

Elsa Perahya



This is Elsa Angel, who I later married. This photo was taken by myself in September 1931. I was a member of the Social Benevolence Association of Haydarpasha in my youth. From 1931 to 1936 I served as the president of the literature division of this association, 'Cercle Litteraire,' as we used to call it. We used to gather in the Cercle's locale twice a week, usually after 8pm, organizing conferences, debates, concerts, meetings and the like. In the orchestra we founded, Elsa Angel played the piano, Fahir Selami and I played violin and Serkis Kalebciyan played the wind instruments. We also had a library that we youngsters were managing as well. I've kept the records

and correspondences of this organization and I still have them today. Generally we went to the famous hotel of the time, the Belvu in Fenerbahce to dance. Naturally, many love affairs blossomed during these gatherings. I also got to know my first wife, Elsa, in this organization. The Elsa and Klara Angel sisters lived on Ferit Bey Street in Talimhane. Their house was just opposite the Turkish state school. Later the school was transferred somewhere else and the building started to be used as 'Askerlik Subesi' [Military Department]. In the thirties we used to rent motorcycles in the meadow at the end of the street and tour around the square 'para azer hadras' [an expression in Ladino meaning 'in order to show off for the girls']. Elsa and I got married on 30th June 1936 in the Kal Kadosh Galata Synagogue, which became The Museum of Turkish Jews in 2001.