

Eli Perahya With His Parents And Siblings



The boy on the right is me, Eli Perahya. I was about 11-12 years old. My father Yaakov is sitting in the middle; he is holding my sister Anna whereas my mother Klara is standing on the left with my sister Luisa in front of her. It's a classical family photo taken by the Photo Studio Th. Servanis in Istanbul in 1922. Although my mother's native tongue was Yiddish, after she got married, in time she managed to communicate in Judeo-Spanish much better and more comprehensively than many Sephardi people. My mother was a classical housewife. Although my father had a rich library at home, I don't recall my mother making any use of it. My paternal grandmother, Yohevet, except for religious holidays, went to play cards with friends almost every afternoon and sometimes also took her daughter-in-law, my mother, with her. According to the Muslim Calendar my year of birth is 1328, meaning 1913 in the Gregorian calendar. I was born on 14th February in a distinguished little

district of Istanbul on the Anatolian side, called Haydarpasha. Why am I named Eli, when according to the Sephardic tradition, where the first child is named after his paternal grandfather, I should have been named Ishak? The simple reason was that my paternal grandfather didn't want to give his name when he was alive, thus he opened the Torah at random and decided on the first biblical name he read: it was Eliyau? Ilyao is my name spelt erroneously in the civil registers. My siblings are Luisa, born in 1920, and Anna, born in 1924. Both studied in French schools.