

# Obituary or Hour-Glass

Categories: Phenomena

Emaciated person, about to die from starvation.

M. Nowak

Klepsydra [clepsidra] (Meyers Konversations-Lexikon). Water clock, used earlier for timekeeping of court speeches, like hour-glasses symbolic of life going by.

In the Polish and Yiddish languages, it also means an obituary. In the Ghetto, it was a common term for emaciated people looking like their own obituary (a living corpse). Their days were numbered, and the term meant sympathy. When such a poor blighter was recommended for a workshop, he certainly had to be rejected as a klepsydra. Because the multitude of the ghetto inhabitants was in terrible condition, it is easy to imagine how usual the term klepsydra was.

Oskar Singer

## Resources

Encyclopedia, p. 112.

## Tags

folklore starvation language of the ghetto

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