



FEATURED STORY “ISTORIKOS”

EMBROIDERIES OF PERLA MENASHE BENOUN

BY ARON HASSON



Portrait of Perla Menashe Benoun

Perla Menashe Benoun was my great-grandmother. My mother, Pearle Benoun Hasson, was named after her. Perla was born in 1861 on the island of Rhodes and was married to Samuel Bohor Benoun. They had eight children: Rahamin (Moshe), Caden, Reina, Matilde, Jamila, Aron (my grandfather, who I was named after), Esther, and Isaac.

In the early twentieth century, “Rhodes embroidery” was popular in northwestern Europe. (TRC, Leiden). The Rhodesli women excelled in fine needlework, and Perla became a skilled embroiderer.

In 1922, then a widow, she traveled to Argentina and brought two handmade embroideries to her daughter, Estrea.



Perla with Masud Dudaie's family

In 2002, Perla’s granddaughter Raquel Bivas Alculumbre of Buenos Aires, donated the artifacts to the Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation. These artifacts are currently on display at the Jewish Museum of Rhodes.

TWO HANDMADE EMBROIDERIES FROM RHODES



Velvet pillowcase designed with embroidered gold-metal thread. Handmade in Rhodes by Perla Menashe Benoun in the early 1900s. She gave the pillowcase to her daughter, Estrea “as a gift, to remember me by.”



Runner embroidery decorated repeatedly with the word “Yerushalayim” (Jerusalem). Handmade in Rhodes by Perla Menashe Benoun in the early 1900s, later gifted to her daughter. The embroidery was featured in the 2019-2020 Rhodesli Jewish Calendar for June 2020.

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EMBROIDERIES OF PERLA MENASHE BENOUN (CONT.)



Setting up the display for the embroidery with the late Nikos Stavroulakis taking the photo in 2005



With my late uncle, Joe Benon and cousin, Kathleen Benon during their visit in Rhodes

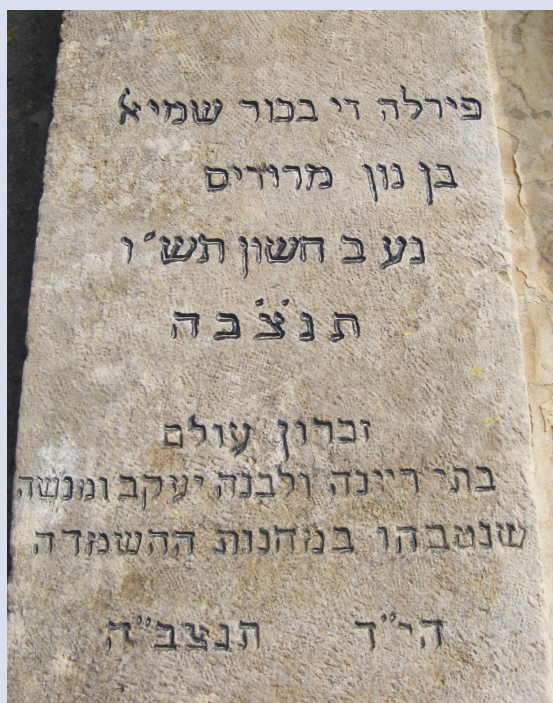


Jerome Shapiro of London looking at his great-great-grandmother's embroidery



Looking at the framed velvet pillowcase on display during my visit in April 2019

After traveling to Argentina, Perla visited the United States to see her children and returned to Rhodes to live for several years. With her affinity to the Holy Land, she moved to Jerusalem in the mid-1930s. She passed away in 1946 and chose Mt. Olives as her final resting place.



Perla Benun tombstone inscribed in Judeo-Spanish. The lower part was later added as a memorial for her daughter, Reina, and grandson Yakov, who both perished in Auschwitz.



My great-grandmother's tombstone at Mt. Olives, next to the Old City of Jerusalem.



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