Field School 2018 to Buczacz

Buchach**Community:**

The organization's annual documentation delegation completed documentation of the Jewish cemetery in Buczacz this year. It could be said that the central theme of this year's field work was the legacy of S.Y Agnon. Members of his family, as well as many of his friends, acquaintances, and heroes of his works, are buried in the cemetery. We cleaned and documented the tombstone of his father – Shalom Mordechai Czaczkes, and discovered the tombstone of his mother, Ester.

The discovery of Ester Czaczkes's tombstone aroused great interest among the public and in the press in Israel (see related articles here) and even while our work at the cemetery was still in progress, several groups of Israeli tourists came to visit her grave.



Israel author and Hebrew literaturer scholar Haim Beer near the rediscovered tombstone of Ester Czaczkes (photo by Meytal Sosnovik)

The delegation numbered 11 volunteers, most of whom were students from Herzog College, and it was led by two researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Dr. Boris Khaimovich, an expert in Jewish art, and Dr. Ilia Lurie, a researcher of Eastern European Jewry. The work of clearing and preparing the site was carried out in conjunction with ESJF- European Jewish Cemetery Initiative and the organization's delegation worked on site for two weeks: from the 29 of June until the 12 August.



century to thIn the course of the delegation's work, around 1,100 tombstones dating from the late19 the Holocaust were uncovered, cleaned, documented and photographed. Many of them were broken, upturned, or sunken into the ground. The central section of the cemetery – about a third of the total area – was destroyed completely during the Soviet era: the tombstones were removed and used for construction in the town.



(photo by Omer and Adi Geal Dor)



by Meytal Sosnovik)(photo by


(Photo by Omer and Adi Geal Dor)

Besides the tombstones of Agnon’s relatives, the tombstones of the head of the community in Buczacz for around 40 years, Avraham Stern, of prominent members of the community, and of heads of charitable and communal institutions were found. Until the Holocaust, the town of Buczacz was known as a place with a vibrant communal and Jewish national life. The cemetery stands as a final testimony to that.

In addition to the documentation of the tombstones, the cemetery was surveyed, and a detailed map was drawn recording all the tombstones coordinates.

All the delegation’s findings will be transcribed, processed, and made accessible to the general public on the JGB organization’s website.



Omer and Adi Geal Dor)(photo by

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