Beauty and Fame of Olšany Cemetery

Olšany cemetery brims full of mysterious nooks, it is entwined with beautiful art and the silent whispers of many fateful lives. Olšany excels all cemeteries in Prague and the Czech Republic aesthetically but also in size. It doesn't come as such a surprise that we can find lots of past celebrities who formed the hub of Czech cultural and social life buried here.

Burials in Olšany first started as a result of a serious plague infection and in the whole time of its existence has received more than two million burials.

Two hundred year old cemetery

Olšany became the regular cemetery for Old and New Town in 1786 when Josef II banned burals inside the town ramparts. For the following two hundred years Olšany cemetery became the last place of rest for the majority of Praguers, including celebrities of Czech science, culture and politics.

Movers of Czech society

A list of all celebrities buried in Olšany would take several pages. Let's remember at least some of them. In an old part of Olšany cemetery is for example the final resting place of K. Havlíček Borovský, J. Jungmann, F. L. Čelakovský or L. Stroupežnický. In the fifth part of cemetery you can find the gravestone of J. Mánes, S. Rašilov and also K. J. Erben. In a newer part of the cemetery are buried celebrities such as Josef Lada, Jan Palach or Voskovec and Werich.

Art at the cemetery

At Olšany cemetery we can also find plenty of artistically valuable gravestones, sculptures and tombs. For example the embossing on the gravestone of sculptor Josef Maudra is the work of one of his students, famous sculptor František Bílek. Works by the hands of V.Prachner, F.X. Leder and I.Platzer are significant also. The largest monument at Olšany cemetery is Hrdličkův gravestone next to the main entrance with its magnificent white marble sculpture by sculptor František Rous.

Cemetery these days

Olšany necropolis consists of twelve cemeteries. There are two ceremonial halls assigned to bid farewell to the deceased, the newer one is located in a building of the former of Prague's first crematoriums. To this day there is an evidence of 230,000 people buried, 65 000 graves sites, 200 chapel graves and six columbariums in Olšany cemetery. New to the scene is "Olšanske Cemetery Learning Trail" which is so far mapping the history of three of the oldest sections and also sketches the life stories of some celebrities buried here. Prague's Olšany cemetery excels in its picturesque style and its tranquil nooks surpassing even Malostranský cemetery and Slavín and it is the biggest necropolis in the Czech Republic.