

2021-11-29

The date of Rubinstein's death 4



Certificate of death from Akiwa Rubinstein (excerpt)

The well-known Belgium chess historian Hans Renette, the author of inter alia thoroughly researched biographies on Henry Bird and Louis Paulsen, has solved the problem of the correct date of Akiwa Rubinstein's death. He has sent us a copy of the official death certificate:

[Certificate of death from Akiwa Rubinstein](#)

Transcript of the original text:

AKTE N° 142
Vredestraat N° 93
Overleden 14 maart 1962
Geboren 1 december 1880

De zeventiende maart duizend negenhonderd een en zestig, te 09,30 uur, is door mij Ondergetekende, Maria Vantomme, echtgenote Jan Baekelmans, schepen, behoorlijk afgevaardigde Ambtenaar van de Burgerlijke Stand van de gemeente Berchem, provincie Antwerpen, aanstonds na vaststelling, ten Gemeentehuize, in dubbel opgemaakt de OVERLIJDENSAKTE van Akiwa Rubinstein, zonder beroep, op een december duizend achthonderd tachtig te Stawisk in Polen geboren, gehuisvest te St. Gillis op Brussel, provincie Brabant, IJskelderstraat nr. 35a, alhier in het Sint Maria gasthuis overleden op veertien maart van dit jaar, te 14,00 uur, weduwnaar van Xnia Lew, zoon van Akiwa Rubinstein en van Rosa Dennenberg, beiden overleden. Volgens de aangifte gedaan door Frain Spielberg, ceremoniemeester, oud zestig jaar, te Brussel gehuisvest en door Henri Mirgaux, bode, oud een en vijftig jaar, alhier gehuisvest. Na voorlezing van deze akte, hebben de aangevers benevens mij getekend.

In a partial and more or less literal translation, the text of it reads as follow:

DABS

Certificate of death

Number: 1961-0009.0115-54

Copy

Certificate Nr. 142

Vredestraat Nr. 93

Deceased 14 March 1961

Born 1 December 1880

The 17th of March 1961, at 09:30, by me, Undersigned, Maria Vantomme [?], [...] officer of civil status of the municipality of Berchem, province of Antwerp, immediately after the adoption, at the townhall, in duplicate the CERTIFICATE OF DEATH has been drawn up of Akiwa Rubinstein, without profession, born on 1 December 1880 in Stawisk in Poland, housed in St. Gillis near Brussels, province of Brabant, IJskelderstraat nr. 35A, right here deceased in the Hospital of Saint Maria on 14 March of this year, at 14:00, widower of Xnia [?] Low [?], son of Akiwa Rubinstein and of Rosa Dennenberg, both deceased. According to the report filed by Frain [?] Spielberg, master of ceremonies, sixty years old, housed in Brussels [,] and by Henri Mirgaux [?], usher, fifty one years old, housed right here. After reading of this certificate, the declarants signed as well as I did.

[Three signatures].

Some letters of the names are difficult to transliterate with certainty:

- the last two letters of Vertomme
- the letters of Xnia; Rubinstein was married to Eugenie Lew and perhaps in her family she was called Xenia; anyway X(e)nia is an existing first name for a female.
- the first two letters of Lew
- the last three letters of Frain
- typewritten the capital of Mirgaux could be a B, but handwritten it seems to be an M; Mirgaux is an existing family name, Birgaux not.

Furthermore, we see that from the often used variants of Rubinstein's first name (Akiba, Akiva and Akiwa) the first name Akiwa is used in this official document. And as we read the text, Rubinstein is named after his father who according to this document also bore the first name Akiwa. At the same time we note that his second first name Kielowicz, mentioned in other sources, wasn't included in this certificate. More information about this second name can be found in Donaldson & Milev, The life & games of Akiva Rubinstein. Vol. 1, p. 17-18.

These uncertainties and guesses are not of any relevance for the main fact. So, thanks to Hans Renette from now on there cannot be any reasonable doubt about the correct date of Akiwa Rubinstein's death: it is 14 March 1961, and this is in accordance with his tombstone as showed on the picture Mr. Philip Jurgens from Ottawa, Canada, has sent us in August of this year.

Bob van de Velde

Wilfried Krebbers

