

## The Rubinstein Graves

Considering that besides a grainy picture at the end of the second volume of Donaldson and Minev's biography, I could not find information or more background on Akiba's (and his family's) last resting place, I decided to head there and find out for myself.



### **The Jewish department of Etterbeek cemetery at Wezembeek-Oppem**

Akiba Rubinstein's grave is located at the Etterbeek cemetery in Wezembeek-Oppem, which is an outer district of Brussels. Though Etterbeek is another commune of Brussels, it probably holds that name since it services its (Jewish) community. The cemetery holds a few Jewish departments, and Akiba's is in one of the older ones, at the far end of the area.

Nom/Naam	Voornamen	begraving	Parc/Park	Graf n°
<u>ROZENSTRAUCH David</u>	David	12/02/1964	K	206
<u>ROZENTAL Hensch</u>	Hensch	7/12/1960	K	733
<u>RUBAN Berthe</u>	Berthe Laura	5/03/1999	E/4	46
<u>RUBBEN Jeanne</u>	Jeanne Louise	21/05/1959	JC	28
<u>RUBBENS Joseph</u>	Joseph Marie	7/11/1974	P.H.Caveau	1000
<u>RUBENS Marcus</u>	Marcus	27/09/1966	K	224
<u>RUBENS Marie</u>	Marie	18/12/1963	K	1209
<u>RUBENS Philippe</u>	Philippe Marc	7/12/1966	K	228
<u>RUBENS Rebecca</u>	Rebecca	19/11/1969	K	1546
<u>RUBINOWICZ Joseph</u>	Joseph	29/03/1966	K	20
<u>RUBINOWITZ André</u>	André	15/04/1968	K	39
<u>RUBINSTEIN Akiwa</u>	Akiwa	17/03/1961	K	681
<u>RUBINSTEIN Regina</u>	Regina	4/05/1979	J	587
<u>RUBINSTEIN Salomon</u>	Salomon	14/06/2002	K	1967
<u>RUBINSTEIN Peter</u>	Peter	27/03/1968	K	1674
<u>RUDA Jechiel</u>	Jechiel Majer	7/02/2002	E/4	359
<u>RUDERMAN</u>	sacha	24/03/1961	K	510
<u>RUDETZKI Bertha</u>	Bertha	4/04/1963	K	1075
<u>RUDETZKI Elias</u>	Elias	12/01/1968	K	1210
<u>RUDNITZKI Elias</u>	Elias	15/09/2005	B2	178
<u>RUDZKI Régine</u>	Régine	18/08/1971	1	6
<u>RUELL Marie</u>	Marie Clémentine Aloi	14/05/1959	JC	33
<u>RUELLE Antoine</u>	Antoine Thomas	21/03/2011	G/4	161
<u>RUELLE Emilie</u>	Emilie Raymonde	16/11/1960	JC	33
<u>RUELLE Irène</u>	Irène Marthe Marie V.	22/02/1961	JC	33
	Madeleine Rose Antoi	8/04/1998	D/4	328

The cemetery index indicates the locations for both Akiba's and his son Salomon's location.

**RUBINSTEIN, Akiwa – 17/03/1961 – K 681**  
**RUBINSTEIN, Salomon – 14/06/2002 – K 1967**

It is not so easy to find, since many graves have been defaced with time or eroded to the point of being unreadable. Some graves contain numbers to indicate their location, but I've found that many are quite disorderly and it takes a keen eye to figure it out.



**The grave of Akiba and Eugénie Rubinstein**

Akiba is buried together with his wife Eugénie. In fact, besides his name, birth, and death date, all the text on the tomb (including the Hebrew) is about her (see more below).

Though from Donaldson & Minev, one would infer that their son Sammy was buried just next to his parents, his grave is actually quite a distance away (see index above). On a side note, it is interesting that his Jewish name is Salomon, considering that Sammy is rather a form of Sam or Samuel (or Shmuel/שמואל in Hebrew). Perhaps he held both names, but his grave only gives 'Salomon', without any name(s) in Hebrew.



**The grave of Salomon, son of Akiba Rubinstein. The text reads:  
'Here lies (ה'נצב) in the Star of David is an abbreviation of *po nitman* –  
'here lies')**

**Salomon Rubinstein  
27.3.1927 – 12.6.2002**

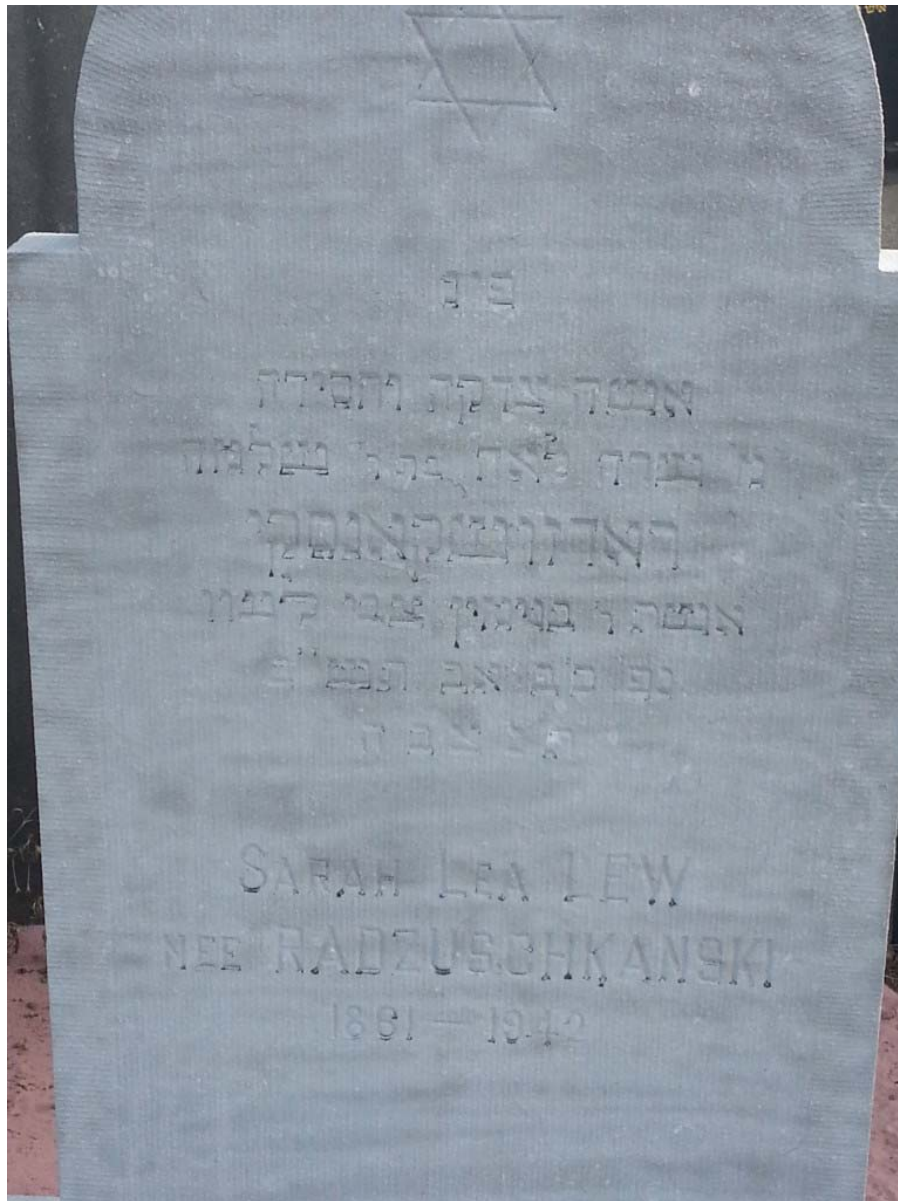
**ה'נצב [an abbreviation of a verse from the Bible, the first book of  
Samuel, 25:29, "May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life"]**

Sammy (Salomon) Rubinstein was himself an outstanding chess player. Born in 1927 (his younger brother, Jonas, was born in 1918), he was arrested by the Germans in 1943 and spent 1943-44 in prison. After being released, he stayed in Belgium until his death in 2002. Besides reaching master strength, he also became an accomplished painter. (among his works is the cover of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, by Bronstein & Fürstenberg). His older brother, Jonas, also played chess, and even reached first category, but preferred bridge. Jonas spent much of his life in the Belgian Congo where he worked as an electrical engineer, before retiring in Charleroi (from Donaldson & Minev, *The Life & Games of Akiva Rubinstein, Volume 2*).



The lower part of Akiba's and Eugénie's tombstone. It reads:  
Genia Rubinstein  
née Lew  
16-6-1893 - 27-11-1954  
Akiba Rubinstein  
1-12-1880 - 14-3-1961

Akiba married Eugénie Lev on March 30th, 1917. She was born in 1893 and was an exceptional woman. Educational opportunities for women were restricted in Poland, so Eugénie's wealthy family sent her to a lycee near St. Petersburg. After graduating, the future Mrs. Rubinstein worked as a school teacher before her marriage. Through good and bad times she stood by Akiva.



The upper part of Akiba's and Eugénie's tombstone. It reads:  
פ"נ [Here lies - see note at grave of Salomon]  
אשה צדקה וחסידה [A righteous and pious woman]  
נו שרה לאה בת ר' שלמה [Born Sara Lea daughter of R' Shlomo]  
ראדזושקאנסקי [Radzuschkansky]  
אשת ר' בנימין צבי לעוו [The wife of R' Binyamin Tzvi Lev]  
נפ' כ"ב אב תש"ס [Died on 22nd of Av 5702 - which corresponds to August  
5th, 1942]  
תנצב"ה [an abbreviation of a verse from Samuel - see note at grave of  
Salomon]  
Sarah Lea Lew  
Nee RADZUSCHKANSKI  
1861-1942

During the war, she and Sammy were forced to flee Brussels. They found refuge at a chateau where Eugenie worked in a kitchen. One day the Gestapo made a raid. Eugenie was able to escape but young Sammy was captured and sent to Mechelen (Malines) [at the infamous [Dossin transit camp](#)], where he spent the next year and a half in hell (Minev & Donaldson, id.).

Eugénie died in 1954. A few interesting points: From the inscription on the grave it seems Akiba was not her first husband, who is named Binyamin Tzvi Radzuskansky. The years '1861-1942' most probably refer to him, and he appeared to have perished during the war. According to Minev & Donaldson, Akiba married Eugénie (Genia) in 1917. It is remarkable that she chose to name her previous husband so elaborately on the same tombstone under which she lies with her new husband. Perhaps this wasn't the original plan when she died. If anyone has other thoughts or insights about this, I'd be glad to hear it.

Another interesting anecdote is that Sammy, her son, is most probably named after her father, Shlomo (the hebrew version of Salomon). The naming of a child after a grandparent is a common Jewish custom.

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### **Chess pieces and medals**

Lastly, and this is entirely a trivial sidenote, a few gravestones away on the right of Akiba's, lies an interesting chess-themed tombstone. I did not manage to find more information about it. It is not clear if it is in reference to Leon Fogelbaum, who lies there with his wife Guta Dickstein, or to Salomon Berlinerblau, most probably a victim of the Holocaust, who is memorialized in text.