

## **KISLYAK THEME: NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

*By Andrey Frolkin*

*Alexander Kislyak in memoriam*

The outstanding Ukrainian retro composer Alexander Kislyak, who was twice proclaimed world champion in retroanalysis (once on the basis of a FIDE Album and then as the winner of the 1<sup>st</sup> WCCI) and who still remains the highest scorer of FIDE Album points for classical-style retros, passed away five years ago.

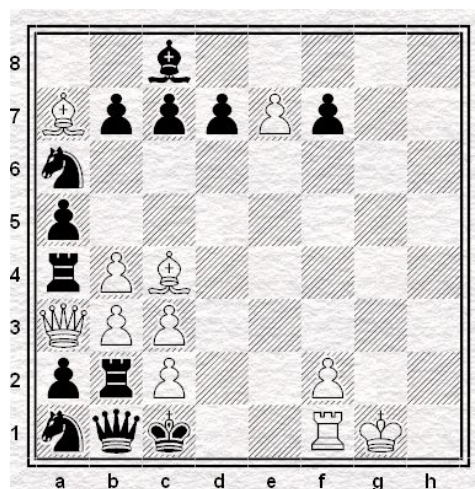
His best articles were published in *Die Schwalbe* and two of them were focused on what later came to be known as Kislyak theme (“10 Jahre Verfolgung eines retroanalytischen Themas”, Heft 103, 1987, and “Die Verfolgung eines retroanalytischen Themas geht weiter”, Heft 118, 1989, Heft 123, 1990).

### **Kislyak theme:**

*Unpromotion by both sides on adjacent files, followed (in retro-play) by uncapture performed by one of the pawns, resulting in both pawns finding themselves on the same file, with the white pawn being placed on the board “below” its black counterpart.*

It appeared to be quite hard to present the theme in a double form, that is, with four thematic unpromotions. Until recently, to the best knowledge of the author of this article, there were just three classical-style retros with a double rendition of the theme. Below, the strengths and weaknesses of those problems are discussed.

Alexander Kislyak  
*Die Schwalbe* 1987  
 Dr. Karl Fabel in memoriam  
 5<sup>th</sup> Hon. Mention



11 + 13 Release the position

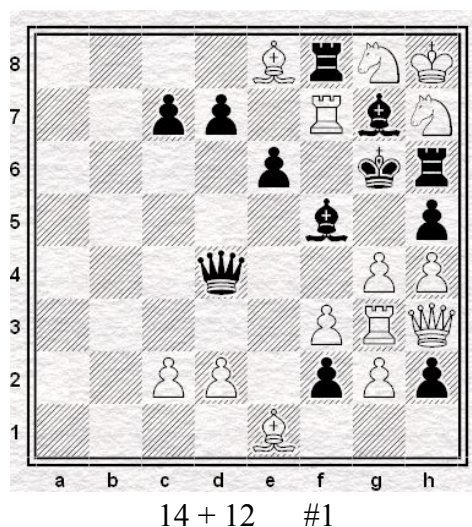
Retract: -1.0-0+ (move numbers are preceded by a “-“ character in this article, so as to differentiate between retro moves and “forward” moves) Sc5-a6 -2.Bd3-c4 Se4-c5 -3.Bd4-a7 Sg3-e4 -4.Bh8-d4 Se2-g3 -5.h7-h8=B Sg1-e2 -6.h6-h7 g2-g1=S -7.h5-h6 g3-g2 -8.Bc4-d3 g4-g3 -9.Bd3-c4 g5-g4 -10.h4xRh5 Rh6-h5 -11.Bc4-d3 Ra6-h6 -12.Bd3-c4 Ra8-a6 -13.Bc4-d3 a7-a5 -14.Bd3-c4 Ra6-a4 -15.Qa5-a3 Rh6-a6 -16.Qe5-a5 Rh2-h6 -17.Qh8-e5 Rg2-h2 -18.Bf1-d3 Rg1-g2 -19.e6-e7 a3-a2 -20.a2xSb3 Sa5-b3 -21.e5-e6 Sb3-a1 -22.e4-e5 Sc5-b3 -23.e3-e4 Qa1-b1 -24.e2-e3 Rb1-b2 -25.Qh7-h8 Qb2-a1 -26.Qh8-h7 Qb3-b2 -27.Qh6-h8 Qe6-b3 -28.Qh7-h6 Rb3-b1 -29.Qh8-h7 Kb2-c1 -30.h7-h8=Q g2-g1=R -31.h6-h7 g3-g2 -32.h5-h6 Qe8-e6 -33.h4-h5 Qd8-e8 -34.h2-h4 h4xRg3! -35.Rd3-g3 Sa6-c5 -36.Rd1-d3 Sb8-a6 -37.d2xBc3 Bg7-c3 -38.Ra1-d1 Re3-b3 -39.b3-b4 b4xSa3, etc.

**Strength:** AUW.

**Weaknesses:** The check to the black king in the diagram position necessitates White’s immediate uncastling. **This has a highly restrictive effect on the retroplay, “pinning” the wK and wRh1 to their home squares.** The squares of captures on the thematic files are **not determined strictly.** For the sake of subsequent comparison, it should also be mentioned that all four thematic pieces involved in the AUW are already on the board, i.e. **none of them is uncaptured in retroplay.** Overall, a highly impressive achievement:

**9.5 FIDE Album points**

Alexander Kislyak  
*Die Schwalbe* 1989  
 Dedicated to N. Plaksin



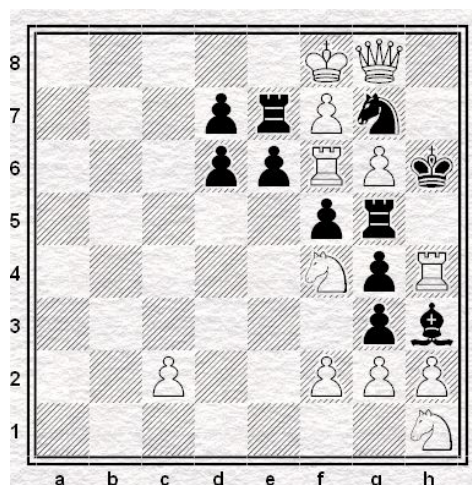
1.Rxg7#. Retract: -1...Be5xBg7+ -2.Bf6-g7 Qd6-d4 -3.Bg7-f6 Ba1-e5 -4.Bd4-g7 a2-a1=B -5.Ba7-d4 Bd3-f5 -6.Bb8-a7 Ba6-d3 -7.b7-b8=B a3-a2 -8.b6-b7 Bc8-a6 -9.b5-b6 a4-a3 -10.b4-b5 Qb6-d6 -11.a3xSb4 Sd5-b4 -12.a2-a3 Sf6-d5 -13.Sg5-h7 Sh7-f6+ -14.Se4-g5 Qb1-b6 -15.Sd6-e4 b2-b1=Q -16.Sc4-d6 b3-b2 -17.Sb6-c4 b4-b3 -18.Sa8-b6 b5-b4 -19.a7-a8=S b7-b5 -20.b6xSa7 Sc6-a7 -21.b5-b6 Se7-c6 -22.Sf6-g8 Sg8-e7+ -23.Sd5-f6 a5-a4 -24.Sc3-d5 Kf6-g6 -25.R~-f7+, etc.

**Strengths:** Immensely rich content. **One of the thematic promoted pieces (wB) is uncaptured.**

**Weakness:** One of the thematic captures **may have occurred on b4 as well as b5.**

**8.0** FIDE Album points

Andrey Kornilov  
 Andrey Frolkin  
*Die Schwalbe* 1999  
 Dedicated to A. Kislyak  
 1<sup>st</sup> Prize



12 + 11 What were the promotions  
 and the promotion squares?

Retract: -1.Sh5-f4+ c7xSd6 -2.Sc4-d6 Se8-g7 -3.Sb2-c4 Sd6-e8 -4.Sc4-b2 Sb5-d6 -5.Sd6-c4 Sc3-b5  
 -6.Se8-d6 -7.Sb1-c3 -8.Sg7-e8 Sc3-b1 -9.Se8xRg7 Rh7-g7 -10.Qh8-g8 Sb1-c3 -11.Kg8-f8 Sc3-b1  
 -12.Sd6-e8 Sb1-c3 -13.Sc4-d6 Sc3-b1 -14.Sb6-c4 Sb1-c3 -15.Sa8-b6 b2-b1=S -16.a7-a8=S b3-b2  
 -17.a6-a7 b4-b3 -18.a5-a6 b5-b4 -19.a4-a5 a6xRb5 -20.Rb8-b5 a7-a6 -21.Rf8-b8 Re8-e7 -22.a3-a4  
 Rb8-e8 -23.Re8-f8, etc.

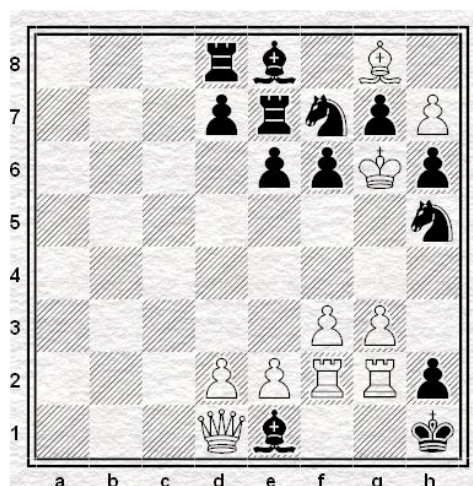
**Strengths:** One of the thematic promoted pieces (wS) is uncaptured. Also, there is a try based on alternative unpromotions: a8=R, b8=S, a1=S, b1=R instead of a8=S, b8=R, a1=R, b1=S.

**Weakness:** The second thematic event (b3xBa2) following b8=R and a1=R occurs when the cage has already been released and therefore the promoted white and black rooks are unidentifiable.

9.5 FIDE Album points

A fourth retro with Kislyak theme presented in double form is Michel Caillaud's prize-winner in a tourney in which the award has been published just a few days ago.

Michel Caillaud  
 1<sup>st</sup> ChessProblem.net Composing Tournament  
 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> Prize e.a.



10 + 13 What were the promotion moves?

Retract: -1.Qb1-d1 (any side can start the retraction; this is unessential here) Ra8-d8 -2.Qb8-b1 Ra1-a8 -3.Qc8-b8 **a2-a1=R** -4.Qb8-c8 a3-a2 -5.Qc8-b8 a4-a3 -6.Qb8-c8 a5-a4 -7.**b7-b8=Q** a7-a5 -8.a6xSb7 Sc5-b7 -9.a5-a6 Se4-c5 -10.a4-a5 Sg5-e4 -11.a3-a4 Sh3-g5 -12.a2-a3 Sg1-h3 -13.Rf1-f2 Bf2-e1 -14.Rb1-f1 Be3-f2 -15.Rf2-g2 Kg2-h1 -16.Rf1-f2+ Kh3-g2 -17.f2-f3 Sf3-g1 -18.Rb8-b1 Sd4-f3 -19.**b7-b8=R** Sb3-d4 -20.Rg1-f1 Sc1-b3 -21.b6-b7 **c2-c1=S** -22.b5-b6 c3-c2 -23.b4-b5 c4-c3 -24.Rh1-g1 b5xBc4 -25.Bd5-c4 Kg4-h3 -26.Bg2-d5 Bc5-e3 -27.Bf1-g2 Kf4-g4 -28.g2-g3+ Sg3-h5 -29.Kh5-g6 Se4-g3+; later, Bg8>c8, **c7-c8=B**.

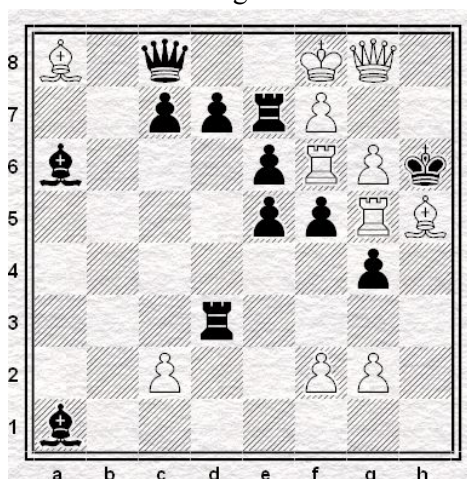
**Strength:** Extra promotion (c8=B) on a file adjacent to the two thematic pawn files.

**Weakness:** Even though both thematic uncaptures occur before stage 2 of the cage release is over (key retraction: g2-g3), any of the two white rooks could have unpromoted on b8; that is, **one of the thematic promoted pieces is unidentifiable**.

Below are three more retros, all original ones, presenting Kislyak theme.

Andrey Frolkin

Original



11 + 12 Release the position

### Detailed solution.

The cage in the upper right corner of the board can only be released following the emergence of a shield on h7; then Qg8>h8, Kf8>g8, shield on f8.

g7-g8=Q? or h7xg8=Q results in 5 captures by white pawns, while only 4 black pieces are missing.

Cage release scenario 1: bS>g7, Se8xBg7, Bh8-g7+, h7-h8=B, Qh8-g8, etc; 4 captures by the white pawns f7 and g6; but there is no bS in the diagram position; 12 (black pieces on the board) + 4 (dxexf, exfxg) + 1 (bS) = 17.

Cage release scenario 2: wS>g7, Se8xRg7, Rh7-g7, Qh8-g8, etc.

Black balance (preliminary): 12 + 2 (exf, hxg) + 1 (bRh7) = 15.

White balance (preliminary): 11 + 3 (fxe, gxf, hxg) + 1 (wS) = 15.

Moreover, none of the pieces outside the cage, including the wS that must be uncaptured, can perform the shielding on f8; to that end, a bB/S or a wQ/R is needed.

In view of this, the general balance of the position is:

15 + 15 + 1 (d6xe7>e8 or wPd was captured on its file) + 1 (piece for the shielding on f8) = 32.

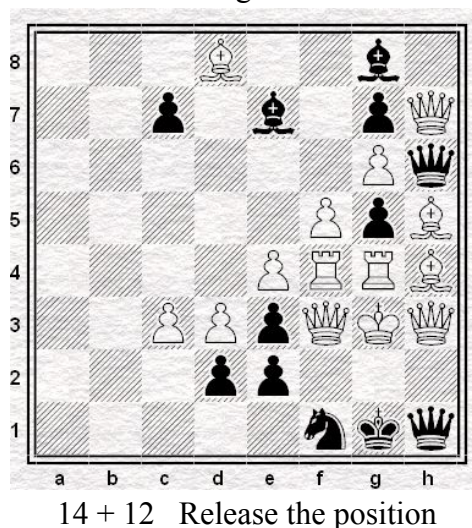
If the f8-shield is a black piece, Kg8xB/Sf8 is required. The black a- or b-pawn must have captured the wS; then one more capture is required to account for the sides' a- and b-pawns, raising the general balance to 33. To account for the a- and b-pawns as well as for the uncapture of the white knight and the white shield on f8, Black had to cross-capture on the a- and b-files.

Retract: -1...Qb7-c8+ -2.a7-a8=B Bc4-a6 -3.a6-a7 Qb1-b7 -4.a5-a6 b2-b1=Q 5.a4-a5 b3-b2 -6.a3-a4 a4xSb3! These 11 single moves were unique ones. -7.Sd4-b3 Bc3-a1 -8.Sb5-d4 Rd1-d3 -9.Sd6-b5 Ra1-d1 -10.Se8-d6 a2-a1=R -11.Sg7-e8 B~ -12.Se8xRg7 Rh7-g7 -13.Qh8-g8 B -14.Kg8-f8 B~ -15.Sd6-e8 B~ ... -20.b7-b8=S ... -24.b2-b4 b3xRa2! (b3xQa2?) -25.Ra1-a2 ... -30.Rf8-a8(b8) Re8-e7 -31.a2-a3! Ra8-e8

The "mobile part" of the upper cage has been released, but the "immovable part" – on the squares e5, e6, f5, f6, f7, g4, g5, g6, h5 – is yet to be released. -32.Re8-f8 Ra5-a8 -33.e7-e8=R! ~ -34.d6xSe7 (d6xQe7 is also possible) Sc6-e7+ -35.~ e7-e6.

**AUW on the a- and b-files:** a1=R, a8=B, b1=Q, b8=S; there is also a non-thematic promotion: e8=R. **For the first time ever, two promoted pieces are uncaptured** in the process of Kislyak theme implementation. The problem presents a considerable improvement compared to the above-quoted *Die Schwalbe* 1999 1<sup>st</sup> Prize.

Andrey Frolkin  
 Joaquim Crusats  
 Original



**Detailed solution.**

White balance:  $14 + 2$  (fxe, hxg) = 16.

All missing white pawns had to promote. What is the black balance?

$12 + 3$  (b2xc3, c2xd3, d3xe4) + 1 (exf>f8) + 1 (axb>b8) = 17.

Alternative:  $12 + 3$  (fxe, gxf, hxg) + 1 (exf>f8) + 1 (axb>b8, b2>b8 or bxa>a8, a2>a8) = 17.

Therefore, it is clear that White had to cross-capture on the d- and e-files. In that case, the black balance is not closed:

$12 + 2$  (e2xd3, d3xe4) + 1 (axb>b8, b2>b8 or bxa>a8, a2>a8) = 15.

The cage can only be released after Kf1-g1; for that purpose, two shielding pieces are required: on f2 and g2. In case of two white promotions on the same file, White had to capture a black pawn on this file.  $15 + 2$  (shielding pieces) = 17.

Therefore, White must unpromote on a8 and b8 and uncapture a black knight and a black rook when performing the “cross-uncapture” on the a- and b-files.

**Retract:** -1...Sh2-f1+ -2.Qh8-h7 Bf6-e7 -3.Be7-d8 Bc4-g8 -4.Qa8-h8 Qh8-h6 -5.Qc6-a8 Qa8-h8 -6.Bc5-e7 Qa1-a8 -7.Ba7-c5 a2-a1=Q! -8.Bb8-a7 a3-a2 -9.Qa8-c6 a4-a3 -10.b7-b8=B a5-a4 -11.b6-b7 a6-a5 -12.a5xRb6! Rb1-b6 -13.Qa7-a8 Rf1-b1 -14.Qa8-a7 Rf2-f1 -15.Qa7-a8 Ba2-c4 -16.Qa8-a7 Bb1-a2 -17.Qa7-a8 b2-b1=B! -18.Qa8-a7 b3-b2 -19.Qa7-a8 b4-b3 -20.Qa8-a7 b5-b4 -21.a7-a8=Q b7-b5 -22.b6xSa7! Sc6-a7 -23.a4-a5 Sb4-c6 -24.a3-a4 Sc2-b4 -25.a2-a3 Se1-c2 -26.b5-b6 Sg2-e1 -27.b4-b5 Kf1-g1 -28.b3-b4 Ke1-f1 -29.b2-b3 Kd1-e1 -30.c2-c3 Se1-g2 (Rf1-f2), etc.

Kislyak theme doubled.

**Tries:**

**a2-a1=B and b2-b1=Q?**

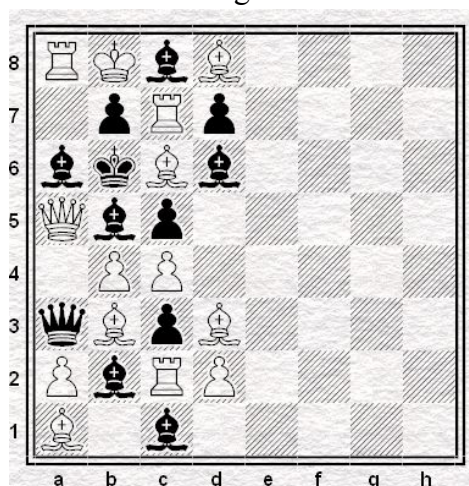
This “interchange of unpromotions” is illegal because Black loses his dark-squared bishop and the remaining two uncaptures by White are on light squares (e2xd3, d3xe4).

**b5xRa6 and a6xSb7?**

How many tempos does White have in store after the final uncapture? It can be easily counted that the black piece to be uncaptured second is his knight, for this piece requires fewer retractions to get to its shielding square. If White uncaptures the knight on a7 as in the solution, the knight needs 5 retractions. If the uncapture is performed on b7, the knight needs 6 retractions, i.e. one extra retromove and eventually retrostalemate.

Andrey Frolkin

Original



14 + 12 Last three pieces captured  
(regardless of sequence)?

**Detailed solution.**

White promotions: 3 BB + 1 R.

Black promotions: 4 BB.

White balance: 14 + 2 (axb, b4xc3) = 16.

Black balance: 12 + 4 (captured by the white pawns e – h) = 16.

To release the cage, three shields will be necessary – the first two on a5 and a7, allowing the retraction Ka6-b6; after that, a third shield will be installed on b6, so that White can retract Qc6-a4 or Rc6-c7.

The retroplay can be as follows:

-1.Qa4-a5+ Bg3-d6 -2.Bd5-c6 Bc6-b5 -3.Bg8-d5 Bh1-c6 -4.Bg6-d3 Bb5-a6 -5.Be8-g6 Bc6-b5  
-6.Be7-d8 Bg2-c6 -7.Bf8-e7 Be1-g3 -8.e7-e8=B Bf1-g2 -9.f7-f8=B f2-f1=B -10.f6-f7 e2-e1=B  
-11.f5-f6 e3-e2 -12.f4-f5 h2-h1=B -13.f3-f4 h3-h2 -14.e2xSf3 Sd4-f3 -15.e6-e7 f3-f2 -16.e5-e6 f4-f3  
-17.Ra7-a8 f5-f4 -18.f4xSe5 Sb5-d4 -19.Ka8-b8 Sc6-e5 -20.Kb8-a8 Sa5-c6+ -21.Ra8-a7 h4-h3  
-22.g7-g8=B h5-h4 -23.g6-g7 h7-h5 -24.h5xRg6 Sa7-b5 -25.h4-h5 Ka6-b6 -26.f3-f4 Rb6-g6  
-27.Qc6-a4 (Rc6-c7)

Kislyak theme **tripled** – for the first time ever! However, the thematic files are not strictly determined.

Andrey Frolkin

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