

ARNSTEIN Mark (1878-1943), pseudonym and pen-name “A. Marek”, “Andrzej Marek”, “M. Ar.”, “M. Arn”. He was a journalist, playwright, translator and director.

He was born on 2nd January 1880 in Warsaw, the son of Adam Arnstein and Dora née Gotsfart. He graduated from high school in Sanok. From around 1900, he worked as a journalist for the “Izraelita” magazine in Warsaw. He was the author of several plays with Jewish themes, among them being *Chasydzi* (1900), *Wieczna bajka* (1901) and *Pieśniarze* (1902). He also translated and adapted Polish drama from Jewish literature, among them being *Golem* and *Mirla Efros*. He was the winner of a literary competition under the patronage of H. Sienkiewicz. In Częstochowa, on 16th April 1911, in the “Lira” hall of the Jewish Literary Society, his one-act play *Wieczna pieśń* was staged. In 1912, in the Teatr Ludowy in Kraków, he directed his own play entitled *Noemi*.

For a certain time, he lived in the United States, in Los Angeles, where he completed a theatrical course and where he worked with the outstanding activists in Jewish theatre, N. Cemach and M. Schwartz. Around 1924, he returned to Poland where, shortly thereafter, he was granted the right to direct by the Union of Polish Stage Artists. He worked on Jewish plays and, sometimes, with Polish theatres, where he staged only Jewish plays or plays with a Jewish theme (among them, in the “Nowości” Theatre in Warsaw).

In the second half of the 1920s, for a short time, he worked as a director in Częstochowa. He directed, among others, *Golema* by Halpern Leiwik, which was staged at the “Warta” theatre (Aleja 26). In 1928-30, he travelled frequently to Częstochowa, where (most often in the premises of the “Warta” Częstochowa Sports Club) he gave readings on such topics as “Legends About the Dybbuk and the Golem”, “The Humour of Jewish Tragedy, The Tragedy of Jewish Humour”. He also presented theatrical performances (in the Polish language) in the “Warta” hall.

In 1929, in an interview with “Express Częstochowski” (No. 241, p. 2), he spoke about the message that his theatre was intended to convey:

“I dream of an artistic platform for the sympathetic and fair propagation of peace, mutual love of people regardless of which God to whom they pray and in which language they express their sorrows and joys. I dream of scenes where lofty spirits will fight darkness, ignorance and hatred in all its manifestations.”

For many years, he collected Jewish jokes and anecdotes, publishing them under the title *Dowcipy żydowskie* (to 1929, three editions were published). He lived at ul. Śniadeckich 7 in Warsaw. During the German occupation, he was forced to live in the Warsaw ghetto, where he managed the *Nowy Kameralny Teatr*, which held performances in Polish. He was murdered in 1943.

From 1926, his wife was Ada née Braun.

Łoza, *Czy wiesz kto to jest I*, p. 466 (photograph); *Słownik biograficzny teatru polskiego 1765–1965*, Warsaw 1973, p. 423; *Słownik pseudonimów pisarzy polskich XV w. - 1970 r.*, Vol. IV (A–Ż). Surnames, ed. E. Jankowski, Wrocław 1996, p. 17. - Kozłowska, *Żydowski ruch teatralny*, pp. 45, 46; Wojtysiak, *Z życia kulturalnego i artystycznego Żydów*, p. 274. – “Express Częstochowski” 1928, No. 31, p. 3, 1929, No. 56, p. 2, No. 66, p. 4, No. 75, p. 4, No. 241, p. 2; „Częstochower Cajtung” 1929, No. 42, p. 8.

Juliusz Sętowski, Wiesław Paszkowski