dings to a few elementary endgames.

Groups of variants

An organisation according to the various themes involved should be useful for eventually collecting all the old material in a systematic way.

If we consider the whole corpus of old endings, it is however difficult to associate to a given combinational idea the exact number of variants existing in the various collections: a given variant is sometimes shown as a separate item, sometimes as an appendage to another ending, sometimes neglected.

The difficulty is that groups of variants on a given theme were indeed common but at the same time the number of positions to be considered could vary greatly. The reconstruction of the correct dependence of these compositions from each other is an essential point for us when we are willing to evaluate the successive contributions to the whole corpus of chess endings.

Authors of the compositions

Practically in no case, until may be Polerio and his times, there was an author willing or meriting to have a chess composition bound to his name.

Actually, we do find some names recorded, but commonly they correspond to legendary characters, such as for instance princess Dilaram, instead of historical ones.

In several cases it appears that the copy has been made for one's own use and the *author* had added a few specimens which were not included in the traditional collections. Usually, however, the copyist is anonymous and the date rather uncertain. Due to the collective character of the traditional compilations, the search for the actual authors of the compositions is fruitless. On the contrary, here - more than elsewhere for chess - is a study of the various manuscripts justified.

Studies of the evolution of chess endings

With the electronic means of data acquisition and sorting now available, it should be not too hard to compile a corpus of all these endings, even if some difficulty will derive from the uncertain date of most of them and the unorthodox conditions and/or pieces present in many cases. I already wrote a note asking for collaboration,

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