

Izak Nassi



This is my paternal grandfather Izak Nassi's oil portrait from the year 1925. I found out recently, from family documents, that my father's father, Izak David Nassi was born in Istanbul in 1855. I believe the family moved to Romania from Istanbul, as they had cousins here, maybe children of cousins. There was a Mayir Araf and an Eskenazi family whom we used to see often. The Eskenazi family's mother was Rashel Eskenazi. She had two sons, Jak and Marsel, and two daughters, Viktorya and Suzan. Another relative of theirs, Beki Eskenazi, was married to a Yaesh. Their niece was an opera singer in Istanbul, a mezzo soprano, named Süzi Leal. My grandfather got married in Constanza probably in 1894 and had children there. In Constanza, he worked in a bank called Marmarosh Bank, as a wheat expert, but applying his expertise to the insurance side of banking. Wheat is merchandise that is transported in bulk in big cargo ships. He could evaluate how many tons a shipment weighed just by looking at the wheat hold. Thus the bank could insure the goods. The skill strikes me as utterly extraordinary in retrospect. Later, when we looked at the documents he left us, we realized that he held the title of Doctor. I guess he was a Doctor of agriculture. In Constanza, the family used to dress in uncovered [unveiled] fashion. In this only picture we have of my grandfather, he wears the modern clothes of a bank employee of that period, that is to say, a jacket, shirt, etc. My father's father, my father and his sister used to speak Romanian among themselves. My father's mother, Neama Nassi, had passed away at a young age. They moved to Istanbul two or three years after her death, around 1920. My grandfather had been appointed to the Istanbul branch of the Marmarosh Bank for which he had been working. My grandfather worked for two years, but by that time, the Marmarosh Bank was not doing well. The management started to liquidate slowly, dismissing many of their employees. As the first to be dismissed were the elderly, Grandfather's turn came early. He did not work thereafter; he stayed at home and died in 1936 of cirrhosis of the liver.