

Estreya Amon



This is a studio photo of my maternal grandmother Estreya Amon. In this photo my grandmother looks exactly at the age I remembered her. My grandmother was married to Izak Amon but I never knew my grandfather because he died when I was very young. I remember my grandmother very vividly however, because she lived with us after my grandfather died for 6-7 years. Estreya Amon's family was from Haskoy. Later on they moved to Daghamam [a district on the Asian side of Istanbul]. I can still vividly remember my grandmother. She was a very nice and energetic woman. She would cover her head with a white scarf when she went out. She always spoke Spanish [Ladino], and knew how to write using the Rashi alphabet. In those times, nobody knew Turkish

anyway, especially the women. All the Jews would speak Judeo-Spanish amongst themselves. The ones who spoke Turkish had a very bad accent, anyway. I learned Turkish when I started primary school. The Amon couple had three children; Vitali, Mazalto, and Nisim. My grandmother always lived with Nisim Amon, her youngest son till she died. He was a bachelor and was living with them when her husband was alive, anyway. My uncle was the breadwinner of the house. My grandmother was very good at housekeeping. She would always cook, and manage everything in the house until her son got married... She never got along with Sofi Taragano, her daughter-in-law. Due to the intense quarrels at home, she aged early, and died in 1934. She wasn't able to see my Bar-mitzva. She was very fond of my mother, her only daughter, me, and my brother. There was a dish which my grandmother would cook seasonally and which I liked very much called: "balkaba kon zirguela" [Ladino for "pumpkin dish cooked with damson plums"]. The pumpkin was cleaned, washed, then sliced and placed in the pot. After oil and salt was added, the damson plums, with their seeds, were placed over the slices of pumpkins. The damson plums would add a sour taste.