

Theodore Magder With His Mother Sima Magder



This is a picture of my mother Sima Magder (nee Feinzilber) and me. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1922 on my first birthday. Before I was due my mother went to her parents in Iasi, and I was born there on 30th October 1921. My name, as well as my relatives' names, seems to be of Romanian, French or even Spanish rather than Jewish origin. I was a long-expected child, particularly since my parents had lost their first baby. Though my father, Solomon Magder, wasn't religious, he obeyed his relatives and I had my brit milah ritual on the eighth day. At home I was

affectionately addressed as Theo, and this became the name that my family used for me. My first childhood memory is of my mother sitting on the sofa, calling my name and stretching her hands out toward me - she probably taught me to walk thereby. Another one of my memories is our house, or apartment, I'd rather say, which my parents rented on 16 Pushkinskaya Street. We had four rooms: a living room and a piano in it, my parents' bedroom, a children's room and my father's study. Mama spent all her time with me. She read me fairy tales and poems by Romanian authors, and she took me for walks in the beautiful town garden in Kishinev that is still there. There was a visiting housemaid, who did the shopping, cleaning and cooking at home, but my mother tried to do as much housework as she managed herself: at that time the progressive intelligentsia, which I think my parents belonged to, inspired by democratic ideas, tried to avoid using hired labor. My father worked a lot. Lawyers usually had their offices at home. My father was working and I liked watching him as he was sitting on the sofa. There were armchairs, high bookcases with thick volumes in them, and a desk in the center of his room. When my father had visitors, I had to leave his study. He was basically rather strict, but not my mother who was spoiling me.