



## COLUMNISTS

*Over the Horizons*

Stefan Bucker

## High-Flying Maneuvers

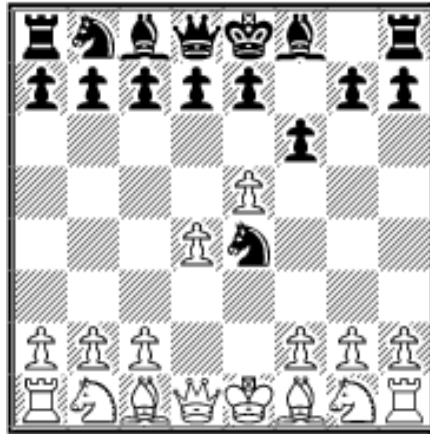
My February [article](#) on the Mokele Mbembe **1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4!?** concentrated on chasing the knight by means of 3 d3. The line had “exotic charm,” according to a reader from Vienna. Almost all of my games took this course. My opponents may have regarded this as the best possibility, or they wanted to be clever, believing that I knew more on 3 d4. In effect, I had to face the most dangerous move only twice. Anyway, **3 d4** must be the critical move. This view is shared by **Ludger Keitlinghaus** from **Prague**, who stated in an e-mail: “3 d4 seems to be the refutation, while I was always glad to see my opponents play 3 d3.” White intends to trap the knight, and in one of the main lines this natural plan even succeeds. Nevertheless, Black gets enough compensation – at least this is my opinion in some of the strange situations that can arise, as we’ll see at the end of the article.



*High-Flying Maneuvers*  
Zygmunt Nasiolkowski, Germany

The best continuation for Black after 3 d4 is tough to identify. In 1922, **Hans Fahrni** recommended 3...e6 [\[1\]](#), overlooking 4 Nh3 h6 5 Qg4 [\[4\]](#) h5 6 Qf4 g5 7 Nxg5 Nxg5 8 Qxg5 [\[7\]](#) when Black

has problems. In Fahrni's booklet [1] 3...f6 was merely a sideline, but, about 1983, I noticed how interesting 3...f6 is (without knowledge of Fahrni's analyses). Some of White's most tempting replies can lead to messy situations where the attacker will lose the thread in most cases.



Since Black cannot flee to the queenside, he secures another escape route for his knight. Now White can choose between several promising alternatives. While pondering the question about where to begin, I received the following reaction to my last column from **Bruno Luyckx** in **Belgium**:

“Here are four games that I played twenty years ago in Spain. The second and third games were very fun to play, but I lost the fourth game without a fight and consequently abandoned the Mokele Mbembe at that time. I soon stopped competing altogether, only to enter a tournament in November 2005 (Beuven, Belgium). Maybe next time I make a comeback, I will put the Mokele Mbembe in my black repertoire again!”

It is unusual to have four games from the same opening in one tournament. The first game transposed to a standard Alekhine, but the others are fascinating. To indicate possible improvements for Black, I'll insert some comments in games three and four.

#### ***Serrate (2170) – Luyckx (1900)***

Badalona, August 3, 1987

Alekhine's Defense [B02]

1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4 3 Nc3 d5 4 d4 Bf5 5 Bd3 e6 6 Nge2 Bb4 7 O-O 0-0 8 Be3 Nxc3 9 bxc3 Bxd3 10 Qxd3 Be7 11 f4 f5 12 exf6 Bxf6 13 Rf3 Qe7 14 Rh3 g6 15 Rf1 Nd7 16 Rff3 Rae8 17 Rfg3 Rf7 18 Rg4 e5 19 Ng3 e4 20 Qd2 Bg7 21 Rg5 Qe6 22 f5 Qa6 23 fxg6 hxg6 24 Ne2 Qxa2 25 Rxg6 Qb1+ 26 Nc1 Ref8 27 Rxg7+ Rxg7 28 Bh6 Qb5 29 Ne2 Qb1+ 30 Nc1 Qb5 1/2-1/2

#### ***Keller (2150) – Luyckx (1900)***

Badalona, August 4, 1987

Alekhine's Defense [B02]

1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4 3 d4 f6 4 Bd3 d5 5 f3 Ng5 6 Bxg5 fxg5 7 f4 c5  
8 Qh5+ g6 9 Bxg6+ hxg6 10 Qxh8 Nc6 11 Qg8 Bf5 12 Na3 Qa5  
+ 13 c3 cxd4



14 0-0 0-0 15 Ne2 e6 16  
Nxd4 Bxa3 17 Qf7 Qxc3+ 0-1

*Vera* (2075) – *Luyckx* (1900)  
Badalona, August 9, 1987  
Alekhine's Defense [B02]

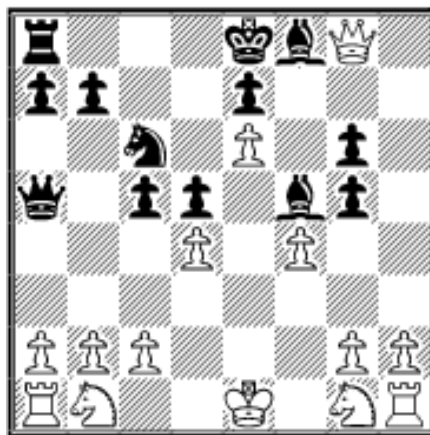
1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4 3 d4 f6 4 Bd3  
d5 5 f3 Ng5 6 Bxg5 fxg5 7 f4 c5  
8 Qh5+ g6!?

An enterprising novelty that  
sacrifices the exchange. The "solid" 8...Kd7 was seen in Lehtonen  
– Heinola, Finnland 1988: 9 Qxg5 Qb6 10 Nd2 c4 11 Be2 Qxb2  
12 Rb1 Qxd4 13 Nxc4 e6 14 Nf3 Qc5 15 Nd6 Qxc2 16 Bb5+ Nc6  
17 0-0 Qg6 18 Qh4 Be7 19 Qf2 Bd8 20 Qd2 Bb6+ 21 Kh1 Ke7 22  
Qc3 Rb8 ½-½.

9 Bxg6+ hxg6 10 Qxh8 Nc6 11 Qg8 Bf5 12 e6

For 12 Na3, see the game above.

12...Qa5+



13 b4 Qxb4+ 14 c3 Qb2 15 Qf7  
+ Kd8 16 Qxf8+ Kc7 17 Qxa8  
Qxa1 18 Kf2 Qxb1 19 Qe8 Qxa2  
+? (19...Bd3! Luyckx) 20 Ne2  
cxd4 21 cxd4 Bd3 22 Re1 gxf4  
23 g3?? f3 24 Qd7+ Kb6 25  
Kxf3 Bxe2+ 26 Rxe2 Nxd4+ 27  
Ke3 Qxe2+ 28 Kxd4 Qc4+ 29  
Ke3 Qc5+ 30 Kd3 Qb5+ 31  
Qxb5+ Kxb5 32 h4 Kc6 0-1

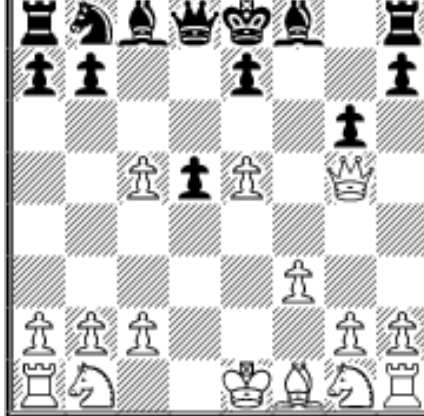
*Pazo* (2010) – *Luyckx* (1900)

Badalona, August 11, 1987  
Alekhine's Defense [B02]

1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4 3 d4 f6 4 Qh5+ g6 5 Qh4 d5 6 f3 Ng5 7 Bxg5  
fxg5 8 Qxg5 c5 9 dxc5



Luyckx's assessment +/- is  
premature, as I'll try to



demonstrate.

### 9...Nc6

Black could also play 9...Qa5+ 10 Qd2 (10 Nc3? d4; or 10 Nd2 Nc6) 10...Qxc5 11 Nc3 d4 12 Nb5 Qxe5+ 13 Be2 Bg7!, unclear.

### 10 c3

After this passive move, White can no longer expect an advantage. Critical is 10 Nc3, but even then Black gets sufficient compensation: 10...Qa5! 11 0-0-0 e6! (11...d4? 12 Nb5 Bg7 13 f4 Qxa2 14 Nc7+ Kf7 15 Nxa8 Bf5 16 Qg3 Bxc2? 17 Kxc2? Nb4+, but 17 e6+! Kxe6? 18 Qe1+, followed by Kxc2, is a clear refutation, since White now has b4 under control) 12 Qf6 Rg8 13 Bb5 a6 14 Bxc6+ bxc6. Black regains the pawn c5. The bishop-pair and the mobile pawns give Black sufficient compensation for the remaining pawn deficit.

### 10...Bf5?

Too complicated. Instead, Black should have castled kingside: 10...Bg7! 11 Na3 Qa5 12 Bb5 0-0 13 0-0-0 Rf5 unclear, or 11 f4 0-0 12 Nd2 (Computer – Bückner, training game 1987 [7]) 12...Qa5 13 Nb3 Qa4 =.

### 11 Bb5 Qa5 12 a4



Now Black is in trouble.

12...0-0-0 13 Bxc6 bxc6 14 b4 Qa6 15 Qe3 h5 16 Ne2 Bh6 17 f4 Bd3 18 Nd4 Rdf8 19 g3 Be4 20 Rg1 g5 21 fxg5 Bg7 22 Nd2 Bxe5 23 Nxe4 Bxd4 24 cxd4 dxe4 25 Qxe4 Rd8 26 Qe2 Qb7 27 Qc4 Rd5 28 h4 e5 29 0-0-0 Re8 30 dxe5 Rdxe5 31 Rgf1 Re4 32 Rd4 Re3 33 Rf7 Rc3+ 34 Qxc3 Qxf7 35 Rd2 Qf1+ 36 Rd1

Qe2 37 Qd3 Qe5 38 Kc2 Qe6 39 Kb2 Qg4 40 Ka3 Qe6 41 Rf1 Qe5 42 Qf5+ Qxf5 43 Rxf5 Re3+ 44 Kb2 Rxc3 45 Rf4 a5 1-0

An impressive series of games. I don't know whether Luyckx's opponents were able to prepare for his opening – in some



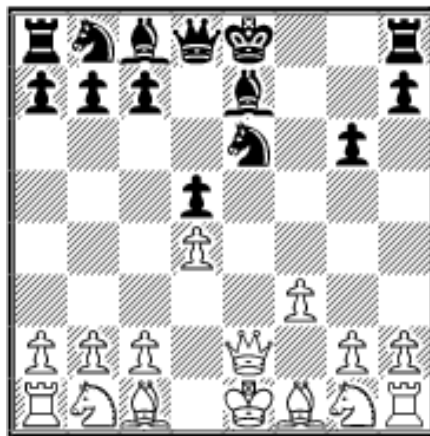
tournaments the pairings are announced just a few minutes before the round begins. But the result of 2½ points out of four games against stronger opponents speaks for itself. Apparently, 2...Ne4 is difficult to refute.

The opening from the last game brings us to another important variation:

**1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4 3 d4 f6 4 Qh5+ g6 5 Qe2**

The text move was suggested by **Kari Heinola** from the **USA**, which I recommended in [\[7\]](#). It attacks the knight, just as 5 Qh4 (from Pazo – Luyckx) does, but has an additional effect: two moves later Black's e-pawn will be pinned.

**5...d5 6 f3 Ng5 7 exf6 Ne6 8 fxe7 Bxe7**



Although Black has lost a pawn, the situation is far from clear. In the last few moves, the defender has gained valuable time for his development, and the open e- and f-files can play a future role.

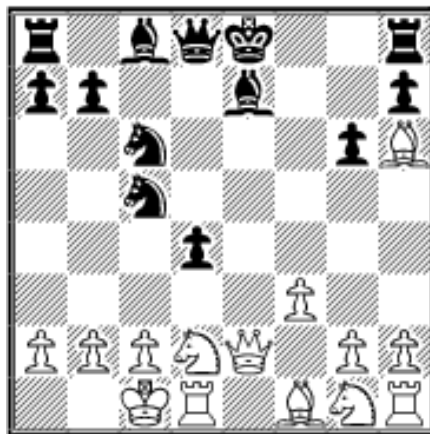
**9 Be3 c5**

He could also consider 9...Nc6 10 Qd2 0-0 11 Nc3 Bf6 12 Nge2 b5.

**10 dxc5 d4 11 Bh6**

11 Bf2 comes into consideration, while 11 Qb5+? Bd7 appears too risky.

**11...Nc6 12 Nd2 Nxc5 13 0-0-0**



**13...d3 14 cxd3 Be6 15 Nc4 b5 16 d4 Bxc4 17 dxc5 Bxe2 18 Rxd8+ Kxd8 19 Nxe2 Bxc5 20 Nf4 Nd4 21 Bg7 Re8 22 Bf6+ Kc7 23 Bd3 =+**

There are more variations where Black ends up much better than you probably would have expected. But I guess that by now you have seen enough happy

endings. So for the rest of this article, let us look at the “worst case

scenario.”

### The Hölderlin Variation: 4 Bd3 d5 5 Nc3!

Only a few months ago I would have hesitated to write an article on 2...Ne4, since Black's problems in this main line, where White aims “to trap the knight on mid-board” (Emms) [11], seemed impossible to overcome.

#### 1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4 3 d4 f6!? 4 Bd3 d5 5 Nc3!



Even stronger than Fahrni's [1] “5 f3 (h4?) Ng5 6 Bxg5 fxg5 7 f4 (if 7...gxf4, then 8 Qh5+), and Black is worse.” In fact, this variation is quite playable for Black. After the text move, Black faces more serious problems:

(a) 5...Nxc3? 6 Qh5+ g6 (6...Kd7 7 bxc3 +/-) 7 Bxg6+ hxg6 8 Qxh8 +/- Ne4 9 Bh6 Nd7? 10 e6

+/- .

(b) 5...Bf5 6 Qf3 e6 was my original idea: 7 Nxe4? dxe4 8 Bxe4 Qxd4! 9 Bxf5 (9 Bxb7? Bg4!) 9...Qxe5+ 10 Ne2 Qxf5 += (draw, 64) Rausis – Bücken, Dortmund 1990. But in [6] I gave 7 g4!, a *zwischenzug* that wins a pawn. Black has no compensation at all. Emms [11] copies my idea without giving a source.

(c) In 1985, Gerard Welling suggested 5...c5 6 dxc5 Qa5; for example, 7 Bxe4 dxe4 8 Be3 f5 9 a3 Nc6 10 f4 Be6 11 b4 Qc7 12 Qe2 g6 13 0-0-0 Bg7 14 Nh3 h6 15 Nd5 Bxd5 16 Rxd5 0-0 17 g4 +/- . This is hardly forced, of course – maybe someone can find an improvement?

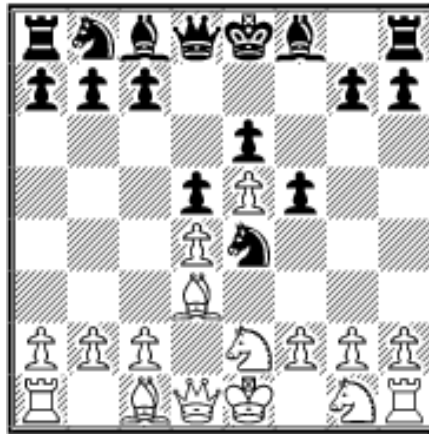
(d) My attempt 5...Nc6 also failed: 6 Nxe4 dxe4 7 Bxe4 Nxd4 (not 7...Qxd4?? 8 Bxc6+) 8 Qh5+! g6 9 Bxg6+ hxg6 10 Qxg6+ Kd7 11 c3 +/-; for example, 11...c6 12 cxd4 Qa5+ 13 Bd2 Qd5 14 Qf5+ Kc7 15 Qf3 Be6 16 Qxd5 Bxd5 17 f3, and White has a clear advantage in the ending.

The situation seemed desperate, but any Mokele Mbembe theoretician knows the axiom from that old master **Friedrich Hölderlin**: “Where there is danger, rescue will arise.”

## 5...f5! 6 Nce2

After the Ne4 has lost its escape square g5, it is a natural reaction to try and win the knight. Nevertheless, it could be stronger – and much simpler – to play for a positional advantage: 6 Nh3! Nxc3 (6...e6 7 Nf4 g6 8 Nce2 c5 9 f3 Ng5 is hardly better: 10 c4!) 7 bxc3 e6 8 Nf4 g6. Black's position is suspicious, but perhaps playable.

## 6...e6



My move order 6...c5 in *Kaissiber* #27 was incorrect. **Maurits Wind** from **The Netherlands** found a strong reply: 7 f3! Nd6 (or 7...c4 8 Bxe4 dxe4 9 fxe4 fxe4 10 Ng3, and White wins a pawn) 8 dxc5 Nc4 (8...Nf7 is too passive) 9 Bxc4 dxc4 10 Qxd8+ Kxd8 11 Nh3! Na6 12 Be3 e6 13 0-0-0+ Ke8 14 Rhg1! Bxc5 15 Bxc5

Nxc5 16 g4 g6 17 Nef4 +/- . White is better developed and enjoys a strong initiative (Wind).

## 7 h4

It is hard to resist the temptation to win the knight. Again, White could play for a positional edge with 7 Nf4, when the verdict must be the same as after 6 Nh3!.

## 7...c5 8 c3 Nc6 9 f3

Without the maneuver Kf1-g2 (to protect pawn g3) the knight will be difficult to catch; therefore, 9 a3 (to avoid the later Bb4+) could be a loss of time: 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 Be7 11 g3 0-0 12 f3 Qa5+ 13 Kf1 Nxd4! 14 Nxd4 Nxg3+, followed by Nxh1.

## 9...cxd4

After the possible reply 10 fxe4!? fxe4 11 Bb5 dxc3 12 Nxc3 Bc5, the passed pawns fully compensate the sacrificed piece.

## 10 cxd4 Bb4+

The modest looking 10...Be7 may be even better: 11 g3?! (White should play 11 fxe4 fxe4 12 Bb5!) 11...Qb6 12 fxe4 fxe4 13 Bc2 0-0 with attractive attacking chances; for example, 14 a3 Bd7 15 Nh3 Rf3! 16 Rf1 Raf8 17 Nhf4



17...Rxc3! 18 Nxc3 Nxd4 19 Bb1 Bxh4 20 Kf2 Nf5+ 21 Kg2 Nxc3 22 Rg1 Bb5 23 Qg4 Nf5 24.Kh1 Bf2 25 a4 Bc4 26 a5 Qc6 27 Rg2 Bd4 28 Bc2 Bxe5 29 Bd2 Bxb2 30 Ba4 Qc8 31 Rag1 Rf7 32 Rh2 Bd4 33 Qh3 h6 34 Rg6 b5 35 Bc2 Be5 36 Qg4 b4 37 Bxb4 Bb5 38 Rxe6 Bxf4 39 Qxf4 Qxe6 —+.

**11 Kf1 Qb6**



Prevents 12 Bb5. In view of the coming pawn structure, it can only be good for White to get rid of that bishop. Here, however, 11...0-0 is playable, since 12 Bb5? fails to 12...Nxd4! 13 Qxd4 Qa5 14 Bd3?? Bc5 —+.

**12 Bf4**

White has to be patient. If he captures on e4 too soon, he can easily find himself in trouble:

(a) 12 Be3? 0-0 13 Nh3 Nxe5 —/+.

(b) 12 Bc2? Nxd4!.

(c) 12 Nh3 0-0 13 Bc2? (13 a3 Be7 14 Bc2 (14 g3? Nxd4) 13... Bxh4 15 fxe4 fxe4+ 16 Nhf4 Be7 17 Ke1 Bd7 18 Ba4 Rac8 unclear) invites a combination: 13...Nxd4! 14 Be3



14...Nxe2 15 Bxb6 N4g3+ 16 Kf2 axb6 17 Rh2 Bc5+ 18 Ke1 Bd4 19 Bd3 (or 19 Nf4 Bxe5) Bxe5, and Black isn't worse.

(d) 12 a3 Be7 13 g3 g5 14 Bc2 gxh4 15 gxh4 Nxd4 16 Be3 Bc5 17 Bxd4 Ng3+ 18 Nxc3 Bxd4 19





f4 Bd7 with active play: 20 N1e2 Be3 21 Nh5 0-0-0 22 Rh3 d4 23 Nf6 Bc6 24 Bd3 Kb8 25 b4 Rhg8! 26 Nxcg8 Rxcg8 27 Rg3 Rxcg3 28 Nxcg3 Qd8 29 Qh5 Bxf4 =.

(e) 12 g3!? 0-0 13 Kg2 (13 a3 Nxd4! 14 Bxe4 fxe4 15 axb4 Nxf3) 13...Nxd4 14 Be3 Bc5 15 b4!



15...Qxb4 16 Rb1 Nc3 17 Rxb4 Nxd1 18 Bxd4 Bxb4 19 Nh3 +=. White regains the Nd1. His slight material deficit is more than compensated by his excellent piece play.

**12...0-0 13 Bc2 Na5**

13...Bd7 is worse, but, as so often is the case, White has to remain

patient:

(a) 14 fxe4? fxe4 15 g3 Be8 16 h5 Rf5! 17 g4 Rxf4+ 18 Nxf4 Nxd4 with compensation.

(b) 14 g3! Na5 15 Kg2 Rac8 16 Ba4 +/-.

**14 fxe4**

14 Nh3 Bd7 15 fxe4 (15 Kg1 Bb5!) fxe4 16 Kg1 Be8 17 a3 Be7 =, intending Bh5.

**14...fxe4 15 Bb3**

(a) 15 b3 Ba3 16 g3 Nc6 17 Kg2 Nb4 18 Bc1 Bxc1 19 Qxc1 Bd7 20 a3 Nc6 21 Qb2 Be8 with compensation.

(b) 15 Nh3 Nc4 16 Kg1 Nxb2 17 Qb1 Nc4 18 Ba4 Qa5 19 Bb3 b5 20 Kh2 Bd7 21 a4 Qb6 22 Qa2 a5 23 Rhc1 h6 24 Nf2 Rxf4 25 Nxf4 Qxd4 unclear.

**15...Bd7 16 g3 Be8**

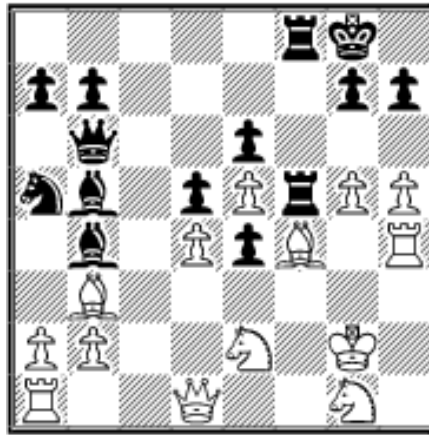
Threatening 17...Bh5.

**17 h5 Rf5 18 g4 Rf7 19 Kg2 Bb5 20 g5**

(a) 20 a3 Be7 21 Ba2 Raf8 22 Qd2 Qa6 with compensation (23 g5? Bxg5!).

(b) 20 h6 Be7 21 Rc1 g6 22 Ba4 Bd3 Black has nothing to fear, e.g. 23 Rh3 Qxb2 24 Qd2 Qxd2 25 Bxd2 Nc4 26 Bd7 Nxd2 27 Bxe6 Bc4 with compensation.

### 20...Raf8 21 Rh4 Rf5



Despite his extra piece, White finds it difficult to extricate himself from Black's stranglehold. As long as White's forces are imprisoned on the first ranks, the pawn e4 will be almost as strong as a piece. It assists any invasion by means of Bd3 and Nc4. For example: 22 h6 g6 23 Rc1 Qa6, and all Black's pieces are well-placed.

#### Sources:

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- [3] E. Siebenhaar, A. Delnef, R. Ottstadt: *Aljechin-Verteidigung* I, Mannheim 1986 (pp.147-152)
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- [5] S. Bucker: game in *Myers Openings Bulletin* 39 (1988), p.11
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- [12] A. Khalifman: *Opening for White according to Anand 1.e4*, vol. 5, Sofia 2005, p.118.
- [13] S. Bucker: "Auf der Fährte: Bewegungsfreudiger Dinosaurier," in: *Kaissiber* #25 (2006), p.50f.
- [14] S. Bucker: "Auf der Fährte: Scherz oder tiefere Bedeutung?," in: *Kaissiber* #26 (2007), p.40f.

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