

Estera Wechsler And Sebastian Sebastien



The photo was taken in Calimanesti, in 1922. This is my mother, Estera Wechsler, and my brother, Sebastian Wechsler in swimming suits. Estera Wechsler [nee Letzler], my mother, was born in 1888, in Ploiesti. She attended a boarding school and spoke German and French. Naturally, she had also learnt Yiddish at home. All she told me about her childhood was that she used to be a good student and that her teachers thought highly of her, especially because of her skills in painting and drawing. When we were children, she used to do many things related to this decorating skill of hers, including weaving Persian rugs starting from a model. My elder brother [Sebastian] would copy decorative models from magazines on a large canvas with little squares and my mother would look at the small model and on the canvas on which it had been copied and would weave the rug. She would also weave decorative pillow covers. I gave one of these to a nephew of mine and I keep another one at home. My mother's culture was rather rich. She spoke foreign languages and she read literature in Romanian and in other languages too. My father's intention was to send us to school to get some education, but it was my mother who insisted that we go all the way from elementary school to college. Sebastian Sebastien, my brother, was born in 1915, in Bucharest. [He changed his name from Wechsler to Sebastian after World War I.] He first went to the Faculty of Law and Philosophy, and then he attended the Faculty of Architecture, which he graduated in 1945. He chose architecture despite his having already graduated in Law and Philosophy because the Jews were disbarred in 1940, so it was obvious that Law wouldn't make a good career. He was kicked out from the Faculty of Architecture [because of the Jewish Statutum], but he continued his studies after the war and became an architect ahead of me. My brother and my sister-in-law emigrated to France around 1960 and settled in Paris.