

Their eggs are laid in bodies of water and the gnat develops by stages – larval, pupal, imaginal. Despite the inconvenience caused by the gnat, the rabbis stated that it, too, is important in the complex of ecological relations between creatures (Shab. 77b). They also declared that even “if all mortals were to gather together to create one gnat,” they would fail to do so (Sif. Deut. 32).

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[Jehuda Feliks]

GNESIN, MIKHAIL FABIANOVICH (1883–1957), Russian composer, musicologist, and teacher. Born in Rostov-on-Don, he studied with Lyadov and Rimsky-Korsakov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. From 1910 to 1923 he taught at Rostov, Yekaterinodar, and Petrograd, and undertook study trips to Greece, Italy, France, Germany, and Palestine (in 1914 and 1921) and worked in Meyerhold’s St. Petersburg studio. He also made a survey of music education in the Jewish schools on behalf of the *Odessa Committee. During 1921 he stayed in Palestine, and then went to Germany where he was one of the founders of the Jibneh music publishing house and reorganized the activities of the *Society of Jewish Folk Music of which he had been one of the founders in 1908.

From 1923 to 1935 he was professor of composition at the Moscow Conservatory, where he also served as head of the pedagogical faculty and of the “studios for the development of the national music of the Soviet peoples.” From 1935 to 1945 he taught composition at the Leningrad Conservatory, and from 1945 to 1951 headed the composition department at the music school, which bore his name and that of his sister who was also a musician. Gnesin’s pedagogical activity included the creation of the basic plan for teaching music composition, which is still followed in the Soviet Union. In addition to his memoirs, he published a number of books on composition, aesthetics, Jewish music, and a study of Rimsky-Korsakov. Among his students were Khachaturian and Khrennikov. As a composer, he pioneered the new Russian symphonic style, and the use of material from the various peoples of the U.S.S.R. Of the 68 items in the list of his works, about a quarter bear “Jewish” titles. The sources for these were, as he himself declared, threefold: tunes of his maternal grandfather, the Vilna *badhan* and singer Shayke Fayfer (Isaiah Fleytsinger); the synagogue tradition which he received from his first teacher, Eliezer *Gerovich; and the melodies he had collected in Palestine. The publication of his Jewish compositions ended in 1929 (see list, up to this date, in Sendrey, *Music*). Of his later works, the most noteworthy are *Song of the Old Homeland*, for orchestra, op. 30; *Wolochs* for string quartet and clarinet, op. 56, in two versions (1938, 1951); *Pastoral Elegy* for piano trio, op. 57 (1940); the opera *Abraham’s Youth*, to his own libretto, op. 36 (1921–23); and the suite *A Jewish Orchestra at the Mayor’s Ball*, from his music to Gogol’s *Revizor* (“The Government Inspector”). His opera *Bar Kokhba*, to a libretto by Samuel Halkin, remained unfinished.

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[Haim Bar-Dayan]

GNESIN, MENAHEM (1882–1952), Israeli actor and pioneer of the Hebrew theater. Menahem Gnessin, a brother of Uri Nissan *Gnessin, went to Palestine from the Ukraine in 1903 and for some years was a laborer and teacher in the villages. In 1907 he founded the Amateur Dramatic Arts Company for the presentation of plays in Hebrew. He staged Chirikov’s *The Jews*, Gutzkow’s *Uriel Acosta*, and other plays in Jaffa, Jerusalem, and the Judean settlements. Returning to Moscow in 1912, Gnessin and N. *Zemach established a Hebrew group which formed the nucleus of *Habimah. By 1923 Gnessin was in Berlin, organizing the Te’atron Erez Yisraeli, which performed a one-act play, *Belshazzar* by H. Roche, with great success. In 1924 he took the group to Palestine and worked as an actor, teacher, and director. When Habimah reached Palestine in 1928, he joined the company. Gnessin wrote articles on the theater and published his memoirs *Darki im ha-Te’atron ha-Ivri, 1905–26* (“My Career in the Hebrew Theater,” 1946).

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[Gershon K. Gershony]

GNESIN, URI NISSAN (1881–1913), Hebrew author who was the first to introduce the psychologically oriented prose style into Hebrew literature. Born in Starodub, Ukraine, Gnessin spent his childhood and youth in Pochep, a small town in the province of Orel. His father was head of a yeshivah and Gnessin studied in a *heder*, later at his father’s yeshivah where J.H. *Brenner was also a student. Besides his religious studies, Gnessin was interested in secular subjects, studying classical and modern languages and literatures. As a boy, he wrote poems and at 15 began publishing, together with Brenner, a literary monthly and a literary weekly for a small circle of friends and readers. These served as a forum for many of his early works. Nahum *Sokolow invited the young poet, then 18, to join the editorial staff of *Ha-Zefirah in Warsaw; this marks the beginning of a productive period in his literary career. Gnessin published poems, literary criticism, stories, and translations in *Ha-Zefirah*. A small collection of short stories and sketches, *Zilelei ha-Hayyim* (“The Shadows of Life”), appeared in 1904.

At this time Gnessin began wandering from city to city, unable or unwilling to strike permanent roots. After a year’s stay in Warsaw he moved to Yekaterinoslav, then to Vilna, where he worked for a time for the periodical *Ha-Zeman*, and then went to Kiev. Gnessin tried to study abroad but was not accepted by various schools since he did not have a formal ed-

ucation. Financial distress, hunger, and an inner restlessness beset Gnessin during his stay in Kiev, yet it was the time of his greatest prolificacy. However, plans to found a Hebrew literary organ and a publishing house did not materialize. In 1907 Gnessin left Kiev and at Brenner's invitation went to London (via Warsaw and Berlin, where he stayed for a short time) to co-edit *Ha-Me'orer with Brenner. The periodical failed and there were violent disagreements between him and Brenner. London proved to be a severe disillusionment in other ways – the spiritual life of London Jewry was disappointing and his later fatal heart disease, probably contracted in Kiev, began to affect him. In the autumn he immigrated to Erez Israel but was unable to adjust. The country was a bitter experience for the young writer; his painful impressions found expression only in his letters however. He ascribes his disappointment at times to himself, at times to his environment which he saw as "Jews who trade in their Judaism." In the summer of 1908 Gnessin returned to Russia. He died in Warsaw four years later.

Gnessin's work, one of the major landmarks in Hebrew prose, is characterized by modern literary techniques and devices which he introduced into Hebrew literature. The interior monologue through which the reader receives an unmediated impression of the hero's continuous flow of ideas, sensations, feelings, and memories as they come into his consciousness was one of the main literary vehicles used by Gnessin to convey the psychological anxieties of his characters. He was among the first Hebrew writers to probe the problems of alienation and uprootedness, particularly as they affected the Jew in the modern age. Among his works four stories of his middle period are most outstanding and their impact on Hebrew prose is felt to this day: "*Haziddah*" ("Aside," 1905); "*Beinatayim*" ("Meanwhile," 1906); "*Be-Terem*" ("Before," 1909); and "*Ezel*" ("By," 1913). His early work, *Zilelei ha-Hayyim*, fails to reveal an individualistic literary character, while later stories, like "*Ba-Gannim*" ("In the Gardens," 1909) and "*Ketatah*" ("A Quarrel," 1912), mark the transition to a new psychological style. Brenner, G. *Shofman, and Gnessin were among the first to cast the problems of the Jew of the age in a literary context. Gnessin poignantly describes the dilemma of the Jew whose world outlook is rooted in the values and spirit of the Jewish East European town, but who, at the same time, adopted the characteristics of a "citizen of the world" sharing the achievements and the deterioration of 20th-century culture. Gnessin's treatment of the theme is close to that of *Berdyczewski.

The four stories are autobiographical and Gnessin, under the guise of different names, is the protagonist. The plots, variations of the same theme, are about a man who leaves home, travels to distant lands, and becomes a "citizen of the world" only to find himself uprooted. A cosmopolitan, he is now completely alienated and lonely. After traveling far and wide, he returns home only to be faced by the awful realization that he has become an alien in his own homeland. At times he may only go as far as the next town, a center somewhat larger than his own hamlet, but the experience uproots and alienates him. The past becomes irretrievable, the gap unbridge-

able, and he is cast in a strange, complex, and confusing world. The theme, apparently peculiar to contemporaneous Jewish intellectuals who had rejected religious tradition, merges in Gnessin with the more universal theme of perplexity, cultural strangeness, loss of God, and loss of roots. Out of his anguish, the lost son, wishing to comfort himself, cries: "Father, there is a God in heaven, isn't there, and He is so good!" ("*Be-Terem*"). The very names of the stories imply the protagonist's detachment from time and place.

Scandinavian literature and the stories of Chekhov, his favorite author, had a marked influence on Gnessin. His sense of time as a factor in the life of man and of society resembles that of Marcel Proust. Through the associative technique, Gnessin focused the past and future in the present, rendering the present less real than the past. He broke with the realistic trend then current in the Hebrew short story and became a "modern" author in the spirit of developments in world literature after World War I.

Gnessin's style involves a flow of lyrical patterns which approaches poetic rhythm. His lyricism, however, is neither ambiguous nor vague and his description of details, objects, characters, and scenery is vivid and precise. One of Gnessin's stylistic devices is to reflect the inner world of his characters in all that surrounds them. This demands a descriptive realism and an avoidance of rhetoric. His language, despite certain Russianisms, captured the rhythms of the spoken tongue. His critical essays, which he signed U. Estersohn, show a close affinity to the 19th-century school of symbolism. Among the works he translated are prose poems by Baudelaire and works by Chekhov, Heinrich Heine, S. Obstfelder, M. Spektor, and J. Wassermann. An edition of his collected works (*Kitvei*) appeared in 1982. The story "Sideways" appeared in A. Lelchuk and G. Shaked (eds.), *Eight Great Hebrew Novels* (1983); "Up-roar" is included in G. Abramson (ed.), *The Oxford Book of Hebrew Short Stories* (1996). For further translations into English, see Goell, Bibliography, 2102.

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[Lea Goldberg]

GNIEZNO (Ger. **Gnesen**), city in Poland; first capital of Poland and center of the Catholic Church in that country until the beginning of the 14th century. Jews are mentioned there in 1267. Various charters of privilege granted to individual Jews or the community giving them rights of residence, and permission to organize defense and engage in commerce (1497, 1499, 1519, 1567, 1571, 1637, 1661) were destroyed in fires that periodically devastated the town. From the 13th to the middle of the 17th centuries, Gniezno Jewry remained one of the smaller communities in the kingdom, numbering 100 people in 30 houses at the end of the period. A representative from Gniezno participated in the provincial (*galil*) council of the communities of Great Poland in 1519. Several such councils were convened at Gniezno (in 1580, 1632, 1635, 1640, 1642). Local and visiting merchants and their agents dealt in wool and rags and collected tolls at the biannual fairs, and even attempted to carry on business outside the Jewish quarter (1643). The synagogue, built in 1582, was modeled after the one in Poznan. Eliezer *Ashkenazi was among the rabbis of Gniezno. The events surrounding the Swedish War (1655–59), as well as attacks led by the Jesuits and by the troops of Stephan *Czarnecki, ended with the destruction of the community. In 1661 it reorganized outside the city walls. A new synagogue was built in 1680. In the first half of the 18th century the community suffered during the Northern War, and there was an outbreak of fire as well as cases of *blood libel (1722, 1738). There were 60 Jews living in Gniezno in 1744. The community increased from the second half of the 18th century, particularly after Gniezno came under Prussian rule with the second partition of Poland in 1793, growing from 251 in the beginning of the period to 1,783 in the middle of the 19th century. It had cultural and welfare institutions, craftsmen's associations, a school, and a synagogue. The talmudic scholar Moses Samuel *Zuckerman officiated as rabbi in Gniezno from 1864 to 1869. Subsequently many Jews emigrated to the German states and from the second half of the 19th century to America, especially after Gniezno was incorporated within independent Poland in 1919. The community numbered 750 in 1913 and approximately 150 in the 1930s.

[Dov Avron]

Holocaust Period

Before World War II nearly 150 Jews lived in Gniezno. During the Nazi occupation, the town belonged to Warthegau. During the first four months of the occupation, the town was emptied of all its Jewish inhabitants. A certain number escaped before and after the Germans entered, but the majority were deported on orders given on Nov. 12, 1939, by Wilhelm Koppe, the Higher SS and Police Leader of Warthegau. The orders called for the deportation of the entire Jewish population of Gniezno

by the end of February 1940 to the territory of the General-gouvernement. On Dec. 13, 1939, 65 Jews from Gniezno, probably the last of the community, arrived in Piotrkow Trybunalski in the Radom district. After the removal of the Jews from Gniezno, the Germans blew up the synagogue and razed the old Jewish cemetery, using it as the site of a warehouse. No Jews resettled in the town after World War II.

[Danuta Dombrowska]

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GNOSTICISM, designates the beliefs held by a number of nonorthodox Christian sects flourishing in the first to second centuries C.E., which developed mystical systems of philosophy based on the *gnosis* (Gr. "knowledge") of God. These systems were syncretic, i.e., mixtures of pagan magic and beliefs from the Babylonian and Greek world as well as from the Jewish. Judaism made an important contribution to the conceptions and the developments of gnosticism. One way in which Jewish motifs were infused into gnosticism was through the Bible, which was holy to Christianity and likewise through other Jewish literature – in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek – which was used by the Christians. The chapters on the Creation in Genesis were also of special influence. Special importance was also attributed to the account of the first man and his sin, which is interpreted by gnosticism as the downfall of the divine principle into the material world. From their negative attitude toward the world of natural existence and moral law which is meant to regulate man's behavior in this world, the gnostics came to a view of the God of Israel, the creator of the universe, as the god of evil, or an inferior god, and they strongly rejected his Law and its commandments. They interpreted the stories in the Bible in a way opposite to their meaning and intention: thus, for example, the original serpent is often seen by them as the bearer of the true "knowledge," of which God intends to deprive man; and Cain becomes a positive figure persecuted by God, etc.

Jewish influence on gnosticism is also evident in the use of names, concepts, and descriptions taken from the Hebrew or Aramaic, e.g., God, the creator of the universe, is called in some gnostic systems *Yaldabaot* (*Yalda Bahut*, according to some "the Child of Chaos"); other mythological or symbolic figures in gnosticism are *Barbelo* (*Be-arba Eloha*, "in four gods," i.e., the father, the son, the female principle in the divine, and the first man), *Edem* (Eden), *Akhamot* (*hokhmot*, "wisdom," according to Prov. 9:1); the name of the gnostic Naassene sect is derived from *nahash* ("serpent"); the mysterious words "*Zav la-zav zav la-zav kav la-kav kav la-kav ze'ir sham*