4 detracts (very slightly).

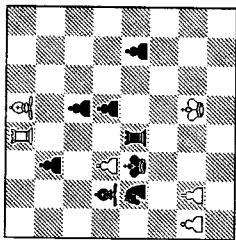


H#6,5 2 solutions

8th Honorable Mention: 13515 by Gunter Jordan

1. - Kg1 2. Ke1 Lf1 3.g2 Kh2 4. Kf2 Kh3  
 5. Kg1 Kh4 6. Kh1 Kh3 7.g1 1.f2#  
 1. - Lh1 2.g2+ Kg1 3.gxh1 4. Kg2 4.Th7 gxh7  
 5. Ke1 Kh1 6. Kf2 h8f1 7. Kg3 Dh2#

Another of those problems whose solutions have for me a beguiling 'similar but different' quality. Each time we manoeuvre the bK into its final resting-place in the bottom right corner, but once (only) White must resort to a promotion!



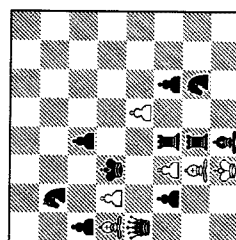
H#2,5 4 solutions

9th Honorable Mention:

13274 by Emil Klemanić and Ladislav Packa

1. - Td5 2.La6 La4 3.Lb5 Lb3#  
 1. - Lc6 2.Tf4 Td3 3.Td4 Tc3#  
 1. - Lg6 2.Td5 Lc2 3.Txc5 Lb3#  
 1. - Ta8 2.Lc6 Ta3 3.Ld5 Tc3#

A very nice 2x2 example. In one pair of solutions we see the Klasic theme; in the other the black officers perform square-blocking manoeuvres. The two pairs of solutions complement each other well. It would have been eminently possible to place this problem higher!



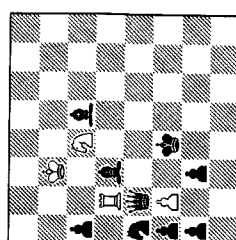
H#3 3 solutions

10th Honorable Mention:

13506 by Vladislav Buřka

1. Txc3 Kxd2 2. Kd4 Ld3 3. Sc5 Lxc3#  
 1. Dxe4 Lb6+ 2. Kd5 Ld4 3. Le2 Lxb3#  
 1. Dxb5 Lxb3 2. Kc6 Lf7 3. Dc5 Le8#

A rich mix. Not perfect harmony among the solutions, and ...Bxb3 crops up twice, but the motives for the first black moves are the same, and there is a lot of interesting play for solvers to get their teeth into.



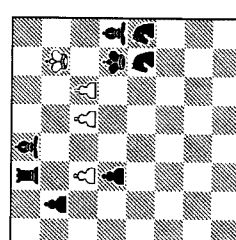
H#3 2 solutions

11th Honorable Mention:

13283 by Janne Syväniemi

1. Kc3 Tb8 2. Kxb3 Sb7 3. Dc3 Sa5#  
 1. Kd4 Ta5 2. Kd5 Sb5 3. Ld4+ Sc3#

Rather unusual to see batteries formed on vertical and horizontal lines. In each case the white second move unpins the black officer which makes black's final move. This is all pleasingly disguised by a diagram that doesn't signpost the composer's idea.



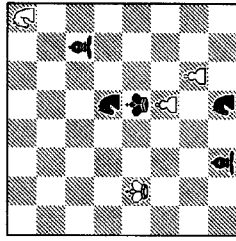
H#3 B Kg5>f5 C Sg4>e7

12th Honorable Mention:

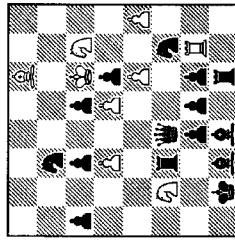
13440 by Christer Jonsson

- A 1. Txc6 e7 2. Txf6 exd8S 3. Tf5 Se6#  
 B 1. Kxe6 cxb7 2. Kd7 bxc8D+ 3. Ke8 Dc6#  
 C 1. Ta8 f7 2. Ta4 f8D 3. Tg4 Df6#

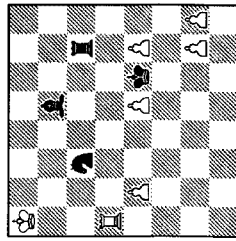
The composer shows his skill in achieving the task he has set himself: promotions by each Pawn followed by return to its diagram square. Only the performative nature of the black play in (c) (as it seems to me) detracts from this fine problem.



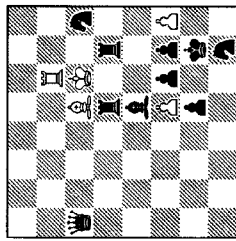
H#3 2 solutions



H#3,5



H#3 3 solutions



H#3 2 solutions

### 13th Honorable Mention: 13360 by Pascale Piet

1..Kd3 Kb3 2..Le4 Sg6 3..Ld2 Sf4#  
1..Lf7 Kc3 2..Ld5 Sf7 3..Sf3 Sd6#  
Two very nice sequences of moves attractively linked by the wS moving to the square just vacated by the bB.

### Special Honourable Mention: 1377 by Per Olin

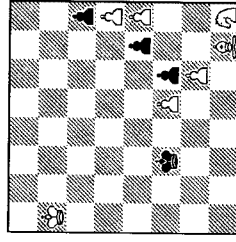
1 - Sh8 2 Sh1 Tg7 3 Sa8 Tb7 4 Kc2 Sa1#  
This one has to be a 'Special' award as it is a heavy position in which a purist might be affronted by the lack of contribution to the mate of the Sg6, but the succession of moves to the corners of the board is of course very amusing!

### 1st Commendation: 13439 by Christer Jonsson

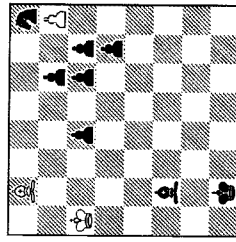
1..Lf6 e5 2..Kg5 exf6 3..Kh6 Th5#  
1..Lh4 g5 2..Kg4 h3+ 3..Kh5 g4#  
1..Te6 b5 2..Ke5 b6+ 3..Kd6 Td5#  
Moves by each of the wPs to provide a shield for the bK. In two (but not all three) of the solutions the wP then also performs guard duties.

### 2nd Commendation: 13509 by Abdelaziz Onkoud

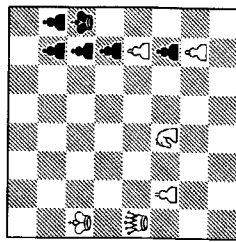
1..Sf5 Kxg5 2..Kxh3 Kf4 3..g2 Th7#  
1..Lf5 Kxe5 2..f2 Ka4 3..Kf3 Ld5#  
The self-pinning motive of the first black moves is delightfully deep and obscure. Initially I intended to place this problem higher, but I'm a bit worried that the other effect of the first black moves (unguarding each of the bRs in turn) is arguably rather 'weasely' as the mechanism would essentially work in much the same way without the bRs.



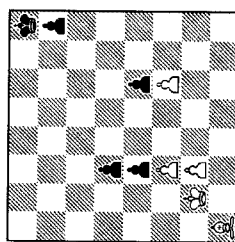
H#5 2 solutions



H#4 B: wSb8



H#2,5 3 solutions



H#8

### 3rd Commendation: 13512 by Nicolae Chivu

1..Kd2 Sg3 2..Ke1 Se2 3..Kf1 Lh2  
4..Kg2 Lg3 5..Kh3 Sf4#  
1..g3 Sxg3 2..Kc4 Se4 3..Kd5 Sf6+  
4..Ke5 e4 5..Kf4 Lh2#  
Again, nice disparate solutions; I especially like the move Pb4>b3.

### 4th Commendation:

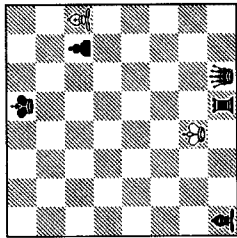
13362 by Jean-François Carf, version Teppo Mänttä  
A 1..g4 Lxd6 2..g5 La3 3..Sg6 h8D 4..f5 Db2#  
B 1..f5 Sc6 2..f6 Sb4 3..Lg8 hxg8D 4..Ka1 Da2#  
The version, dispensing with the zero position, is an immeasurable improvement.

### 5th Commendation: 13505 by Jorma Pitkanen

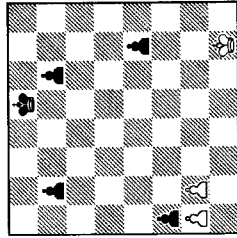
1..- Sf2 2..gxf2 Df4 3..f1T Dh2#  
1..- Sf4 2..gxf4 De8 3..g5 Dh5#  
1..- Df4 2..gxf4 Se5 3..f3 Sf7#  
This problem won't detain solvers long, but the three sacrifices make a good impression.

### 6th Commendation: 13369 by Jorma Pitkanen

1..h5 Ka3 2..h4 Ka4 3..h3 Kb5 4..h2 Kxc4 5..h1L Kd5  
6..Lxf3+ Ke6 7..Le4 Kf7 8..Lh7 c4#  
This composer often (as here) finds unexpected (and so fresh-seeming) takes on the Excelsior H#n.



H#6



H#6 2 solutions

7th Commendation: 13367 by Valeri Barsukov  
 1. Te6 Le3 2. Df8! Ke2 3. Kf7 Kf3 4. Lg7 Lh6  
 5. Kf6 Kf4 6. Df7 Lg5#

Difficult to grade this problem. The play is very pleasing, but we've seen so many fine H#n w/Bminimals with strategic effects of this sort in recent years that we've become rather blasé!

8th Commendation: 13514 by Jorma Pitkanen

1. Kd7 Kf2 2. Kc6 Ke3 3. Kb5 Kd4 4. Ka4 Kc5  
 5. b5 Kb6 6. b4 b3#  
 1. axb2 a4 2. Ke7 a5 3. Kf6 a6 4. Kg5 axb7  
 5. Kh4 b8D 6. Kh3 Dh2#

Another very nice problem by this exponent of the Excelstor H#n – here enriched with a non-Excelstor solution and far-ranging King treks.

I can only end with thanks to Kenneth Solja and to the composers for the enjoyment they have given me and with apologies for any perceived eccentricities in my rankings!

Christopher Jones  
 Bristol, February 2017

*Knorrfrist 1.7.2017*

**Problemski šah**  
 Josip Varga

