

***The Golem* (1915)**

Abstract

Der Golem (distributed as *The Monster of Fate* in the U.S. at the time) was the first in a trilogy of films on the subject directed by Paul Wegener. Both Wegener and Henrik Galeen, who co-wrote and co-directed this film with him, became influential figures in the development of Expressionist film. Both also star in the film, with Wegener playing the title figure. The plot of *Der Golem* was inspired by a Jewish folk tale about a rabbi who creates a figure from clay (the Golem) to protect his Jewish community from antisemitic persecution. The film was likely inspired by Gustav Meyrink's novel *Der Golem*, which had first been published in serialized form between 1913 and 1914, introducing a wider, non-Jewish audience to this Jewish folklore motif. In this film version, an antiques dealer comes across the Golem (a clay statue brought to life) and uses it as a servant: but the Golem then falls in love with his daughter, and when its love is unrequited, it goes on a murderous rampage. This first of the three Golem films is considered partially lost. The clip featured here shows the surviving fragments.

Source

Intertitles:

Expecting the terrible.

Nature always has a profound effect,
both internally and externally,
and everything lives in death,
and even in death, it is alive.

Angelus Silesius

Source: *The Golem* (fragment), dir. Heinrich Galeen and Paul Wegener, Deutsche Bioscop GmbH, 1915.
Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk ID: 6715.

<https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/6715/606088>

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