

Beya Melamed



This is my maternal grandmother, Beya Melamed, in a Turkish folk costume. This photo was taken in the second half of the 19th century in Ruse. I know that Beya is my grandmother on my mother's side, but I don't know anything else about her. My maternal grandparents were named Mushon and Beya Melamed. They were hospitable and loving people, with a great sense of humor. They had eight children: Robert, Simanto, David, Sharlota, Flora, Estreya, Sofi and Roza, my mother. They spoke Ladino, Romanian, Bulgarian and a little French. They knew Turkish perfectly. Their children also knew these languages. My grandfather alone supported the family. Naturally, they

didn't have a cook and a maid. The family had a small shop, in which Mushon Melamed sold vegetables and fodder. My mother's father had some Zionist inclinations, but I don't know if he was a member of any of the Zionist organizations in Ruse. They lived on the coast of the Danube, in the Bulgarian neighborhood. This was the site of Bulgaria's first meteorological station. They had very nice neighbors. Their friends were Bulgarians and Jews. I remember that my maternal grandparents had two houses close to one another. In the beginning, Beya and Mushon lived in one of the houses with their sons, and their five daughters lived in the other. In the house where the boys and their parents lived, there were two rooms and a kitchen. In the other house there were two big rooms. I can't say why the family lived this way. Probably for practical reasons, there were ten of them, after all. There was a very big verandah, where they placed mattresses and sometimes they all slept outside. They also had a yard with very nice fruit trees. I remember, for example, a big mulberry tree with big fruits. There were also hens. But there was no running water. They didn't have running water in Ruse until the beginning of the 20th century.