

Today's two annotated games comes a bit late; I apologise, as there were technical problems in getting the games to me (in PGN form – going through everything on the live site of a Greek website is beyond my patience, I fear) I suddenly had to cook for two ungreatful scoundrels, who were later sent early to bed...

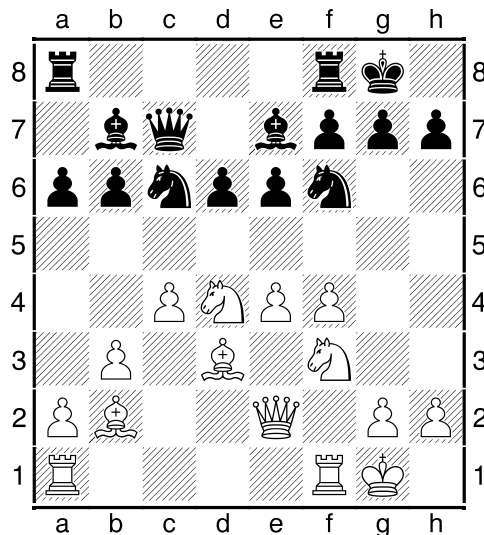
 **Istratescu (2636)**

 **Khetsuriani (2336)**

40th Greek Team Championship 2012 Porto Rio Hotel (Round 2 board 16), 01.07.2012

(Annotations by GM Aagaard)

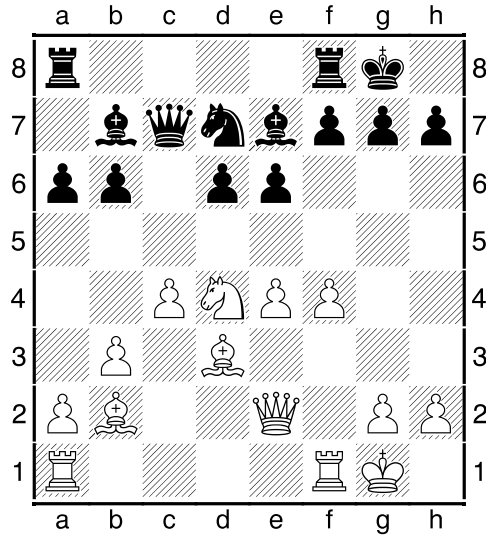
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♙d3 ♘f6 6.0-0 ♖c7 7.♚e2 d6 8.c4 ♙e7 9.b3 0-0 10.♙b2 b6 11.♘d2 ♙b7 12.f4 ♘c6 13.♘2f3! (D)



13.♘xc6 ♙xc6 14.♙h1 ♘d7 and ...♙f6 is Black's plan. But White does not have to be so compliant.

13...♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♘d7!N (D)

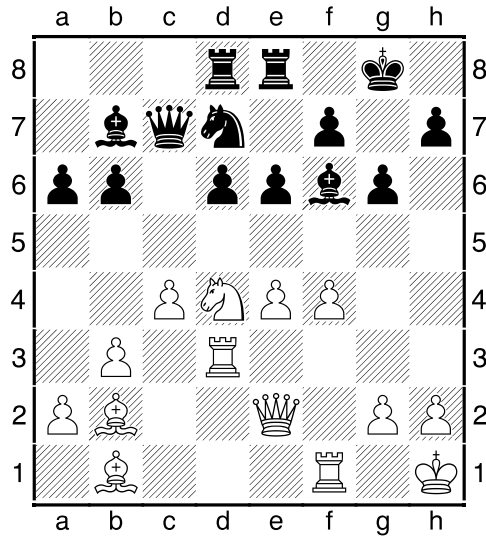
I find this move pleasant and natural. A previous game continued 14...g6 15.♘c2 d5 16.cxd5 exd5 17.e5 ♘e4 18.f5 ♖ae8 19.♙h1± Palac – Martorelli, Formia 1994, but probably there were improvements for both players along the way.



15. ♖ad1 ♜fe8

This move looks very standard, but I suspect that this is an inaccuracy. As we shall see the rook might still have a function on f8, so 15... ♟f6 with something like equality was probably better.

16. ♔h1 ♟f6 17. ♟b1 ♜ad8 18. ♞d3 g6 (D)



It is already not so easy to suggest good moves for Black. 18...e5?! 19. ♘f5 ♘c5 20. ♞g3±

19. ♞g3!

Istratescu eyes the weakness of the e6/f7/g6 constellation; a typical example of what I once called "the missing bishop" (♟b7 is out of this part of the game).

19...♔g7

19...♖h8 20.♜h3 ♔g8 21.♞d2 ♔g7 22.f5

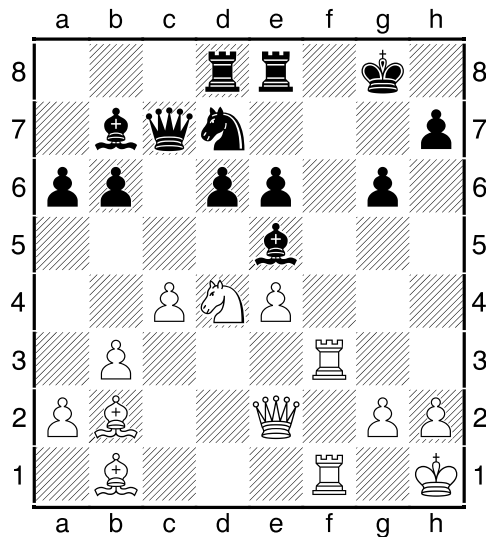
20.f5

It is obvious that White's play is easier at this point.

20...♔e5?!

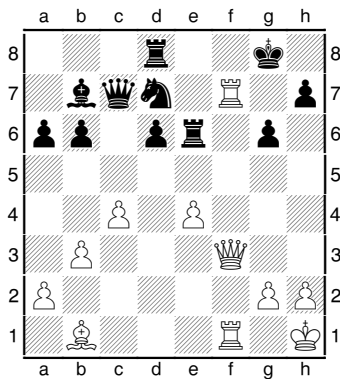
20...♗f6! was better, but I do not feel that Black has solved all of his problems.

21.fxe6 fxe6 22.♞gf3± (D)



22...♞e7

Black has a lot of poisoned chalices to drink from. 22...♔g7 can be met with an very nice combination leading to a preferable rook ending: 23.♗xe6! ♜xe6 24.♔xg7 ♖xg7 25.♞f7+ ♔g8 26.♞f3 (Analysis Diagram)



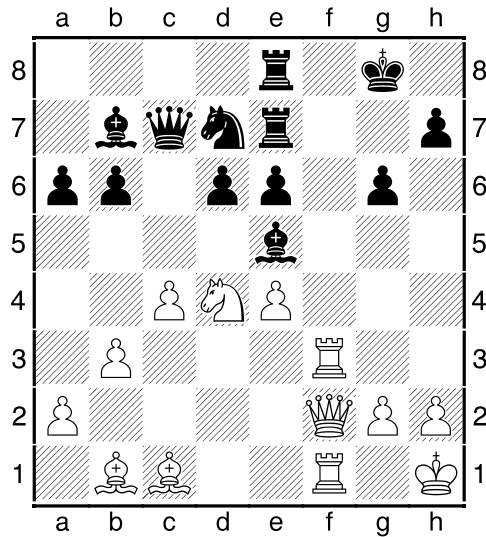
26...♖de8! 27.♘c3 ♜e5 28.♗h3 ♞h5 29.♗xd7 ♗xd7 30.♞xd7 ♙xe4 31.♙xe4 ♜xe4 32.h3± and White has serious winning chances in the endgame.

22...♗c5? is just bad because of 23.b4!± .

23.♗f2 ♞de8

23...♗c5 is bad for a number of reasons. The human line goes: 24.♗h4 ♞de8 25.♗xe6 ♜xe6 26.♞f7 h5 27.♙xe5 ♗xe5 28.♞xd7± and White has won a pawn.

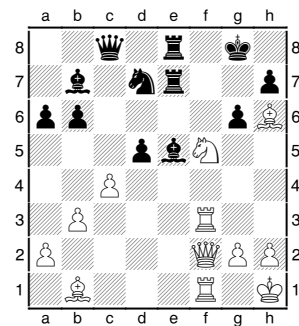
24.♙c1!→ (D)



I like this regroupment quite a bit, even if a computer might not pick it for the best possible continuation. 24.♗h4!? was another idea, but I do not see a direct kill after 24...♞g7± .

24...♙g7

24...d5 25.♙h6!± is very unpleasant for Black He has to find 25...♗d8!, where 26.♗e3 and 26.♞f7 still favours White. The main point is 25...♗c8 26.exd5 exd5 27.♗f5!!± (Analysis Diagram)

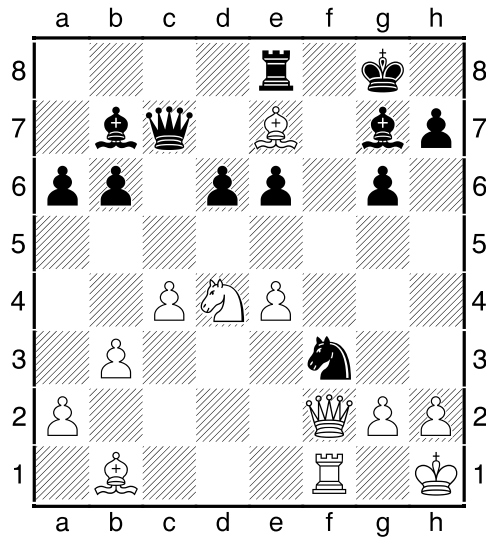


♖e6 (27...gxf5 28.♙xf5+-) 28.♙g5! dxc4 29.♘h6+ ♔h8 30.♖f7 ♙c3 (30...cxb3 31.♙xd7 ♜xd7 32.♜f8+!+-) and now either 31.♘g4! or (31.♜g3 ♙b2 32.♜h4! with the threat ♜xh7+, winning.)]

25.♙g5 ♘e5

25...♜c5 26.♙xe7 ♜xe7 27.♜h4 g5 28.♜h5 also gives White a winning attack.

26.♙xe7 ♘xf3 (D)

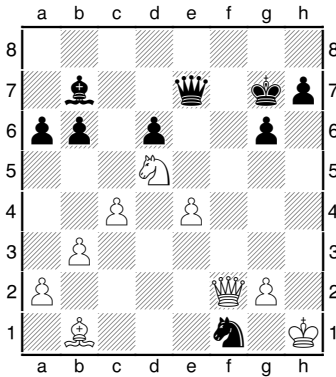


27.♘xe6!!

The great tactical point of White's play up to this point.

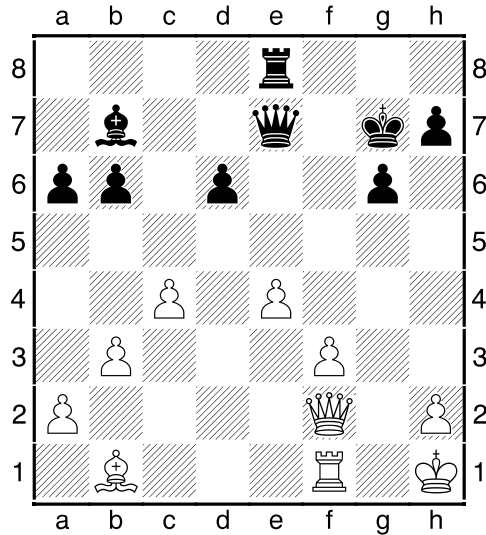
27...♜xe7 28.♘xg7 ♔xg7

The continuation of the desperado sequence fails to work after 28...♘h2 29.♘xe8 ♘xf1 30.♘f6+ ♔g7 31.♘d5 (Analysis Diagram) , when the black knight is in trouble.



For example: 31...♙xd5 32.cxd5 ♖f8 33.♔g1 ♗xf2+ 34.♔xf2 ♜h2 35.♔g3 ♜f1+ 36.♔f4 and the threat of ♙d3, trapping the knight and attacking the a6-pawn forces Black to play 36...g5+ 37.♔xg5 ♜e3 , which seems to be quite unrealistic after 38.g3 .

29.gxf3± (D)



White's extra pawn constitutes a significant advantage. The next ten moves did not change much, but Black failed to demand a sign of technique for White by losing on time.

29...♖c7 30.♗d4+ ♔g8 31.♙d1 ♜e6 32.♙d3 ♗c5 33.♙e2 ♗xd4 34.♙xd4 g5 35.b4 ♔f8 36.♔g2 ♔e7 37.♔g3 ♔f6 38.f4 gxf4+ 39.♔xf4 ♔e7 40.♙g4 1-0

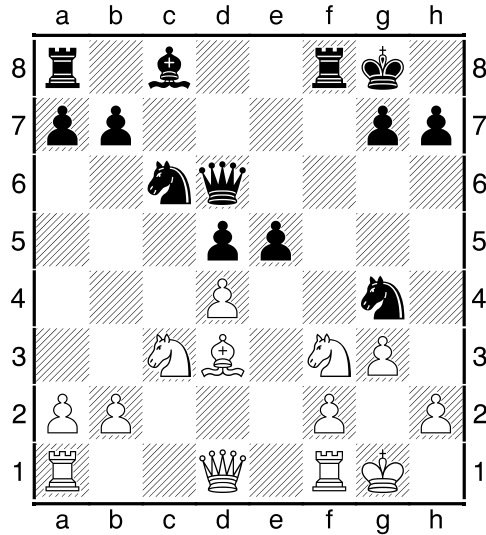
Papadopoulos (2417)

Berg (2587)

40th Greek Team Championship 2012 Porto Rio Hotel (Round 3 board 4), 01.07.2012

Emanuel Berg shows his preparation in a sharp game in one of the most critical variations of the French.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♙d3 c5 6.c3 ♘c6 7.♘e2 cxd4 8.cxd4 f6 9.exf6 ♘xf6 10.0-0 ♙d6 11.♘f3 ♗c7 12.g3 0-0 13.♙f4 ♘g4 14.♙xd6 ♗xd6 15.♘c3 e5 (D)



Black has to go forward (or backwards) as after 15...♔d7? 16.♕xh7+! he just lose.

16.dxe5 ♖h6

16...♗gxe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♕e4!±

17.h4 ♗gxe5 18.♗g5 d4!

I am quite sceptical about Black's chances after 18...♕g4?! . The two critical lines go:

19.♕xh7+ ♔h8 20.♖xd5 (20.♖b1? Heedt – Jurek, Biel 2000, could have lost immediately, had Black played 20...♗d4!N followed by ...♗f3+, winning.) 20...♗ad8 21.♖c5 g6♞ was Losev – Moskalkenko, Moscow 1995. The critical line now seems to be 22.f4 ♗d3 23.♖e3 ♗fe8 24.♗ce4 ♖g7 25.♗ad1!±

19. ♕e2! ♕xe2 20.♖xd5+ ♔h8 21.♗xe2± Haslinger – Berg, Liverpool 2007. Black drew, but the position is not comfortable.

19.♕xh7+!

According to my database this is a novelty. But I assume that both players are fully aware of what they are doing at this point.

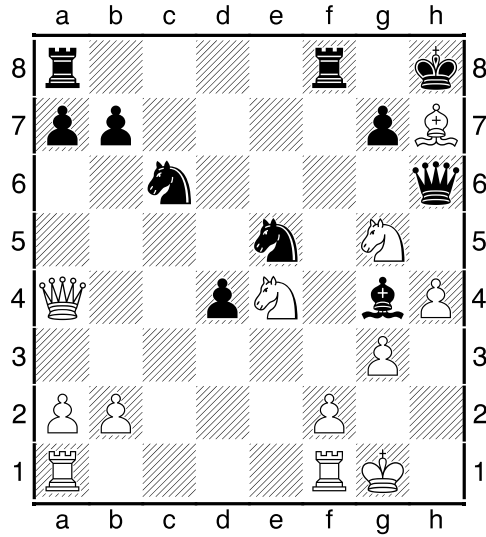
(Editor's note: Jacob's database informed him wrong. White's 19th is a known theoretical move)

19.♗e2 was played in Kudrin – Ryan, Port Erin 1999. Here Black is at least equal after 19...♕g4!∞

19...♔h8 20.♗ce4

20.f4!? ♗g4 (20...♕g4 21.♖c2!± ♗f3+ 22.♗xf3 ♖xh7 23.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 24.♗e4) 21.♗b5 ♗e3 22.♖b3 ♗xf1 23.♗xf1∞ is another interesting variation that Berg has no doubt analysed deeply.

20...♕g4 21.♖a4 (D)



So far we are following Houdini's recommendations.

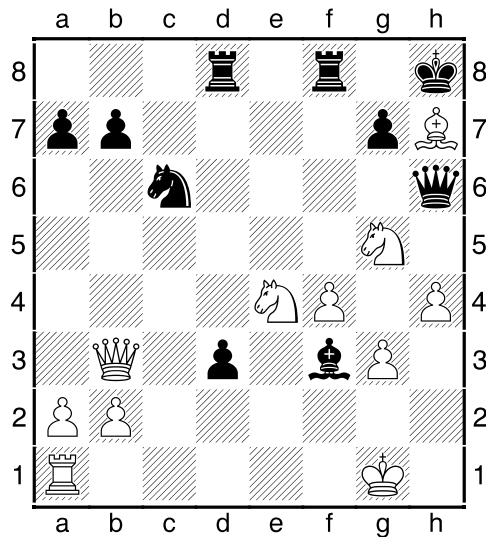
21...♖ad8!?

21...♙e2 22.♖fe1 d3♖ is also worth more analysis. For example: 23.f4 ♖xf4!? 24.gxf4 ♙xh4 25.fxe5 ♗g4+=

22.f4 ♘f3+ 23.♖xf3?

23.♘xf3 ♙xh7 24.♘eg5 would have forced Berg to show his preparation. I personally believe Black is ok, but White should White not be so as well?

23...♙xf3 24.♗b3 d3! (D)



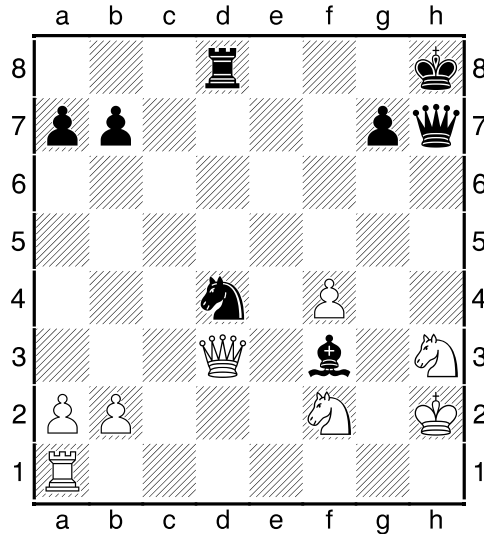
25. ♖h2?

This fails tactically in quite a number of ways. 25. ♘xf3 was forced, but after 25... ♙xh7 26. ♘fg5 ♙h5+ White will struggle for a draw.

25... ♖xf4!

A nice shot. The bishop on h7 is truly far away from the action.

26. gxf4 ♙xh4+ 27. ♘h3 ♘d4 28. ♙xd3 ♙xh7 29. ♘ef2 (D)



29. ♖e1 ♙g6! and White cannot both defend the knight and the g2-square.

29... ♙h4

Preparing ... ♘c6 and ... ♘f3+.

30. ♖e1

30. ♖g1 ♘c6 31. ♖g3 would probably have forced Black to win the queen with 31... ♘f3+ 32. ♖xf3 ♖xd3 33. ♖xd3, when some technical challenges remain.

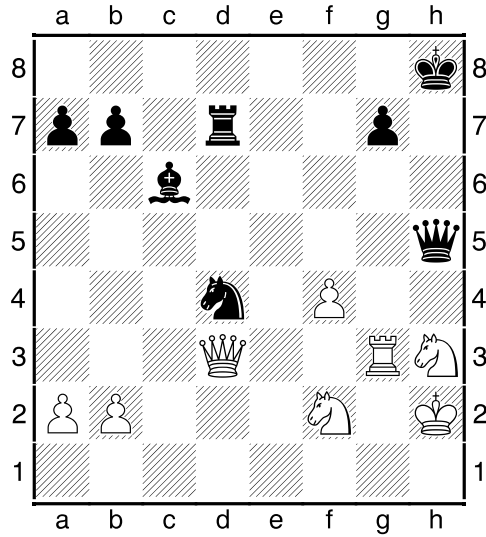
30... ♘c6

30... ♘g4! with the idea 31. ♖e3 ♘f5 is brilliant computer chess.

31. ♖e3 ♙h5!

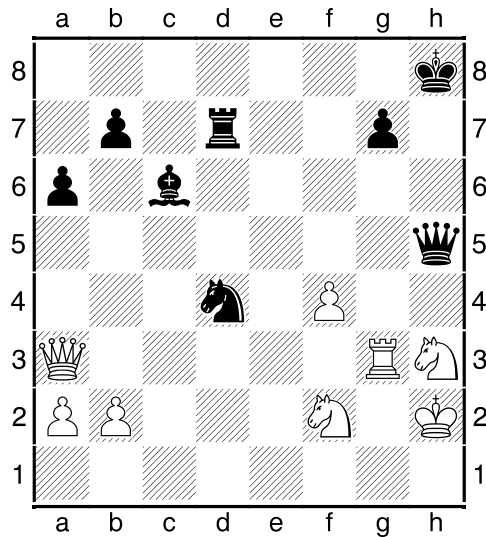
It is not even necessary to win the queen; the attack is thus much to be preferred.

32. ♖g3 ♖d7?



Black's reluctance to not win the queen is understandable, but puts some demands on him. Here he had to find 32...Rd6! , which after 33.♖e3 ♘f3+ 34.♔g2 ♖g6! would have carried the attack to its conclusion.

33. ♖a3 a6?! (D) [33...♔g8!♣]



34. ♖g5??

A sad end to an interesting game. After 34.♖f8+ ♔h7 35.♖e3♣ would not be so easy to refute.

34...♘f3+ 0-1