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| Parnok, Sofia Yakovlevna [Парнок, София Яковлевна] (1885-1933) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| File: Parnok.jpg  Figure 1 Portrait of Parnok  Source: https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Парнок  After decades of neglect, now recognized as a gifted and original poet. Sofia Parnok was born into a Jewish family, in the southern city of Taganrog. Her father was a pharmacist; her mother, a doctor, died when Sofia was six.  Parnok studied music and law before deciding to devote herself to poetry. In 1909, after divorcing her husband, she settled in Moscow. She converted to Orthodox Christianity; she appears always to have seen herself as Russian rather than Jewish.  In 1914 she and Marina Tsvetaeva fell in love. Tsvetaeva wrote about their affair in her poem-cycle ‘The Girl-Friend’, Parnok in her first book, *Poems* (1916). No Russian poet before her had written so directly about female, let alone lesbian, sexuality.  In the 1920s she published four collections of poetry, the last two through The Knot, a publishing co-operative she had co-founded in 1926. An influential critic, she was the first to pick out the four now considered the greatest Russian poets of their time: Pasternak, Tsvetaeva, Akhmatova and Mandelstam. After 1928, unable to publish her own work, she supported herself mainly through translations from French. |
| After decades of neglect, now recognized as a gifted and original poet. Sofia Parnok was born into a Jewish family, in the southern city of Taganrog. Her father was a pharmacist; her mother, a doctor, died when Sofia was six.  Parnok studied music and law before deciding to devote herself to poetry. In 1909, after divorcing her husband, she settled in Moscow. She converted to Orthodox Christianity; she appears always to have seen herself as Russian rather than Jewish.  In 1914 she and Marina Tsvetaeva fell in love. Tsvetaeva wrote about their affair in her poem-cycle ‘The Girl-Friend’, Parnok in her first book, *Poems* (1916). No Russian poet before her had written so directly about female, let alone lesbian, sexuality.  In the 1920s she published four collections of poetry, the last two through The Knot, a publishing co-operative she had co-founded in 1926. An influential critic, she was the first to pick out the four now considered the greatest Russian poets of their time: Pasternak, Tsvetaeva, Akhmatova and Mandelstam. After 1928, unable to publish her own work, she supported herself mainly through translations from French.  Intelligent and independent, Orthodox and lesbian, Parnok was deeply isolated, speaking of herself as an ‘invisible woman’ in Russian poetry and titling her last unpublished cycle ‘A Useless Good’. Perfectly controlled but emotionally and sexually uninhibited, these poems are among her finest; they are addressed to Nina Vedeneyeva, the physicist who was her last lover (her ‘grey-haired Eve’). In 1933 Parnok died of a heart attack. List of Works:PoetrySeparate volumes *Stikhotvoreniia* [*Poems*][*1916*]  *Rozy Pierii* [*Roses of Pieria*] [1922]  *Loza: Stikhi 1922 g.* [*The Vine: Poems of 1922*] (1923)  *Muzyka* [*Music*] (1926)  *Vpolgolosa: Stikhi 1926-1927* [*In an Undertone: Poems of 1926-1927*] (1928)  Posthumous publications  *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* [*Collected Poems* ed. Polyakova] (Ardis, 1979)  *Sobranie sochinenii* [*Collected Works*, ed. Polyakova] (Inapress, 1998)  *Vpolgolosa: Stikhotvoreniia* [*In an undertone: Poems*] (OGI, 2010)  *Sverstniki: kniga kriticheskikh statei* [*Contemporaries: a book of critical articles*] (Glagol, 2012) A collection of reviews by Parnok.  *Zelenaia tetrad’. Khodasevich* [*The Green Notebook. Khodasevich*] (Dom-muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, 2012) Contains poems from 1916-22 and an essay about Khodasevich. |
| Further reading:  (Burgin)  (Chester and Forrester)  (Kelly, A History of Russian Women’s Writing 1820-1992)  (Kelly, An Anthology of Russian Women’s Writing 1820-1992) |