



### JACOB, MAX (1876–1944)

French poet. Jacob came to Paris from his native Brittany at the age of twenty-two, determined to become a poet and painter. In the capital he gravitated to the bohemian avant-garde circle around Guillaume Apollinaire. When he was twenty-five Jacob met Pablo Picasso, then unknown; the two quickly formed a pair bond and became roommates. The aggressively heterosexual Picasso tried to “correct” his friend’s homosexuality, but without success. In 1915 Jacob, who had been born a Jew, converted to Catholicism with Picasso as his sponsor. The poems he wrote at this time are a rich amalgam of puns and parody, and mixtures of high and low subjects, all shot through with a hermetic complexity that was analogous to Picasso’s Cubism.

In 1921 Jacob retired to live in the ancient monastery of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire. His mysticism, heightened by the Catholic revival orchestrated by Jacques Maritain and others at the time, began to play an increasingly important part in his poetry. Another feature was reminiscences of Brittany, a region in France known not only for its traditional Celtic ways, but also for its association with the modernist primitivism of Paul Gauguin and his school. Despite his religious vocation, Jacob would make extended visits to Paris where he saw his old friends and enjoyed the sexual scene. In due course a bout of guilt would drive him back to the monastery.

In 1944 Max Jacob was arrested at Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire and deported to the notorious concentration camp at Drancy. Jean Cocteau and other friends attempted to intervene on his behalf, but Picasso

refused. Although they are difficult, the poems of Max Jacob retain an important place in avant-garde French literature. A better understanding of the linkage of his life and work will be the task of a major biography, which has not yet been written.

Ward Houser

### JAHNN, HANS HENNY (1894–1959)

German novelist and dramatist. Jahnn was born in Stellingen near Hamburg. Raised in a bourgeois milieu, Jahnn made his first literary efforts at the age of fourteen. In 1911, in high school, he met his friend and later life companion Gottlieb Harms, with whom he quite early made several attempts to break out of his repressive bourgeois environment.

Jahnn’s diaries offer an effusive record of the love affair linking him with Harms, who was one year older. After the outbreak of World War I the friends as self-proclaimed pacifists emigrated to Norway. There in great seclusion Jahnn wrote among other things the drama *Pastor Ephraim Magnus*, which was published by the Fischer firm after his return to Germany in 1919; winning the prestigious Kleist Prize, this work made Jahnn famous (and notorious).

Sharply rejecting Christian beliefs and morality, Jahnn and Harms founded (together with Franz Buse) the “Ugrino” commune, whose members shared living quarters and common beliefs. This home-spun utopia, for which the multitalented Jahnn designed buildings for everyday use and for worship, was to be realized on a large plot of land south of Hamburg—acquired specifically for the purpose—and