

## Bella Katz At Her Mother's Grave



The woman near the tomb stone is my mother, Bella Katz; you can see that she wears a kerchief on her head, according to the Jewish customs. The photo was taken in 1941, and the tomb belongs to my maternal grandmother, Braha Moskowitz, who died in the 1930s I think. Everything on the tomb stone is written in Hebrew. My grandmother had four boys, of whom I remember Pinhas and Moric, and six girls: Blanka, Eugenia, Bella - my mother -, Etelka, Rozsi and Olga. My mother's maiden name was Moskowitz. I suppose she was born in 1900. She came from Halmeu, which was not far away from Satu Mare. Satu Mare was the nearest larger town, and this is probably why she went there. My parents told me how they met. Back then, it was the parents who arranged the marriages, and this was true especially for the religious Jews. My parents got married in 1918, one

year before I was born. With the religious Jews, women would have their hair cut and would wear wigs after the wedding. They also had to cover their head, in any circumstance. Even old women wore wigs and covered their head. My mother wore a wig too, and covered it with a kerchief. But she usually only used the wig. The wig imitated natural hair but, the more religious a woman was, the less the wig resembled natural hair. Back then, there were wigs made of artificial hair. Whenever women went to the synagogue, they had to cover their head. I remember my mother always dressed according to the fashion of the time. She was a rather beautiful woman; at least, this is how I thought of her, as all children think of their mothers. She was tall and had a beautiful chest. My mother had more education than other women. I believe she had gone through the elementary school. Her mother tongue was Yiddish, but she also spoke Hungarian very well. After she got married, she read less than before, as she was busy raising the children and taking care of the house. What she usually read was not literature, but had more to do with religion, with raising children, and with the laws that had to be kept in a family. She read books in Hebrew and Yiddish.