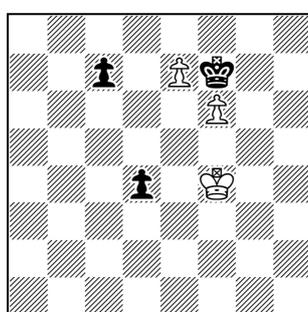# On a study by Behting

John Beasley, 21 August 2013, footnote added 22 August
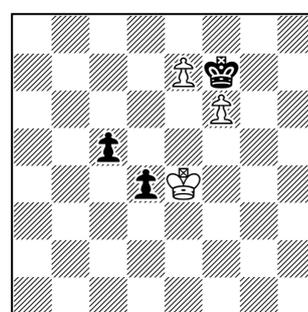
1 is a study by J. Behting (*Rigaer Tageblatt* 1894, 3384 in Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database IV"), with intention **1 e7 Kf7** (see **1a**) **2 Kf3!** (2 Ke4 c5 gives **1b** with White to play, after which there is no win) **c6** (2...Ke8 is met by 3 Ke4 c5 4 Kd5 winning as in the main line, while 2...c5 allows 3 Ke4 at once) **3 Kf4! c5 4 Ke4** (now we have **1b** with Black to play) **Ke8 5 Kd5!** (5 Kd3 also wins, but this threatens 6 Ke6 with mate next move and so is crisper) **Kd7** (5...Kf7 6 Kd6 winning more quickly) **6 Kc4 Ke8 7 Kxc5 d3 8 Kd6 Kf7** (7...d2 8 Ke6 d1Q 9 f7 mate) **9 Kd7 d2 10 e8Q+**. Unfortunately the study is unsound, 1 Kf3 at once providing an alternative solution, and there are also wins after 1 Ke4 and 1 f7+ (Black can answer White's eventual promotion with a promotion of his own, but White can then force through the promotion of his second pawn). The study therefore appears in Tattersall's *A Thousand End-Games* with the White king on f3, a version due to Lasker, with solution 1 Kf4 (now we have **1** with Black to play) Kf8 2 Ke4 c5 3 Kd3 Ke8 4 e7 etc, and I quoted it in this form in special number 42 of *British Endgame Study News*. We still have the same finish, which provides a sufficient reason in itself for the study's existence, but the beautiful preliminary moves 2 Kf3 and 3 Kf4 have gone. Furthermore, while the inversion dual 1 Kf3 has gone, the alternative cooks by 1 Ke4 and 1 f7+ remain, though I did not realise this when quoting the study in *BESN*.
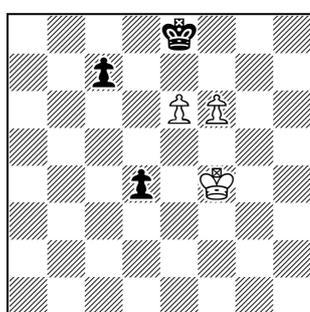
1 - White to play and win   1a - after 1...Kf7   1b - reciprocal zugzwang

However, the study becomes perfectly sound and everything of importance remains if we cut off the first move by each side and start from **1a**, and in this form it was rediscovered by Réti and published in good faith as an original (*Tagesbote*, 6 February 1927). This anticipation was doubtless the reason why **1a** was omitted from Artur Mandler's *Richard Réti : Sämtliche Studien*. The shortened form **1a** should therefore now stand as the definitive setting of Behting's idea.[*]

My thanks to Jan Kalendovský for bringing the Réti rediscovery to my attention. Had he not done so, I would in all probability have remained ignorant of the full beauty of Behting's study.

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[*] Harold van der Heijden tells me that the study seems first to have appeared in this form in *Zlatá Praha*, 26 January 1900.