

Editor: **Hayim Leaf**
Associate Editors: **Rivka Friedman**
Gabriel Preil
Chairman, Editorial Board: **Nathan H. Winter**
Editorial Assistant: **Nelly Segal**

BITZARON, P.O.Box 623, Cooper Station, N.Y. 10003 Tel. (212) 598-3987

Vol. VI (New Series), Adar, 5745 - March 1985, No. 24-25 (354-355)

correction: The last issue, September 1984, was marked as 354. It should have been, 353.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topics	H.L	2
Remembering Moshe Maisels.....	Dov Sadan	5
Our Closing Eyes (poem).....	Amir Gilboa	12
Amir Gilboa: A Poet of Joy and Sorrow.....	Lili Ratok	13
Structure and Meaning in Amir Gilboa's Cycle, "Sheva Reshuyot"	Avidov Lipsker	17
The Presentation of the Irving and Bertha Newman Prizes in Jerusalem	Ruth Arazi	33
Two Poems	Gabriel Preil	37
Present and Future in the Thought of Jacob Klatzkin	Natan Rotenstreich	38
Four Poems	Eizig Silberschlag	47
Esther - an Underground Scroll	Ariella Deem	49
The Lance of Qatros.....	Cyrus H. Gordon	53
From Overt to Covert in the Works of Dvorah Baron	Nurit Govrin	56
Beyond Fiction: A Study of Hazaz' "Dorot Harishonim"	Rivka Friedman	63
Washington (poem).....	Hedva Sh.	74
S.Y.Agnon as a Vegetarian.....	Rina Lee	75
The Characterizations of S. Yizhar	Ruth Beizer-Bohrer	83
A Disheveled Red-Breasted-Robin (poem).....	Irving Finkel	91
To Zelda (poem)	Edith Covensky	91
In Memory of Ariella Deem.....	Nelly Segal	92
The Legend of Pesach Bar-Adom.....	Yoel Rappel	94
On Yonatan Maximon	Saadyah Maximon	96
"On Guard of our People".....	Yonatan Maximon	97
A New Approach to Biblical Interpretation.....	Aaron Mirsky	99
A New Book of Poetry by N. Mei-Ami.....	Sarah Halperin	102
George Steiner's Biblical Distortions	I. Melamed	105
"Deconstructing Deconstruction"	Sh. Nash	108
The Sixth Conference of the Hebrew World Organization in London.....		110
New Books.....	Avshalom	111
News and Events		113
"The Golden Land" - A Cavalcade of the Jewish Theater		114
English Abstracts		127

REMEMBERING MOSHE MAISELS

Dov Sadan

Hebrew University, Jerusalem

I am compelled to confess that initially, I failed to recognize the importance of Moshe Maisels (Amishai's) magnum opus, *Thought and Truth*. I was happy to alter my opinion when circumstances brought me closer to this major contribution to Jewish and universal thought. As one of three judges chosen for the prestigious Bialik Prize, I immersed myself in the work, and have come to realize that Maisels is a worthy successor to the philosophical and scholarly writings of a Nachman Krochmal or a Yechezkel Kaufman.

Maisels aimed to present in his work a comprehensive and critical treatise of Jewish thought in the light of our people's historical experience. Moreover, his retrospective, keen philosophical observations charted the future course of Jewish national survival. He supplemented these observations in his brilliant essays, collected in his book - *Zionism, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*.

Moshe Maisels, in addition to his work with Hebrew publications in Warsaw, Poland (*Hayom, Hazfirah*), New York (*Hadoar's* editor) and Israel (*Mossad Bialik*), was the anonymous translator and editor of numerous works. A full bibliography of his work, still lacking, would reveal the magnitude of his contribution to Hebrew letters.

AMIR GILBOA: A POET OF JOY AND SORROW

Lili Ratok

Tel Aviv University

The Book of Interwoven Joy and Sorrow is one of seven sections in Amir Gilboa's cycle *Sheva Reshuyot*. Since the poet had stressed the fact that many of his poems were spun with the poetic threads of contrasting elements, the title of the book serves as a key to their understanding.

The poems are innovative in their form and they signal the poetic style of the later collections. The syntax is fragmentary, the verses elliptical, the rhythm elastic

and expressive. The poem "Eineinu Haneezamot" (Our Closing Eyes), illustrates the poet's stylistic mode. Its structure is distinctly impressionistic. The swift transition from one state to another points to the complexity of human experience. In consequent passages, the experience of the individual becomes that of his people, assuming a new dimension: the holocaust and the rebirth of a nation, loss vs. renewal. The people's past coexists, continuously, with their present and future. As the eyes are closing, one can see that which evades the naked eye - a distant and metaphysical reality.

STRUCTURE AND MEANING IN AMIR GILBOA'S "SHEVA RESHUYOT"

Avidov Lipsker
Bar-Illan University

The poetry of Amir Gilboa, in the view of some critics, defies the poetic norms of his generation. It breaks the conventional rules of the craft, abounds in forms, content and imagery, and is characterized by an ecstatic tone.

An examination of the collection *Sheva Reshuyot* reveals careful planning and editing. The seven sections of the collection contain a defined and organized world of themes. While there is an affinity to poets of his own generation as well as preceding ones, the style, form and motifs, as they evolve from one volume to another, point to a poetic voice unique to Gilboa. Moreover, the polarity that exists within the body of the poems, the contrast between "untamed" poems and organized ones, is the very essence of the poet's world. Poems in which childhood and autobiographical experiences are recollected contrast with those in which the poet seeks to break into a world of vision and ecstasy. From this conflict rises the tension between controlled memory and metaphysical conceptualization. These two realms are expressed in different linguistic and thematic modes.

Despite the abstract nature of Gilboa's poetry, it contains a sense of reality that is rooted in the diverse experience of the individual and his society in Israel of the forties and fifties.

PRESENT AND FUTURE IN THE THOUGHT
OF JACOB KLATZKIN

Natan Rotenstreich

The Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Analyzing Jacob Klatzkin's description of the Jewish situation as it is and its continuity in the future, we can distinguish between the diagnostic aspect of Klatzkin's conception and his prognostic one. From the diagnostic point of view, Jewish experience in the diaspora was possible only because the Jews adhered to prescriptions or commandments and these in turn shaped their day-to-day behavior. It is not faith as such that shaped Jewish existence, but modes of behavior which constituted the living force of Judaism. In this sense, Klatzkin presents a position which is an extreme continuation of Mendelssohn's interpretation of Judaism. In the modern period Jews ceased to adhere to the legal norms of their tradition, thus a disruption of their collective existence has become increasingly significant and results in disintegration of the people.

The establishment of the Jewish state is destined to constitute a mode of Jewish existence which will be based once more on the institutional framework, and not on abstract ethical concepts. Yet the establishment of a new framework for Jewish existence is bound to bring about a rift between that mode of existence and the Jewish life in the diaspora.

Some of elements of Klatzkin's theory do not bear out in reality. Experience has proven that co-existence between the State of Israel and diaspora Jewry is possible and their relationship is not marked by a rift, as suggested by Klatzkin's theory.

THE LANCE OF QATROS

Cyrus H. Gordon

New York University

The discovery of an artifact in the "Burned House" (destroyed in Jerusalem in 70 C.E.) sheds new light on a passage in Talmud Babli, Pesahim 57a. The small object (said to be a weight, though perhaps it is an amulet) bears the proper name

“Qatros”, mentioned as a powerful personage in several magic bowls from Talmudic Babylonia; he wields a lance that pierces demons through their pericardium thus rescuing their intended victims.

Pesahim 57a lists four evil priestly families that abused their high positions in the temple to injure the public:

1. The House of Baytos notorious for their curse,
2. The House of Hannin notorious for their magic spell,
3. The House of Qatros notorious for their *qolmos*, and
4. The House of Ishmael son of Piaki notorious for their fist and clubs.

Qolmos (Greek *Kalamos* and Latin *Calamus*) “reed” has two applications: (a) a writing pen, and (b) a weapon such as arrow, lance or blade. The most common interpretation of this passage is that the House of Qatros wielded the pen to write harsh decrees. But the meaning in the magic bowls fits the context better. Note that the first two houses resort to magic (curse and incantation). The last refers to physical violence (fist and clubs). In between, the “lance of Qatros” provides perfect transition; it is both magical like what precedes and physically violent like what follows.

The main categories of Talmudic literature are of course *halaka* and *aggada*. But there are also minor factors that we must not overlook. One of them is magic, from which no ancient people was exempt, not even the rational Greeks nor the practical Romans.

BEYOND FICTION — A STUDY OF HAZAZ’S “DOROT HARISHONIM”

Rivka Friedman
Hunter College; N.Y.C.

Haim Hazaz’s story *Dorot Harishonim* (First Generations), in addition to being an artistic feat, highlights vital aspects in the author’s creative history, and illustrates his struggle with the linguistic tools that have come to distinguish his work.

Organized around a set of different parodic techniques, the story’s nostalgic pattern is forever ravelled. Overtly, the story is a journey into the past - the *shtetl*, but the voice behind the narrator is the author’s own. Hazaz parodizes, bitingly, the lofty and artificial language used by his contemporaries to depict the Eretz-Israel reality. He does not spare himself; thus he uses the weapons of the “victim” to defeat his opponent. Hazaz’s affinity to Mendele is not evidenced by following exactly in the footsteps of the master, but by rebelling against him.

S.Y. AGNON AS A VEGETARIAN

Rena Lee

Queens College

Several characters in Agnon's novel. *OREACH NATA LALUN* ("A GUEST FOR THE NIGHT") are vegetarians. They include the protagonist-narrator, Yeruham Hofshi and the doctor, Kuba Meelech. In examining their relationship to the author, a vegetarian for fifty years, it appears that vegetarianism serves as a moral doctrine, going hand in hand with Agnon's vision of the ideal life in Eretz-Israel.

A later story, "*Harofe U-grushato*" ("The Doctor and His Divorcee"), is based on the theme of Kuba Meelech's divorce in the novel. Juxtaposing the characters of Kuba Meelech and the nameless doctor of the story, we see that the former's generosity, Jewishness, Zionism and vegetarianism are absent in the latter. It seems as though the good doctor has turned into a Mr. Hyde.

FROM OVERT TO COVERT IN THE WORKS OF DVORAH BARON

Nurit Govrin

Tel Aviv University

D. Baron's earliest stories can aptly be called the stories of the literary sub-conscious. These awkward beginnings boldly reveal later will be covered and blurred through finely hewn aesthetic means. Of the 48 (early stories), 42 were not included in the author's collected works. She had ruled them out and prohibited their publication, calling them "rags." These stories lay bare her feelings concerning eroticism and womanhood, discrimination against women in general, and the Jewish woman in particular. Her male colleagues, deceived by her status as a Rabbi's daughter and her cloistered appearance, were surprised at her open and daring treatment of erotic themes.

Protest against societal pressure which assumes that girls should play with dolls only, is raised in "*Harachamaniah*" (The Charitable One). She protests the religious prohibition against a girl's right to say Kaddish after a beloved grandfather, and against the exclusion from the ritual burial of damaged sacred texts the women's book of prayer (*Techinah*) in her stories "*Kadisha*" and "*Genizah*". In a second version of this story, published 14 years later, the feminist protest was deleted, only a general, suppressed outcry remained.

THE CHARACTERIZATIONS OF S. YIZHAR: REALITY AND FICTION

Ruth Beizer-Bohrer

Ramat Hanegev College, Yerucham; HUC, Jerusalem

Yizhar's characters are drawn from the Eretz-Israel scene of the thirties and forties. While they are fashioned with realistic details (clothes, speech), and are placed in a familiar locale (Kibbutz, orange groves, Arab village), their artistic treatment points to the author's own ideological stance, as well as to his emotional and moral involvement with society.

There is a clear division of characters in the works of Yizhar. There is always a protagonist, from whose point of view the story is told, and an array of secondary figures, usually antithetical in relation to the former, who are divided into sympathetic and unsympathetic characters. A third group ("incidental characters") exists in the stories' background, and has little bearing on the plot.

The plot pivots around two points: the protagonist's inner world, and society's ideological problems as viewed by him. In keeping with the tradition of the moralist writers, Yizhar employs many shades of satirical devices in depicting his characters and their reality. He moves from a realistic-naturalistic portrayal of the incidental ones, to a comical painting of the sympathetic heroes. They exaggerate reality to the point of caricaturizing it. The unsympathetic characters are ridiculed to the extreme. They distort reality, rendering it grotesque. Standing behind this gallery is the artist who, true to his generation, is committed to humanistic standards of the highest order.