

2006-10-22

On the way to "mystic places"

by Michael Negele

From the Jewish Cemetery in Berlin-Weißensee to Kórnik Castle

I quickly got to like the idea jointly developed with Andreas Saremba to carry out the autumn meeting of the Ken Whyld Association (October 20-22, 2006) together with the Emanuel Lasker Society in Berlin and to combine this event with an ensuing journey to Poland. On the one hand it was a welcome occasion to bring together again quite a lot of the authors and researchers involved in the Lasker biography project, on the other hand we were able to pay our "young member", the library in Kórnik castle a first visit, and with that the legacy of one of the most eminent chess researchers of the 19th century, Tassilo von Heydebrand und der Lasa.

When in addition the commemorative plaque for Jean Dufresne, donated by Ralph Schiffmann and other Berlin chess friends, could be officially opened on Friday afternoon, a really attractive programme had been achieved.

By the following survey I would like to share this successful weekend with all the other chess friends. My thanks are due to the diligent photographers, to the Berlin hosts – especially Susanna Poldauf and her helpers as well as Andreas Saremba for the organization of the meeting in Weißensee, but of course also to Ralph Schiffmann for his generosity.

Furthermore our thanks are due to my Polish friends, Maria Łuczak, Dr. Kazimierz Krawiarz and their team from the Polish Academy of Science in Kórnik as well as to Tomasz Lissowski who made this visit possible with his kind help.

Last but not least: a big thank-you to Ralf Binnewirtz, the tireless "Master of the Net".

(You will find our short report in advance on this weekend in the [Archives](#).)

Jewish Cemetery in Berlin-Weißensee

(Afternoon, 2006-10-20)



Ralph Schiffman next to the gravestone of Jean Dufresne (1829-1893) who is honoured now with a fine plaque. With 115000 graves the Jewish cemetery in Weißensee is the largest in Western Europe.



Andreas Saremba quoting from his nice [Dufresne biography](#).

On the right Frank Hoppe, webmaster of the BSV can be made out – the following link leads to his fine article on this event (in German only): www.berlinerschachverband



In spite of the drizzle the guests listen to the explanations: right at the front you can make out Mr. Seppelt with his wife, then P.W. Wagner, T. Gillam (a little hidden), M. Negele, R. Binnewirtz, S. Augustat and H. Fietz.



Now the "community" is gathering around the stele in honour of Paul Lasker-Schüler (1899-1927), son of Else Lasker-Schüler. Berthold Lasker (1860-1928) who is buried at this cemetery as well outlived him by one year, his fatherhood was always denied by the artist being married to him from 1894 to 1903.



The grave of Dr. Berthold Lasker.

Unfortunately the inscription is hard to read – the Hebrew characters mean: "May his soul be integrated into the bond of life"

"Emanuel Lasker (Society) meets Ken Whyld (Association)" on Leuschnerdamm 31

(Evening, 2006-10-20)



We are glad to say that Egbert Meissenburg will undertake the drawing up of a Lasker bibliography for our project. Next to him Ralf Binnewirtz, his contribution will deal with Lasker's few problem compositions.



The "delinquents" Tony Gillam, Toni Prezioso and Michael Negele in eager anticipation of the "Lasker Evening" – in the front Andreas Saremba's ubiquitous recorder – "source of quite a lot of audio documents".



Stefan Hansen (Spiritus Rector of the Lasker project) in dialogue with Jurgen Stigter who will deal with Lasker's mathematics – together with professor Norbert Schappacher from Strasbourg.



I wonder if Tony Gillam is still suspecting lost games on Lasker's desk? Behind that you can see the historic chess table of the world championship match 1910 Lasker – Schlechter.



Prof. Hans Holländer (on the left), like Ralph Schiffmann a steady guest and supporter of the Lasker society.



At least Toni Preziuso accepts my expositions with kind and joyful calmness, while beside a relaxed Andreas Saremba (see below) Tony Gillam gives the impression of being more concentrated – certainly the discussion was just in German once again.



Stefan Hansen, quasi the master in the Dorland house, explains once again his motives for supporting the Lasker book: at least it should be as thick as Richard Forster's "Amos Burn" ... Ralf Binnewirtz thinks this idea to be quite amusing, and in the background Susanna Poldauf is "beaming", she will tell about "Lasker and the Berlin Bohemian world".

"Chess treasures at a mystic place" – the castle of Kórník

(2006-10-21 to 22)



Patiently waiting for the "Reds" – shortly behind Frankfurt/Oder and in brilliant sunshine. (From the left: Bernd Ellinghoven, Ralf Binnewirtz, Jurgen Stigter, Toni Prezioso and Calle Erlandsson.)



"Here they are" – with plenty of traffic jams and not much petrol nevertheless arrived at the intermediate stop: Marie-Theres Saremba, Tony Gillam and Andreas Saremba.



But also the "rearguard" is in need of a rest – as usual Tony Gillam knows to tell a thing or two.



Kórník we are coming – it's only the question what time. Fortunately Tomasz Lissowski then answered the phone some time.



Happily arrived, but with a delay of two and a half hours – thanks a lot to our generous hosts and to Tomasz (a little stressed out by the long waiting) who was eventually able to welcome his friends and guests.



First of all taking some refreshment was the order of the day – for that the magnificent dining hall in the castle basement was lovely decorated in autumnal colours (on the right and below).



Dr. Kazimierz Krawiarz (to Bernd Ellinghoven's left) is a biochemist but also a passionate chess amateur,

an amusing neighbour at table proficient in languages.



There were some talks as well: Maria Łuczak and Michael Negele are attentively listening to the words of Andreas Saremba speaking in his capacity as a board member of the Emanuel Lasker Society.



Zukertort and "Cremetorte"
(cream gateau) ...



... our two Polish friends couldn't avoid this funny pose -



... now a dedicated copy of our book also belongs to >>



Finally having arrived in the treasure chamber!



Naturally the library had been closed some time ago, therefore Maria Łuczak had arranged for bringing the most beautiful books, quite a lot of documents and certificates owned by von der Lasa to the castle ...



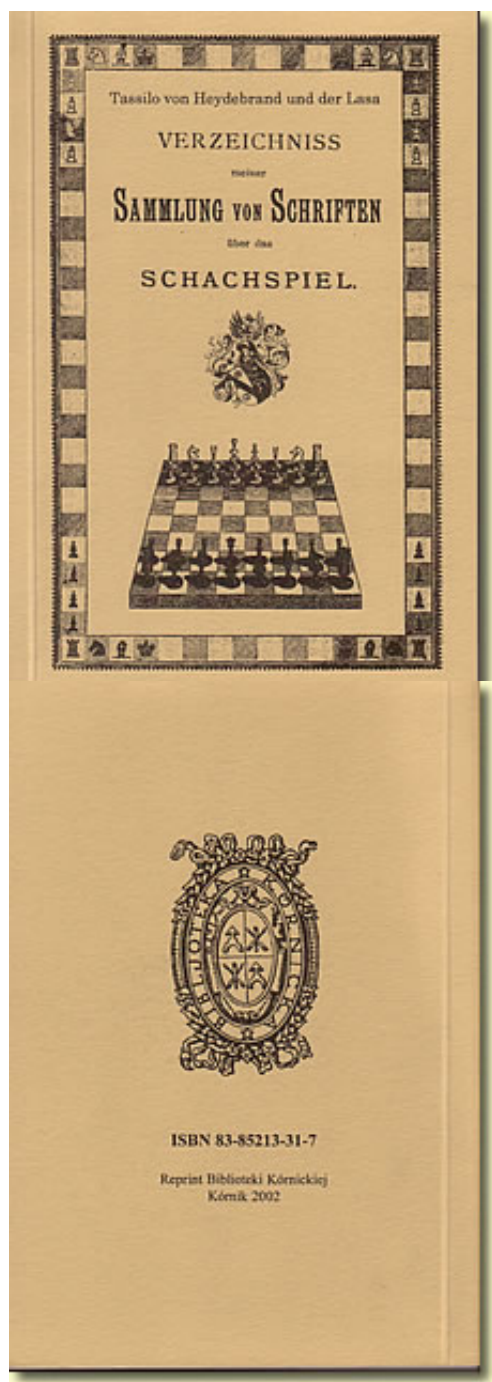


... the former owner "kept watch with a stern face" over the late guests.



The pictures give only a minor impression of the collection – here the nice [auction catalogue](#) of the house Karl & Faber, Munich of the year 1935, in order to show which treasures can't be shown any more in Kórnik, unfortunately.

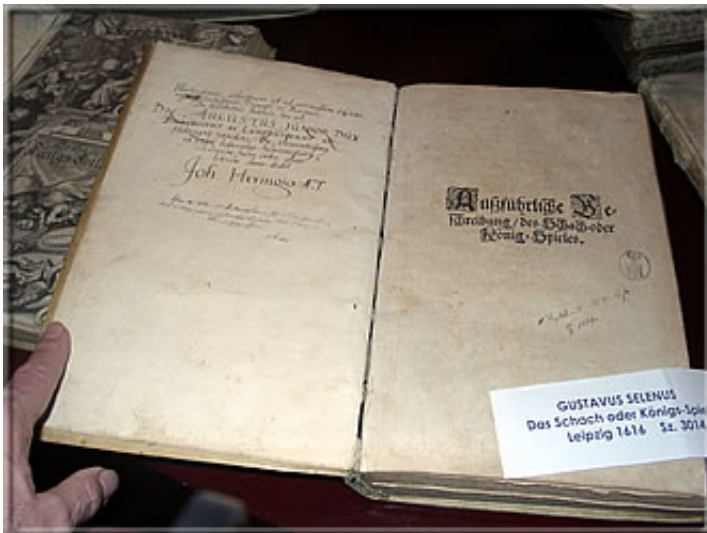
Von der Lasa had documented his stock very well, that was still possible at that time by a volume of 166 pages which he got produced for the first time in 1887 in an edition of 75 copies. (In 2002 the Bibliotek Kórnickie published a reprint of this list, unfortunately it's now out of print again.)



In the following some treasures will be displayed ...



MOMMEIANUS B. TOLOSANUS
Ludi latrunculorum brevis descriptio
Parisiis 1560



GUSTAVUS SELENUS
Das Schach- oder Königs-Spiel
Leipzig 1616



PETRUS DAMIANI
Operum [...]
Roma 1606



Document on von der Lasa's election to the honorary president of the club
Wiesbaden, July 1897



GIOACHINO GRECO
Le jeu des eschets. Traduit de l'italien de [...]
Paris 1689 Sz. 1282

GIOACHINO GRECO

Le jeu des eschets. Traduit de l'Italien de [...]

Paris 1689



ALESSANDRO SALVIO

Il puttino altrimenti

Napoli 1643



First American Chess Congress

New York, November 1857



Modern collectors and chess historians like us can't get over our amazement there – sheer inexhaustible sources are still to examine and to analyse in the records of Tassilo von Heydebrand und der Lasa.



Calle is "digging" in old documents ...





Naturally Tomasz Lissowski was a frequent guest in Kórnik before, but today he could show all this to his friends what he was clearly proud of.



Tony Gillam was obviously impressed and speechless at times – which happens very rarely.



Our excellent host in dreamlike surroundings –
Maria Łuczak.



After that it was time to quench our thirst in Kórnik at night. Not an easy undertaking, but after all many a glass of good Polish beer ran through thirsty throats, and close German-Swedish friendships were to be noted as well.



While Ralf Binnewirtz is possibly dreaming about "Selenus", there is still some chess history successfully dealt with at the next table (see below).



Next morning – feeling very content after having some refreshment in the form of a rich breakfast – we headed back, the visit was worth the strenuous journey.

Probably the participants of the first von der Lasa symposium in 2002 felt the same way – in the first row our unforgotten Ken Whyld:



Now we can only hope that a second event of that kind will bring us all again to Kórnik in October 2007.
In the following – to give a small foretaste – some more impressions of Kórnik and of the castle's interior:





The moat with a view of the castle grounds.



The small town with appr. 6000 inhabitants is surrounded by wonderful woods on the Greater Polish Lakes, about 20 km southeast of Poznan (Posen).



The castle in its today's form was rebuildt by Tytus Działyński (1796-1861) in neo-gothic style in the first half of the 19th century. With the idea of founding a library which should document the former significance and glory of the divided Poland he collected manuscripts and old printed works, purchased specifically sources on the history of the Polish state and the Polish people in the whole of Europe. His son Jan Kanty Działyński (1829-1880) continued this tradition as well as the extension of the castle, and so one of the most famous Polish libraries developed there.



A special forming influence on the castle and its collections however had Władysław Zamoyski (1853-1924), son-in-law of Jan Działyński. Keeping expenses as low as possible and leading a humble life, he announced after the death of his wife to set up a foundation and to consign the castle of Kórnik and all collections to the Polish nation. This foundation survived till 1952, therefore the collections got undamaged through the wartime and largely through the time after as well, when Kórnik came into possession of the Polish Academy of Science -



... the collection there of tree seeds (Arboretum with more than 3000 species) is internationally renowned. Since 2002 the foundation character has been restored in Kórnik.

The photos give an impression of the magnificent interior:



The ceiling panelling of the dining room, decorated with coats of arms.



The dining room with precious furnishings (on the left and below).





The Moresque Hall
(Mauritanian Hall)

Kórnik castle in a warmer season

