

The Baikove Cemetery



Polish Traces at the Kyiv Necropolis

CHRONOLOGY

Preparations for opening a new cemetery.

Dedication of the wooden Orthodox Church of St. Dmitri of Rostov.

Addition to the cemetery of the area on the other side of Baikova Street, known as the new cemetery, also divided into the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran parts.

Construction of a red brick wall separating the cemetery from Baikova Street.

Construction of a monument at the burial place of Polish soldiers of the Polish-Soviet War of 1920.

Construction of a crematorium next to the cemetery (designed by Abraham Milecki). The design comprised the Road of Sorrow, along which artists Ada Rybachuk (1931-2010) and Volodymyr Melnychenko (b. 1932) designed a concrete wall of remembrance with a unique, monumental relief. They worked on it for nearly 13 years, but the project was interrupted in 1981 and deemed incompatible with the spirit of socialism. Despite the fact that the 230 m² composition was almost finished, in 1982 it was destroyed by covering it with concrete.

1832
—
1833

ca.
1834

1841

1848

1876

1884
—
1889

The
1880s

1900

1935

1971

1975

2001

First burials at the Novostroyevsky cemetery (the name of the cemetery before it received Baikov's name).

Construction of a chapel and a building for cemetery employees (which has not survived until now) in the Lutheran part of the cemetery.

Construction of the brick Byzantine Revival Church of the Ascension of the Lord (designed by Vladimir Nikolaev) at the new Orthodox cemetery.

Request of Father Piotr Żmigrodzki, the administrator of the Roman Catholic part of the cemetery, for additional 10 acres of land, granted in 1901.

Closing the Baikove cemetery for new burials by the decision of the executive body of the Kyiv City Council.

Listing the Baikove cemetery as a National Historic Landmark of Ukraine.



*Fragment of the chapel of Gerard Bajkowski,
photo: B. Gutowski*

In 1812 there were over 4,000 Poles living in Kyiv, mainly the nobility. Sixty years later their number had grown to around 8,000, and they constituted about 10% of the city's population and around a quarter of its voters, as voting rights were based on the person's financial status. Some of the Poles gained a high position in Kyiv, like Józef Zawadzki, founder of the city's stock exchange and mayor in the years 1860-1863. Many Polish businesses, mostly those based in Warsaw, had their branch offices in Kyiv.

In 1900 there were about 35,000 permanent inhabitants of Kyiv declaring themselves to be Polish nationals, but there were also Polish students and landowners coming to Kyiv on business. The population of Kyiv at that time is estimated at about 250,000, which means that about 14% of the city's inhabitants were Poles. On the eve of World War I this number had increased to around 40-50 thousand. Many refugees from the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia came to the city during the war, increasing the number of Poles to about 80-90 thousand.

The last inflow was after 1917, coming mainly from the provinces. There may have been even more than 100,000 Poles in Kyiv at the time. This changed after the retreat of the Polish Army and Petliura's troops in June 1920. Even though the tsarist empire had not been able to denationalize the Polish inhabitants of Kyiv, the Bolsheviks largely succeeded. Many of the city's Poles left, many were murdered, others lost their ties with Poland. Now there are around 7-10 thousand Kyiv inhabitants declaring themselves to be Polish nationals; some of them came to Kyiv after 1991.

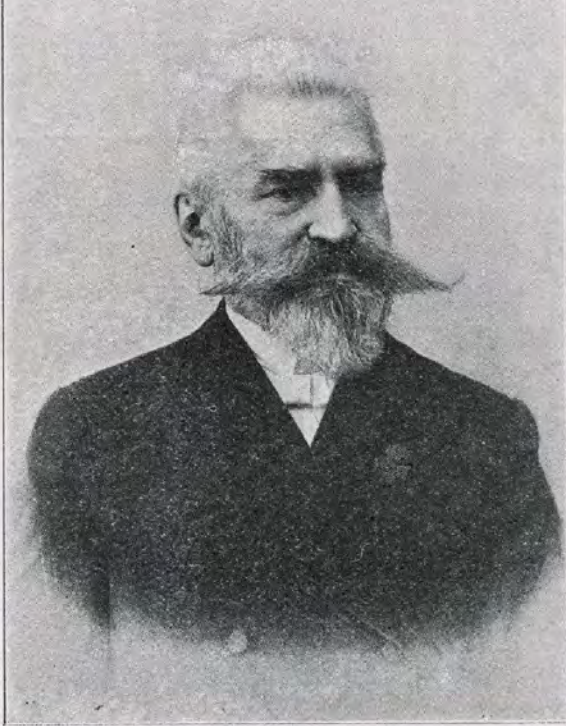


*Tomb of Julius Ferdinandus Mazonn (d. 1885),
director of the Hospital of St. Alexander in
Kiyv, buried in the Lutheran part of the
cemetery, photo: N. Piwowarczyk*

Lesya Ukrainka (1871-1913), Mykola Lysenko (1842-1912), composer of Prayer for Ukraine, or Mykhailo Hrushevskyi (1836-1934) are important figures for modern Ukraine. The presence of their tombs makes the cemetery not only an urban necropolis, but also a national Pantheon.

Many Poles, residents of Kyiv and the Kyiv Governorate, have been buried at the Baikove cemetery. About 640 pre-1945 tombs have been preserved until now.

Photo from *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 10 (1903)



JOZEF CHOYNOWSKI.

There are many famous citizens of Kyiv buried in Catholic part of the Baikove cemetery:

Józef Choynowski (1833-1914) – archaeologist and collector. He amassed a rich archaeological collection, which he bequeathed to the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in Warsaw. At present it forms part of the collections of the National Museum in Warsaw and of the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw.

Ludwik Górecki (1825-1885) – doctor of medicine, professor at the University of St. Vladimir in Kyiv. In 1871 he carried out the first vaccinations against smallpox in Kyiv.

Leon Idzikowski (1827-1865) – founder of the largest Kyiv bookshop, reading room and publishing company. Among others, he printed the first editions of works by the outstanding Ukrainian composer Mykola Lysenko and by Polish poets. By 1920 the publishing house had issued about 8,000 titles. The Warsaw branch survived until 1944.

Narcyz Jankowski (1827-1910) – his involvement in the national cause cost him his military career and his estate, as he was exiled to Siberia for 20-years. After his return he settled in Kyiv under the care of his brother Leonard – a philanthropist, co-founder of the "Kyiv Daily", founder of St. Nicholas Church in Kyiv. Unfortunately, Leonard Jankowski's tomb has not survived.

Stanisław Syroczyński (1848-1912) – forester, landowner, philanthropist; along with Roman Dmowski he co-founded the Polish National Party in Ruthenia. In the years 1906-1909 he was a member of the State Council.

Wilhelm Kotarbiński (1848-1921) – painter, whom the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg "recognised and honoured as an academician for his achievements in the field of art". His grave was forgotten for many years. It was only in the 1990s that the Kyiv National and Cultural Association of Poles "Zgoda" found it and initiated the construction of a new tombstone.

Tomb of a Kiev publisher Leon Idzikowski,
photo: B. Gutowski



Tomb of the Ukrainian poet Lesya Ukrainka,
photo: B. Gutowski



Włodzimierz Wysocki (1846-1894) – poet and a popular photographer. Court photographer to Grand Duchess Alexandra Petrovna. His symbolic tomb is located on the grave of his mother Maximilia.

Włodzimierz Wysokowicz (1854-1912) – professor, pathologist and epidemiologist, one of the founders of modern immunology.

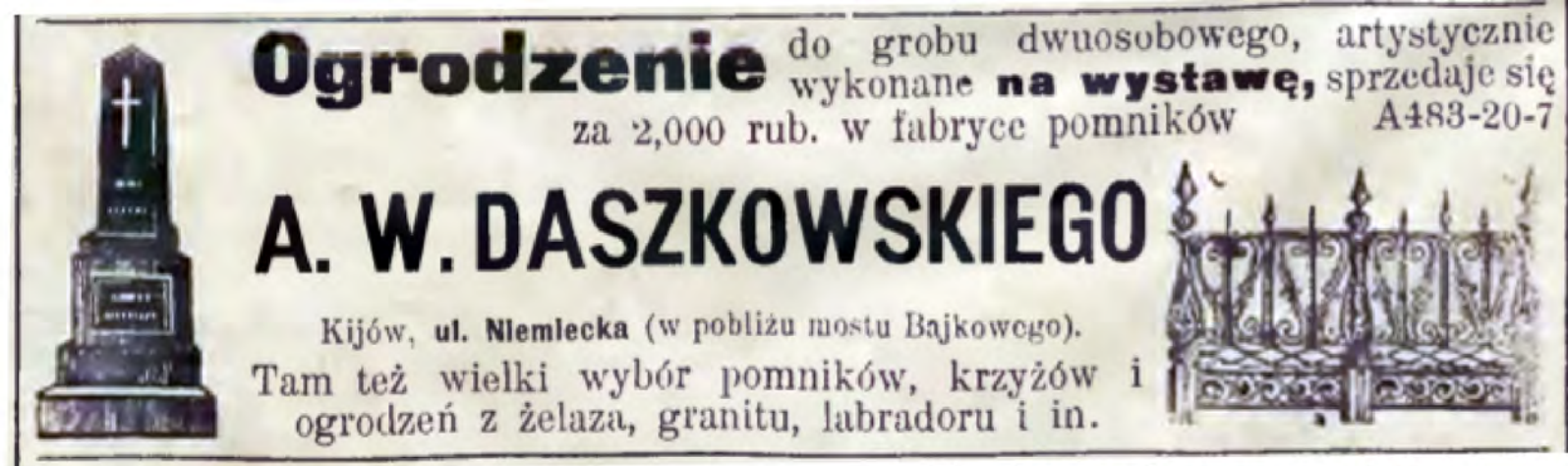


Tomb of Włodzimierz Wysokowicz,
photo: N. Piwowarczyk

Ogrodzenie do grobu dwuosobowego, artystycznie wykonane **na wystawę**, sprzedaje się za 2,000 rub. w fabryce pomników A483-20-7

A. W. DASZKOWSKIEGO

Kijów, ul. Nlemecka (w pobliżu mostu Bajkowego).
Tam też wielki wybór pomników, krzyżów i ogrodzeń z żelaza, granitu, labradoru i in.



Advertisements of stonemason workshops
from Kiyv Dziennik Kijowski, 79 (1906)

Józef Zawadzki (1818-1886) – Polish publisher and printer, publicist, founder of the Polish Society in Kyiv and the city's stock exchange, the mayor of Kyiv in the years 1860-1863.



Photo: N. Piwowarczyk

In 1919 the final outcome of the Russian Civil War was already a foregone conclusion. It ended a year later, although on a small scale hostilities continued until 1923. The involvement of larger forces in the Polish-Soviet conflict posed a threat to the independence of both Poland and the Ukrainian People's Republic. The treaty concluded between Józef Piłsudski and Symon Petliura guaranteed the sovereignty of both countries and their military alliance. The most spectacular episode of the war against the Soviets was the capture of Kyiv, almost without a fight. It was not a lasting victory, as a few days later the Soviet army counterattacked. It was, however, an important moment of triumph for the common Polish-Ukrainian cause. Over a hundred Polish soldiers died in the fighting. They were buried in Kyiv, on the then outskirts of the Baikove cemetery.

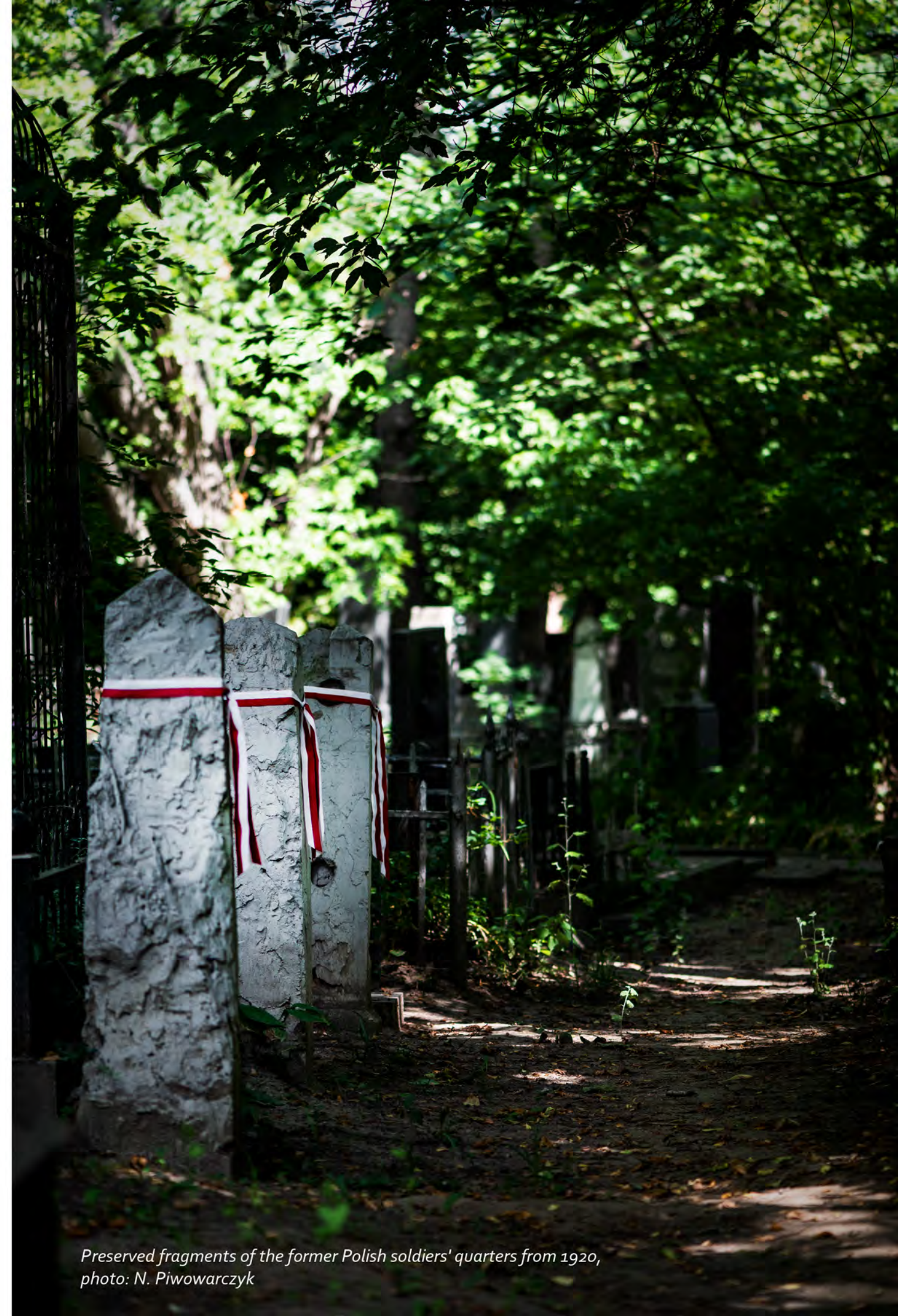
"I also visited the military cemetery, the one from 1920. There, unfenced, in an open field, in the immediate vicinity of the German military cemetery, which is nicely fenced and decorated with a beautiful monument, stand equal rows of Polish graves with iron crosses. The hand that does not respect tradition has spared them. They stand in perfect order, in even lines, as if at roll call". This is what Marshal Piłsudski's aide-de-camp, Captain Mieczysław Lepecki, wrote about the soldiers' graves at the Baikove Cemetery. It was a stop on his extraordinary journey through – as he described it – the Soviet Caucasus.

The construction of the cemetery took a long time. It was opened on 3 May 1935, a few days before the Marshal's death. At that time it was the only proper Polish military cemetery on the territory of the USSR. Several years later it was destroyed. Maria Bondziuk-Berezowska, who remembered the soldiers' cemetery from before the war and lived to see free Ukraine, passed on her recollections to the local Poles. Thanks to the efforts of the Kyiv National and Cultural Association of Poles "Zgoda" and the Polish diplomatic mission, a new monument has been erected and the memory of this place has been restored.

TU SPOCZYWA
114 ŻOŁNIERZY WOJSKA POLSKIEGO
POLEGŁYCH W REJONIE KIJOWA
WIOSNĄ 1920 R. W BOJACH
TOCZONYCH PRZY WSPÓŁDZIAŁE
FORMACJI UKRAIŃSKICH
PRZECIW ARMII CZERWONEJ

Plaques from the monument commemorating Polish soldiers killed in Kyiv in 1920, photo: D. Janiszewska-Jakubiak

CZEŚĆ ICH PAMIĘCI



Preserved fragments of the former Polish soldiers' quarters from 1920, photo: N. Piwowarczyk



Do Legionistów



Tomb of Cyprian Ułaszyn, photo: N. Piwowarczyk

Who were the ones who passed away? The name, surname, age – this is the basic information which can usually be found if the gravestone inscription has survived. However, we will not know much more about the deceased. In the case of more socially active people historical notes have survived, sometimes a short note about their position. However, it is impossible to find any information at all about many of them.

Among the inscriptions that can be found, some give an idea of the deceased. The founders of tombs most often asked for prayers, recommended the deceased to God and chose Biblical quotations as epitaphs. Sometimes the inscriptions refer to the deceased or to the feelings of the living. Sometimes it is hard to resist the impression that we are dealing with stock phrases, taken from tombstone poetry. Even if they may seem artificial and formally rigid, it is difficult to doubt their sincerity. An example is the beautiful poem inscribed on the grave of Maximilia Wysocka, written by her son, the poet Włodzimierz Wysocki. Sometimes the information is more concise: "He lived well, loved God, loved his homeland". Gravestone poems sometimes feature poor prosody and hackneyed phrases, although often, despite its brevity and clumsiness, such an inscription may be a touchingly profound and genuine expression of suffering and longing.

Among the inscriptions in the Baikove cemetery, one draws particular attention:

Caution to Parents:

As long as you are alive

Do not give your property to your children.

In my grave problems will trouble me no more,

I will sleep in my grave until I am called to God.

Tomb of Aleksandra Jezierska,
photo: B. Gutowski



Gobys nie stracił w żywota kolei:
Mienie, przyjaciół, zdrowie czy dostatki-
Wszystko odzyskać możesz tylko Matki
Druziej nie znajdziesz- i nie miej nadziei!
Jako Bóg jeden była mi jedyną,
Lecz ja Wszechmocny powołał do Siebie,
Więc aż dwa Bóstwa dzisiaj mam na niebie
Do których teraz moje modły płyną.
Przebacz mi, Panie, że w ućzuć rosterce
Miedzy Was dwojga modły moje dziele
Wszakże mej Małce tak zawdzięczam wiele:
Tys mi dał dusze-ona dała serce...

We do not know the history of this tomb, we do not even know whether Franciszek Lesisz was actually buried in it. The year of his death is only partially carved, which, along with the inscription, may prove that the tomb was erected while he was still alive. The rest is guesswork, or we can look for traces in the archives – maybe one day someone will manage to find some.

*Tomb of Aleksandra Jezierska,
photo: B. Gutowski*

Przeszła przez życie
jak Anioł poświęcenia,
z myślą obowiązków
względem drugich,
z zaparciem się
siebie samej

*Tomb of Aniela Pol,
wife of the poet Wincenty Pol,
photo: N. Piwowarczyk*

Aniela z Perzowa
POLOWA
dowa po s.p. Wincentym
† d. 7 marca 1874 r.
żyła lat 38.

The Baikove Cemetery also represents forgotten and unknown stories. The graves of thousands buried there have not survived. There are also many people whose names mean nothing to anyone today. Some played important roles in their times, like Maurycy Poniatowski, Edward Przewórski (a critic), Antoni Jaksa Marcinkowski (a writer), August Piskorski (a leathermaker), Generals Kazimierz Dubicki, Ignacy Haciski, Wacław Iwanowski, Gabriel Rześniowiecki, Feliks Zdański, as well as Ksawery Marszycki (a grammar school superintendent) and Feliks Lenkiewicz-Ipohorski (Marshal of the Gentry of the Volhynia Governorate).

Women are the most frequently forgotten. Far fewer of their tombs have survived. From the inscriptions we learn that they were wives, mothers, grandmothers, paramours. Sometimes they are identified by their husbands' names, such as Mrs. Helena Paszkowska, the wife of a general. We also learn about Maximilia Wysocka only because she was the poet's mother. They are mentioned less frequently, because their history does not fit in with tales of wartime merit or achievements in science, health care or politics. But are their stories, determined by the place that the society had given them, any less important?

No mention is made of Teresa Newerly or Anna Pol, the second wife of the poet Wincenty Pol. Their forgotten tombs were identified during inventory work carried out in 2021. Who were they? Teresa Abramow-Newerly was the mother of Igor Newerly, the writer. She helped him to escape from Kyiv in 1924. The inscription on her gravestone informs that she is buried along with her son. Was this a way to cover up the truth about his escape? So, did Igor Newerly have a grave while he was still alive? Clearly, Teresa played an important role. Besides, apart from being mothers and wives, women from Kyiv were also very competent professionals, which is proved by the history of Barbara Grzesińska, who finished courses in Kyiv, Berlin, Paris and London and started working for local business enterprises. Sadly, she died at the age of 22.

Little is known about the artists and craftsmen doing work at the cemetery. The tombstone of Antoni Pawłowicz (1809-1895) bears the signature "A. Росси", while the tombs of Juliusz Patkowski (1867-1888) and the Wojno family (ca. 1890) bear the signature "П.Я. Риццолатти". The company run by the latter specialized in making not only tombstones, but also washbasins.



The tomb of Helena Mnich featured a sculpture by Emilio Sala (1864-1920), who worked in Kyiv until 1914. One of the artists was also Ivan Petrovich Martos (1754-1835), a St. Petersburg Classicist of Ukrainian descent, the disciple of Canova. There was also a workshop of W. Korczakow-Sawicki from Kamienny Bród. The designs of three chapels are attributed to Władysław Horodecki (1863-1930). Ludwik Górecki's chapel was designed by the architect Romuald Grigorievich Tustanovsky (ca. 1830 - after 1886), based in Kyiv.

At the beginning of the 20th century the most important enterprise on the stonemason market in Kyiv was the company "Вдова де Веккио" (Widow de Vecchio). It was founded in the 19th century by the Italian sculptor Andrea Schiavoni, who created the Pushkin monument in Kyiv. In 1902 he sold the company to Victor de Vecchio, who died shortly afterwards. The business was taken over by his son's widow, Nadezhda de Vecchio (d. 1919). She was a composer and music teacher, and had also performed on the stage. She ran the company very competently, established international contacts and ensured the high quality of the works. During the war the company declined and eventually went bankrupt. On 9 July 1919 Nadezhda de Vecchio was arrested and subsequently murdered. Her burial place is unknown. In the Polish part of the cemetery one gravestone with the signature of her workshop has survived – the tomb of Prof. Włodzimierz Wysokowicz (1854-1912).



There are press advertisements for artisans such as M. Schantz, producer of cast iron crosses. Crosses were also made of wrought iron by H. Schwlema workshop. In 1906 there was an advertisement for a Polish stonemason A.W. Dazkowski, and in 1907 for S. Ustniowicz. Also popular was the workshop of the Jakubowski brothers. Unfortunately we do not know any of their works.



Advertisements of stonemason workshops from Kyiv



Chapel of the de Witte family (fragment), designed by Władysław Horodecki, photo: N. Piwowarczyk

When the families of the deceased are gone, the tombs, devoid of memory, start to resemble theatrical props and die. But we can try to save their history, and sometimes create it anew.

Photo: N. Piwowarczyk



Walking along the paths of the Baikove Cemetery we can see a lively old lady tidying the soldiers' graves or family tombs. This is Wanda Pawłowa, one of the volunteers who have been taking care of the cemetery. It is thanks to people like her that old cemeteries can survive. Even when the loved ones are not there.

The history of the Baikove cemetery includes a praiseworthy episode of preserving the memory of the past. Back in the 1980s the first volunteers began to appear at the cemetery, led by the tireless Czesława Raubiszko. This initiative grew and evolved into the Kyiv National and Cultural Association of Poles "Zgoda", officially operating since 1992. Now it would be difficult not to notice plaques at the tombstones testifying to the many years of the activity of this organization.

Other Polish organizations, such as the International Association of Polish Entrepreneurs in Ukraine and the Union of Poles in Ukraine, also take care of the graves. Diplomats and employees of the embassy, consulate and the Polish Institute, but above all, residents of Kyiv, join the clean-up campaign. Sometimes groups from Poland also come over to help.

*Fragment of the chapel of Gerard Bajkowski,
photo: B. Gutowski*



Taking care of the Baikove cemetery also involves documentation work. The first records were made by the late Czesława Raubiszko in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The files she had compiled have been preserved by Wanda Pawłowa. It is an invaluable source of knowledge not only about the existing tombs, but above all about those of which there is no trace left.

When the first inventory was made in 1992-1993 the list of persons buried was made by Ludwika Niżyńska and Maria Siwko. In 2021 a virtual map of the cemetery was created, showing all the tombs located there.



*During inventory works,
photo: N. Piwowarczyk*



*During inventory works,
photo: M. Gutowska*

There are inconvenient stories too. Bullet marks on Henryk Zdanowski's gravestone may be testimony to an unwanted history. It is not known who and when fired the shots or if they wanted to destroy the tomb. Or perhaps the marks are traces of some tragic, probably wartime, events? Henryk Zdanowski was not an accidental person – he was a Polish patriot, whose father was killed in the January Uprising, whose family was subsequently deprived of their property, and who was expelled from university and arrested for his patriotic activities. Later in life he made a fortune as a sugar producer and in 1906 he became a member of the Duma. One of his sons, also bearing the name Henryk, was killed in Katyń.

“I was running towards the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union came to me” – this is how Wanda Wasilewska is supposed to have recalled the entry of the Soviet Army in 1939. Was it betrayal, calculation or was she blinded by the ideology? Her commitment to the cause she believed in cannot be denied, but it must also be admitted that it turned her into a symbol of betrayal of the Polish national cause. There are also brighter spots in her biography – thanks to her help some people managed to avoid the Gulag or survive it. Her tomb in the Avenue of the Distinguished in Baikove, which was erected by the Soviet authorities and bears an inscription in Polish, is difficult for Poles to accept. It also reminds us that artistic forms or lofty maxims do not always fit the biography of the deceased.

The cemetery features more such traces of unwanted, unnecessary or simply forgotten stories – soil covering the slabs, crosses, but also red stars on nameless graves, tombstones overturned, reused, plaques attached to cover old inscriptions. It is a sad reality. However, old tombs sometimes survive, even if by chance.

POLONIKA Institute commissioned drawing up an inventory of tombs created at the Baikove Cemetery before the end of 1945. The present exhibition is one of the outcomes of this project. Another will be a catalogue of the tombs, to be published in 2022.

Bartłomiej Gutowski



*Tomb of Józef Choynowski,
photo: N. Piwowarczyk*

MARIA WENGELSKA

ur. 25 grudnia 1883r

zm. 22 MAR



Publication issued at the exhibition: **The Baikove Cemetery. Polish Traces at the Kyiv Necropolis**

Exhibition under the patronage of: **Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and National Heritage, prof. Piotr Gliński**



Organized by: **the POLONIKA National Institute for Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad**



Photographs by: **Norbert Piwowarczyk, Bartłomiej Gutowski**
Staging and graphic design of the exhibition by: **Barbara Kowalewska**
Executed by: **Rafał Krauze Perfect Events**
Curated by: **Bartłomiej Gutowski**

Copyright by: **the POLONIKA National Institute for Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad; Bartłomiej Gutowski; Norbert Piwowarczyk 2021**

ISBN 978-83-66172-48-7

Editorial: **Alicja Berman**
Elaboration of the Ukrainian version: **Iurij Tkachuk**
Elaboration of the English version: **Małgorzata Matysik**
Graphic design of the publication: **Kinga Niewieczyrzał**

Sponsored by:

