FEATURED STORY “ISTORIKOS”

EMBROIDERIES OF PERLA MENASHE BENOUN
BY ARON HASSON

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.

In 2002, Perla’s granddaughter Raquel Bivas Alcumlumbre 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.
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.