

## Objects of Interest



**1 Majori-Dubulti Charity Society (presently the Majori Secondary School)**  
Rīgas iela 3, Majori

In 1879, J. Dumpis established the first private elementary school in Majori. When in 1882 the Majori-Dubulti Charity Society was established, among its goals was the education of poor children. Finding the original building too small, the society bought additional land and constructed a new school building with a spacious auditorium and a stage. It was opened in 1899.

Among many important events, the illegal welcoming home reception of Rainis from his five-year political exile on June 17, 1903, was special. There Aspazija read poems from his first published book *Tālas nošķiras zīla vakara* (Distant sensations on a blue evening) and presented Rainis as the new-age poet. On October 30, 1905, in the same auditorium, a meeting after the Tsar's October manifest took place. Rainis spoke, and Aspazija thanked the Tsar for certain concessions given to the workers and ended her speech by saying, "Let free speech live in a free land!"

The school functioned and remained unchanged for nearly one hundred years, when it became too small and inadequate. After extensive reconstruction, it was reopened on September 1, 1998, when Latvia was again free from foreign occupation. President Guntis Ulmanis participated in the opening ceremony. After few more years, in 2005, the reconstruction of the historical landmark was finished. The next president, Dr. Vaira Vīķis-Freiberga participated in that opening ceremony. Since 2010, annual scientific conferences take place there.

**2 Rainis and Aspazija Memorial Summer House in Majori**  
J. Pliekšāna iela 5/7 (formerly, Aleksandra iela 7), Majori



Rainis's and Aspazija's summer house is a museum for the preservation and promotion of their cultural heritage. The couple purchased the property in the autumn of 1926, the same year they moved from *Pārdaugava* (suburban area of Riga) to the centre of Riga, on Bazmīcas iela 30.

Their whole Majori property is a three building complex, typical of the Jūrmala architecture of the end 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first building is a single storey wooden structure with an attic; the second is a small stone lodge, set deeper inside the garden, which Rainis rented out or used to house his friends in need. The third is a two-storey large house with a wooden carved facade, and an Art Nouveau style veranda. That he chose for himself, because of their upper floor sunnier rooms and the veranda, where he liked to recline and write.

The complex sits at the end of a short street. *The street is very small. One end touches the asphalt of Jomas iela, while the other lies in the sandy dunes; the middle part is only a couple hundred meters long. On both sides of the street are tall pine trees (from a newspaper).*

Rainis, who liked to write in solitude, away from city noises, spent most of his time in Majori, while Aspazija liked to be in the midst of things and close to the theatre, where their plays were staged, chose Riga. Rainis did not like to deal with his old works and entrusted any negotiations and problems to Aspazija, who knew the plays as well as he and

liked to deal with the directors and producers.

Actually, while Aspazija wrote intensely, trying to catch up with time lost in Switzerland, Rainis was tired of creative writing and became again involved in politics. He served as a Minister of Education and travelled on government missions. Feeling free, he held his own council, entertained his old and young friends and basked in the sunshine on the beach. His housekeeper Anna Riniece took care of his daily needs.

In the summer of 1927, Aspazija and Rainis resided in the small upper rooms of their garden house. There he wrote the play *Mīla stiprāka par nāvi* (Love is stronger than death). In the autumn, she returned to Riga, while he stayed behind. "I like this calmness, this clean and fresh air. There is no place I feel as good as here", he said. The next year, 1928, he wrote his last play *Rīgas ragana* (The witch of Riga). The following summer, Rainis, with his doctor, took a trip to Egypt. He returned happy and ready to work. Meanwhile, Aspazija was busy working on another of her plays – *Velna nauda* (The devil's money), and the first part of her autobiography *Mana dzīve* (My life).

Rainis died on September 11, 1929, one day before his 64<sup>th</sup> birthday. Only his housekeeper Anna was with him. Aspazija rushed to his side, but arrived too late.

Museum is under reconstruction till 2016.



**3 Monument of Rainis by the museum**  
J. Pliekšāna iela 35, Majori

Celebrating the centenary of Rainis's life and starting the tradition of poetry days in Latvia, on September 11, 1965, in Majori, a monument by Oto Kalējs was installed. A grey granite image shows a relaxed Rainis in his garden.

**4 Horn's Garden and Monument for Rainis and Aspazija The Young Raven**  
Jomas iela 35, Majori

In 1870, Mr. Horn took a possession of a piece of a dune forest, overgrown with scrub pines and developed it into a garden, naming it after himself. By the end of the century, there was a hotel, a restaurant, a cinema, a concert hall, and a 2000 seat open-air hall for musical and other performances.

In 1905, the first Latvian concert was held there, and the song *Dievs svēti Latviju* (God, bless Latvia), which would become the Latvian National Anthem, was played.

In 1913, a fire that broke out in the Vaker's house on the corner streets of *Jomas* and *Tirgoņa*, burned down all the buildings in Horn's Garden.

In 1970, a cinema *Jūrmala* was built on the site and is now a Jūrmala Culture Centre.

In 1990, a monument *Krauklītis* (The young raven), showing the raven in the upper part of the monument, was installed on *Jomas iela*, in honour of Rainis and Aspazija's *Evening of poetry and songs*, which had taken place there in July of 1905. A monument was installed on their 125<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary, showing Rainis and Aspazija in Switzerland, where he wrote the play *Krauklītis*. The sculptors are Zigrīda Fēmaņa-Rapa and Juris Tišēņko-Rapa.



**5 House of Aspazija**  
Zigriņa Meierovica prospekts 20, Dubulti (formerly, Gončarova iela 13/15)

The House of Aspazija is of national significance with special uniqueness and beauty. Located in the narrowest part of Jūrmala, where the sea is only a couple hundred meters away from the porch and where, from the southern windows one can enjoy the fabulous view of the River Lielupe.

Marija Kīrsteine, a Baltic German merchant, built the summer house in 1903. After the death of Rainis, Aspazija sold their house in Riga and bought the Kīrsteine's house for 11,500 Lats. "Now I am in Dubulti, in the house my beloved and I wanted to buy together. We talked how to set it up", she wrote in her diary, July 1933.

There she lived the last decade of her life, during which time she produced an amazing amount of writing. She wrote and arranged two books of poems: *Dvēseles ceļojums* (Soul's journey), 1933, and *Zem vakara zvaigznes* (Under the evening star), 1942; the novel *Rudens lakstīgala* (Autumn nightingale), 1933; a play *Velna nauda* (The devil's money), 1933, and four out of six volumes of her autobiography *Mana dzīve un darbi* (My life and my works), 1938-1940, each averaging 350 pages. Besides these, she wrote extensive tributes to other writers and personalities, remembrances, and essays. In addition, with the help of friends, she edited and arranged Rainis's diaries for publication in the journal *Atpūta* (Relaxation).

There she received and entertained important statesmen and old friends and colleagues who visited her on special days. As World War II approached, horrified, she saw the Latvia of her dreams disintegrate first with the Soviet occupation of June 1940, followed by mass deportations of Latvian citizens to Siberia in 1941 and the confiscation of all private property. Then she saw the German liberators march into the streets of Jūrmala and heard about the holocaust, devastating battles, and flights of refugees.



There, in the last year of her life, Aspazija made out her Last Will and Testament, expressing her wish that the house becomes a meeting place for creative personalities and that a Rainis and Aspazija yearbook is published, where the truth would be told and made accessible to future scholars.

At the end of October 1943, Aspazija suffered a stroke and was taken to a clinic, where she died on November 5, 1943.

In 1986, a memorial plaque/moulding *Sidra šķidrums* (The silver veil) by Antonija Gulbe was installed. In 1987, the house was transferred to the Jūrmala History and Art Museum and was at the disposal of the Jūrmala Executive Committee that used it as a summer house. Rented out to several families at once, it was finally abandoned in complete disrepair.

In 1993 the *Aspazija home fund* was established for the restoration of the House. Later on, the fund became a part of the *Aspazija Heritage Society*. Combining the initiative of concerned Jūrmala citizens, material resources of the city and financial support of compatriots abroad, such as, American Latvians Uldis Raiškums, Agate Nesaule, and many more, made it possible, in 1996, for the House to be opened to the public.

Thereafter, structural improvements, acquisitions of period furnishings, books, and memorabilia, the addition of an assembly/exhibit room, and landscaping made the antique house ever more attractive to local and international visitors. In 1996 it became a registered museum. Consequently, further restoration and upgrading became necessary, and in 2012, the house was closed down for that purpose.

Fully restored and enlarged, the Aspazija House was reopened in October 2014. It stands now proudly and beautifully on the busy *Z. Meierovica prospekts* for the entire world to see. Connected to the world through the internet, it brings Aspazija's life and her works to home and international audiences.

The house has been restored authentically to the most minute detail: period chairs and tables set with hand embroidered cloths, quaint coffee services and portraits of Aspazija at different stages of her life. Each room seems to welcome not only the curious strangers but also local school children of a democratic, free State such as Aspazija had envisioned in her dreams more than a century ago.

The more recent showpiece is the wood-inlaid Aspazija's piano, telling the guests about composers who visited Aspazija, when she was alone and her world was falling apart. One can imagine her, eyes closed, listening to the poems of her tempestuous youth set to music and sung by many voices or imagine the poetess herself sitting at the piano playing Chopin's etudes and Beethoven's sonatas.

Browsing through the book shelves, one may discover the beautifully bound and illustrated great books by the world's great masters – Goethe, Schiller, Heine, and many more whom Aspazija loved and who became a part of her essence. Those works influenced her works and characters, giving the familiar archetypes modern, often female dimensions. Her plays, especially, need yet to be discovered, analysed, compared, and enjoyed.

Thus, the House of Aspazija is more than a house and a museum; it is a journey into the hidden and virtually unknown past of the eminent writer and her country. It is also a place to discover one's deeper self and connect with others. It is a symbol of Latvia. It is poetry.

Open: Tuesday – Saturday 10.00 – 17.00. Free of charge entrance.



**6 The Monument of Aspazija**  
Zigriņa Meierovica prospekts 20, Dubulti (previously, Gončarova iela 13/15)

In March of 1995, on Aspazija's 130<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary, the well-known contemporary author Māra Zālīte wrote that Aspazija has no monument in Latvia. More than a decade later, in 2006, the City of Jūrmala agreed to finance and support the installation of a monument.

The distinguished Latvian sculptor Arta Dumpe was asked to design a monument dedicated to the poet. It would be placed near her last residence; namely, on the lawn next to the House of Aspazija in Dubulti. The Committee of Monumental and Memorial Sculptures agreed, as Ms Dumpe had already dealt with Aspazija's themes in several of her works. In the end, she created a monument of a mature Aspazija in light grey granite, explaining: "I did not make Aspazija at the time of her fame and glory but rather as she was when she lived in this house, often keeping warm in a heavy wrap, holding her friend, the dear old grey cat."

On November 13, 2009, marking the 91<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia, the president Valdis Zatlers unveiled the monument. He reminded the witnesses that Aspazija had been the recipient of laurel wreaths, the *Trijū Zvaigžņu Ordenis* (The medal of three stars), and the *Tēvzemes balva* (Fatherland award) for her invaluable contributions to the nation and for being the most outstanding Latvian poet of the twentieth century.

In the summer of 2011, upon the initiative of the Jūrmala Pensioner Society's women, in collaboration with the rose breeder Gunta Valants, Jūrmala City and the House of Aspazija created a rose garden around the statue. Mr. Valants donated and planted – with the help of outstanding Latvian women – over a hundred roses, thereby confirming the role and contribution of women in public, social, and cultural fields in the past as well as the present.

Since the dedication of the monument, it has become a tradition to gather around it on Aspazija's birthday, every March 16<sup>th</sup>, for a celebration.

## 7 Aspazijas iela

(Aspazija's Street, formerly, Akas iela), Dubulti

From the windows of the southern sun parlour of the House of Aspazija opens a marvellous view of the river Lielupe. Looking through the second floor windows, on the north sun parlour, one can see the sea. 335 meters wide, this is the narrowest strip of land between the Baltic Sea and the River Lielupe. Aspazija's housekeeper Anna Rijniece wrote in a letter:

"I actually live by the source of life and health, by the sea. However, I am limited only to the pleasure of watching, as I am not permitted to swim because of my health. Madam and I visit the warm baths of Marienbad. Sometimes we go for walks on the beach along the sea. On Sundays, we go to the cinema. The poetess also goes for walks on the promenade Dubulti-Marienbad."

The remaining old part of the promenade, leading from the House of Aspazija towards the sea, crossing *Zigfrida Meierovica prospekts* and continuing on Aspazijas iela can still be traced.

This street is one of the shortest and narrowest streets of the city. Towards the sea, on Aspazijas iela 4, is the Writers' House. The historic two-storey wooden building founded in 1946, could accommodate 30 guests. During the Soviet era, it belonged to the USSR Literary Foundation, and many eminent writers from all over the Soviet Union lived there. In 1970, a new nine-storey building with a hundred rooms was built and replaced the old one, which belonged to the Union of Latvian Writers. Presently it is a private house with a number of small apartments.

## 8 Graves of Anna Rijniece and Virēna Rozenberga in Vecdubulti Cemetery

Slokas iela 52, Dubulti

The graves of Virēna Rozenberga and Anna Rijniece are in the central part of Vecdubulti Cemetery, cared for by the Dubulti Lutheran Church congregation.

Virēna Rozenberga (November 5, 1906 – June 11, 1956) was Aspazija's niece, the daughter of her brother Zamuels. Virēna was a teacher in the Jūrmala city school system, working in Majori, Bulduri, and Pumpuri, where she taught foreign languages. She lived with Aspazija in her house in Dubulti until her own death.

Anna Rijniece was Rainis's and Aspazija's housekeeper, who served them for more than twenty years. A taped narrative about Virēna and Anna can be heard in the house of Aspazija in Dubulti. Various writers in describing the lives of Rainis and Aspazija have mentioned faithful *Annija* as crucial in freeing the poets from household chores so they could devote their time for writing.

Virēna, Aspazija's closest living relative, was a steady companion for her.

The House of Aspazija, in cooperation with the City of Jūrmala and the Aspazija Heritage Society have placed a memorial sign at the graves of Anna and Virēna. The museum staff continues to gather information about the two very different women and their role in the lives of Rainis and Aspazija. Of special interest is Aspazija's influence (if any) on Virēna's teaching career in the Jūrmala schools, as well as her and Aspazija's personal relationship.

## 10 Summer house

Poruka prospekts 61, Jaundubulti (formerly, Aleksandra prospekts 16)

In 1903, after returning to Latvia, Rainis and Aspazija purchased a plot of land and built a summer house in Jaundubulti, on *Aleksandra prospekts* 16. The builders were Jūlijs Pētersons and Ansis Vītols, but Rainis himself actively engaged in the purchase of materials and components for the house, about what he made detailed records.

In the summers of 1904 and 1905, the poets lived in the unfinished house in Jaundubulti. Although 1903 – 1905 were most dangerous and turbulent years, when Rainis, with his friends plotted, what would become, the 1905 Revolution, Aspazija recalled the time as most happy. The house was a gathering place for poets, artists, composers and revolutionaries. Aspazija's friends who knew her as the author of wonderful plays and poems long before she and Rainis were married came to visit and share their dreams.

Among many, the outstanding visitors were the young poet Kārlis Skalbe, the composer Emīls Dārzis, the beautiful young actress Biruta Skujeniece, the novelist Augusts Deglavs, and Antons Birkerts, the future biographer of Rainis.

He writes about the life in the summer house: «The main parts of the small summer house were all rented out. Rainis and Aspazija inhabited a small room in the south-western part of the roof. Once arrived there, three visitors, the room was already too small. For those who had come not for one day, the open space nearby Rainis and Aspazija room, served as a place of residence. There has not been made a room yet, as summer house was not ready. Here many pleasant moments have been spent - in the middle of yet non-existent room, especially at the cooking time, when a small community had gathered around the table.



Without a doubt, the new visitors disturbed a poet, but his demeanour and sparkling wit that sometimes even got rhythmic aphorism type with all the necessary rhymes - all of it seemed that he is not disturbed. It was the same with Aspazija... On the evenings small common walks to the sea and along the sea were made to watch the sunset.

However, because the visitors were many and came often, Aspazija, at times, had to chase them away so that Rainis could finish his play *Uguns un nakts* (Fire and night), which was being published serially in *Dienas lapa* (Daily page). Then Rainis would go to work and be inspired under the pines.

So it continued until the autumn of 1905, when he returned to Riga, where Aspazija's *Sidra šķidrums* (The silver veil) was being performed at the *Jau-nais teātris* (The new theatre) to packed audiences and where, on the outskirts, factory workers were preparing to go on strike. Aspazija, sensing danger, kept Rainis from going to the meetings, but the Gendarmie was already out, looking for him.

On New Year's Eve, Rainis and Aspazija escaped across the Poland-Latvia border, leaving behind the Revolution-devastated country, their unfinished house, and the Three Pines. Emigrated poets live in Switzerland from 1906–1920. At the beginning, Rainis and Aspazija, in the hope of an early return, try to keep the summer house; mother of Aspazija - Grieta Rozenberga - and a sister of Aspazija - Dora, spend few summers there. However, the financial situation in 1911 forces the poets to sell the house. During the Soviet era there is a pioneer camp named after Rainis there. Summer house is rebuilt and a little, various auxiliary buildings are built in its territory. There is a memorial plaque placed by the building. The building is state-owned.

## Personalities



Photo: Rakstniecības un mūzikas muzejs

## Aspazija (1865 – 1943)

Aspazija (born Johanna Emīlija Lizete Rozenberga, 1865 – 1943) – poet, playwright, public figure – extremely bright, diverse and contradictory personality, who with his first poem published on a daily page of a newspaper *Dienas lapa* (Daily page) throws the gauntlet to society by signing it with the name of ancient Greek feminist and beloved woman of the king Pericles – Aspazija. A «suspicious» pseudonym of a poet has often caused some kind of a mistrust, for example, during creation of a compilation «Сборник латышской литературы» («Compilation of Latvian literature», Petrograd, 1916).

Her childhood and youth period still carries a touch of mysticism and legend: both in terms of her year of birth and date (only after the poet's centenary commemorative celebration in 1968, it was made known to the public that in fact, she was born three years earlier) and «official» appearance of her name – Elza (as claimed in her first biographical essay).

Aspazija spends her childhood near Jelgava, in a country house in Zālenieki parish owned by her parents. In 1874 Elza starts to attend Jelgava City Dorothea Girls' School, but after two years continues to the Holy Trinity Girls' Gymnasium. During school the next poet enamoured with classical literature and history, as well as begun to write poetry. Her first play *Atriebēja* (The avenger) is prohibited by censorship, but in 1893 Aspazija is recruited by Riga Latvian Theatre as «theatre writer» and in 1894 on the scene appears her



'yearning drama' – *Vaidelote* – a play about a woman who in the name of love revolts against dogmas and prejudices of the era.

What concerns public and literary spheres, Aspazija is the most evident Latvian women of the 90s in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her poems marked innovative development directions of Latvian literature. They discovered the evolution of a modern woman, her fight for her rights and social equality. Aspazija's drama put forward the ideas of building an independent Latvia and of universal human, ethical ideals. During this period of her life, the poet linked her life with Rainis and in future she fully shares his dramatic fate of a political prisoner and exile when

creative «custody», moral support and practical assistance was very important. In 1894 begins their «letter novels», which the most intensively evolved during the exile periods of Rainis in Pskov and Slobodsk, when Aspazija only periodically was able to stay with her spouse. Letter material has been used in many scholarly and literary works, but in 2009, unique correspondence between two creative personalities has been included in the Latvian national register of UNESCO programme «Memory of the World».

Aspazija and Rainis spend summers of 1904 and 1905 in Jūrmala. During this time, a new elevation in life of Aspazija is caused by the triumph of her drama *Sudraba šķidrums* (Silver veil) in the New Latvian Theatre. In this play, the author is dealing with the eternal problem of the individual relations with a society, as well as with the artist's responsibility towards the nation. In the end of 1905, Aspazija together with Rainis are going into exile in Switzerland, where they remain until spring of 1920. The most valuable poet's creative achievements during Swiss years, are volumes of poetry *Saulainais stūrītis* (Sunny corner, 1910) and *Ziedu kleps* (Bosom of flowers, 1912) – her lyrical autobiography.

Aspazija's contribution to the Latvian culture has been valued with the Three Stars Medal (1927), Class II Cross of Recognition (1938), and the highest state award – the Fatherland Award (1939). In 1936, in Prague a capital work or collection «Significant women nowadays» is issued – 64 women from 26 countries were selected, including Aspazija.

The funeral ceremony of the poet, where, in spite of heavy war conditions, hundreds of people were participating, was held in the true spirit of Aspazija, namely turning into a spontaneous protest demonstration against the German occupying power.

Quite significant, sometimes even inseparable, is the role of Aspazija in the today assessment of literary heritage of Rainis. In 2004 a book of Saulcerite Viesē Mūžīgie spārni (Eternal wings) and in 2010 – a book of Ināra Andžāne *Aspazija?* Aspazija were issued.

Since March 2011, concerts devoted to the birthday of Aspazija, take place in Dubulti Church.

*Aspazija*

## Rainis (1865 – 1929)

Rainis (real name Jānis Pliekšāns) – an outstanding Latvian writer, cultural worker and politician, spouse of poet Aspazija. In Latvian history, he has a permanent role as one of the most visible creators of his nation's cultural and national identity during the collapse of the Russian Empire and struggle for the independence of Latvia.

Born on September 11, 1865 in Ilūkste County's Dunava parish house *Varaslavāni*, in the family of a manor's tenant. He graduated from the Riga City Gymnasium (1883) and St. Petersburg University Faculty of Law (1888). Since 1889, he worked in the Vilnius District Court as a candidate judge, then in Jelgava as an assistant of attorney A. Stērste and wrote articles for encyclopaedia on legal and social issues.

From 1891 to 1895, Rainis works as an editor of the newspaper *Dienas Lapa* (Daily page). In 1897, when the arrests of the *Jau-nā strāva* (New current) begin, also Rainis is arrested, he is accused of belonging to a secret anti-government organization. From 1897 until 1899, Rainis was in exile in Pskov (Russia), but from 1899 to 1903, in Slobodsk (Kirov region, Russia). In the spring of 1903, Rainis returns to Latvia; he lives in Jelgava and Jūrmala.

During exile, Rainis mainly translated plays of foreign classics (Ibsen, Goethe, Pushkin, and Shakespeare), wrote poetry (included in the collection *Tālas noskaņas zilā vakarā* (Distant sensations on a blue evening, 1903)). His attitude towards the revolution is reflected in the poetry collection *Vētras sēja* (Storm sowing, 1905). During this time, also a drama *Uguns un nakts* (Fire and Night) was published.

During the Revolution of 1905, Rainis made speeches at both protest rallies and meetings; that was followed by his exile in late 1905. At the beginning Rainis and Aspazija settles in Zurich, later in Castagnola at Lake Lugano (Switzerland). During exile, he wrote poetry collection *Klusā grāmata* (Still book, 1909), which is a memorial for heroes of 1905's revolution. A poem *Ave sol* written in 1910 is a hymn to the sun – source of transformation and life.

In the following years, until the World War One, Rainis created the most philosophical works: a collection of poems *Sākums un gals* (The beginning and the end, 1912) and the tragedy *Jazeps un viņa brāļi* (Joseph and his brothers, 1919), in 1915 – the play *Spēlēju, dancoju* (I played, I danced), in which he highlighted the important role of spirituality during times of historical turning points. New Riga Theatre has staged his exile period plays *Zelta zirgs* (Golden horse, 1909), *Indulis un Arja* (1912) and *Pūt, vējņi!* (Blow, wind, 1914).

In Switzerland Rainis became the chairman of the Latvian Committee and in his articles in periodicals he stressed the need to separate the people in national countries (1917). During this time the poem *Daugava* was written; the idea of an independent country was promoted as a savior of a nation. In April 1920, after fourteen years in exile, Rainis and Aspazija returns from Switzerland, thousands of people greet them as national heroes in busy city streets. Poet with a youthful enthusiasm engages in the building of new Latvian state: he is elected into Constitutional Meeting as a candidate from the list of Socialist Democrats. Rainis is also elected into the parliament. Now he is an honorary doctorate of the University of Latvia, earlier *Trojmantnieka bulvāris* in Riga in now renamed under name of Rainis.

Rainis was a co-founder of *Dalles* theatre (1920), as well as its first director, from 1921 to 1925, he was a director of the National Theatre. From 1926 to 1928, he served as Minister of Education – he showed the greatest understanding and organizational skills in this field of political activity.

The greatest poetic work of the last years of Rainis was *Dagda's skiču burtnīcas* (Dagda's scrapbooks), which include poetry collections: «*Addio, bella!*», «*Čūska vārdi* (Snake words), *Uz mājām* (On the way home), poems written in Castagnola, *Sudrabota gaisma* (Silver light) and *Mēness meitņa* (Moon daughter). During the twenties, the best dramatic work is epic tragedy *Iļja Muromietis* (Ilya Muromets, 1923). In case of this epos, Rainis gave free interpretation, naming it the «tragedy of the ages» caused by the hero's inability to understand the younger generation. The powerlessness of evil is emphasized in play *Mīla stiprāka par nāvi* (Love is stronger than death) that was staged in 1927.

During the last years of his life, Rainis actively participates in the preparation of his collected works *Dzīve un darbi* (Life and Works, 1925 - 1931). In order to dispel the grim mood and improve his health, the poet often travels to various countries in Western Europe, Scandinavia, also Egypt and Palestine. A strong nostalgia is pulling him back to Castagnola; Rainis visits it in 1921, 1926 and 1927 (in the second half of twenties the poet increasingly desires to return there forever). During the last visit a memory book *Kastagnola* (Castagnola, 1928) is written, in which he confesses in love to his second homeland - Switzerland.



In 1940, Rainis was assigned a People's Poet Award of Latvian SSR.

In September 1929, the day after his sixty-fourth birthday, Rainis suddenly passes away. He did not complete his work *Modernais Fausts* (Modern Faust), left unfinished several poetry collections, and left in his archive a material of over a hundred unfinished plays. Currently the most complete literary heritage of Rainis is summarized in issue *Kopoti raksti* (Collected works) in 30 volumes and 4 volumes of «Translations of J.Rainis» (1989–1990).

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1929, Rainis was buried in the New Cemetery of Riga, which is now named after him. In the end of the main avenue of the cemetery, a memorial colonnade is unveiled on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1932, and in 1935 – a sculptural part *Gēnija pamodināns* (Awakening of genius). In 1943 also Aspazija is buried here nearby the grave of Rainis. In 1958 a red granite slab with inscription «Rainis. Aspazija.» is put by the grave.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1965 – on the occasion of poet's hundredth birthday – in Riga, *Esplanāde*, a monument of Rainis is unveiled. The first days of poetry takes place here, establishing a long-standing tradition of public poetry readings. At present, museums of poets are open not only in Latvia (Tadenava, Jasmuiža, Riga, Jūrmala) but also in places of exile: Switzerland – Lugano Historical Archive House and Slobodsk (Kirov oblast).

Repository of literature, theatre and music collection stores a massive collection of Rainis's and Aspazija's works – more than 45 000 units, including correspondence - 14 420 units. Mutual correspondence of both poets consists of 2 499 letters in Latvian, Russian and German languages.

## Jūrmala tourism information centre

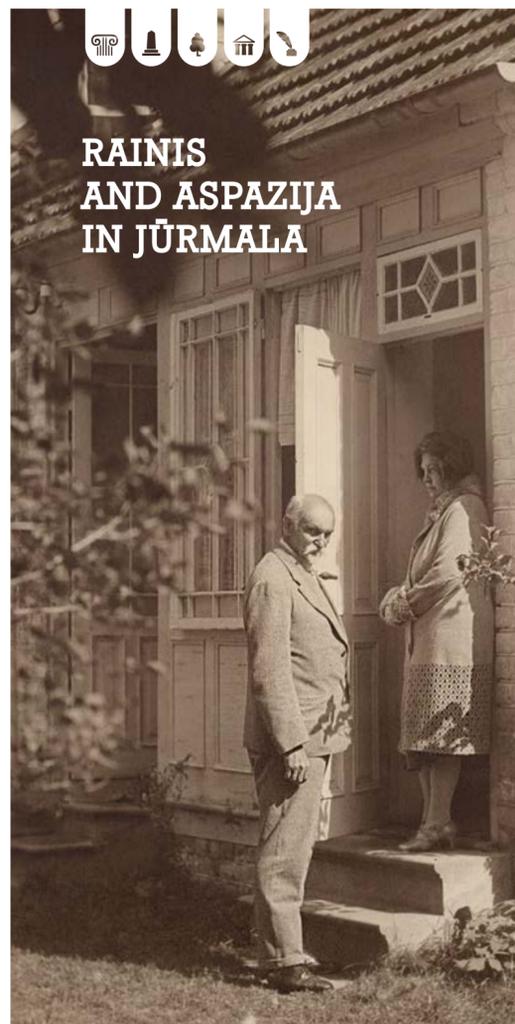
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## RAINIS AND ASPAZIJA IN JŪRMALA



## 9 Rainis's Pine Trees

Jaundubulti, the seaside dunes opposite Amatas iela

Near the Jaundubulti summer house, at the end of *Amatas iela*, where the woods meet the white sand dunes, grew three pine trees. After Rainis returned home in the spring of 1903 from his exile in Russia, he and Aspazija lived on *Poruka prospekts*, while they started building their summer house in Jaundubulti. Then, seeking peace and solitude, Rainis often went to sit in the shade of the pine trees and write.

## 11 Melluži Summer House, the Pēperkoka namiņš (gingerbread cottage)

Salacas iela 4, Pumpuri (formerly, 14. līnija 2, Melluži)

From 1894 to 1896, Rainis, while working as editor of *Dienas Lapa* (Daily page), rented the small cottage in Melluži. There, in the *Pēperkoka namiņš*, Aspazija visited him while she lived with her Riga roommates in their Jūrmala summer house. On July 22, 1894, she wrote to Rainis: "From afar, I already see your veranda with the speckled curtains. Now I am at the gate. You come towards me with a radiant smile of happiness, your kind, sincere eyes looking at me, and we are so happy, so happy. A pot of tea is on the table. The black cat has already arrived, and our neighbour is calling *Eide und Lea, kommt – lement!* And I love you so, love you so much that I feel as on endless stairs, climbing to the top, feeling fuller, bigger, and happier."

On August 10, 1931, Aspazija's entry tells: "One day I drove to see the little house on the 14.līnija, where we first declared our love and spent a happy summer together."



## 12 The Health Spa Ķemeri

Robežu iela 20, Ķemeri

In the summer of 1881, older sister of Rainis – Lize (born in 1854), treated rheumatism in Ķemeri. Jānis first writes to her sister in Ķemeri, but in June 1882, when Lize again is going for the treatment, sixteen years old Jānis comes with her. Already for five years Ķemeri can be reached by train, and it takes two children through Rigas Jūrmala. It is possible that it is his first connection with this place, and he watches city through the window of a train, still unaware that all his life he will return to Jūrmala repeatedly.

In a letter home, dated June 18, 1882, Jānis tells about their daily life at Ķemeri: "The park is small, but the forest is large, humid and swampy. Reading is starting to be boring. I have walked through the forest as far as Jūrmala, about five versts from Ķemeri. Back at the resort it is also dreary. I wake up at six and go to Mrs. Gulbis, who gives me fresh milk. Then I walk until nine, when Liziņa wakes up, and we drink tea. Liziņa goes to take her bath, and then I go. We eat lunch and spend the evening together until ten, as every day."

It is not known whether or not Lize Pliekšāne and her brother rented one of the eighteen rooms at the resort or somewhere else. Ķemeri, burned down in 1894, and so did all the records.

Rainis often went to Ķemeri during the 1920s. In the summer of 1925 he noted in his diary: "I took 30 baths at Ķemeri. I rented an apartment on *Robežu iela 20* from *Kronkains* for 2,500 rubles. Food is only 1,500 rubles, baths 5000. I have to go often to Riga."

The address of the building can still be seen, and the oak tree in the yard has definitely seen Rainis.

