

PURIM

Purim, the Jewish carnival of February is chronologically placed near Carnival. This Jewish holiday, commemorates the liberation of the Jews from the Persians and it is celebrated, with joyful ceremonies, on the day they were to be exterminated by lot (purim). It refers to the machinations of the vizier (prime minister) Aman, who planned to kill all the Jews of Persia, drawing lots to decide which day would determine their slaughter. He particularly disliked the royal adviser Mordecai, who was a cousin of the queen of Persia. King Ahasuerus (probably Artaxerxes I or Xerxes I) discovered the conspiracy through the mediation of Queen Esther. The story, which occurred in the 5th century BC, is mentioned in the book of the Old Testament "Esther". Masquerades, parties, dances, songs, theatrical performances are the main features of Purim. Family and relatives used to give money to the children "Purimilikia". The official celebration is associated with the reading of the book of Esther in the synagogues, with the exchange of gifts, with donations to the poor and with joyful ceremonies, from which the carnival events stand out.

Purim in Rhodes



1930, Purim, Rhodes. Photo Taken from the Rhodesli Jewish Calendar of 2018 by Aron Hasson, ©The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation

“There was a continual fair for two days and two nights in la Kay Ancha. The food vendors with their booths of shish kebab, bourekas, olives, cheese, sweets, fruits, lemonade, syrup drinks and snow cones.

Games of fortune were played, their tables filled with prizes of sweets and money.

A line of horse and buggies , decorated with flowers and adornments would take us for a ride to the Puerta de la Mar .The driver would cry out “Ir I venir un grosh” Other buggies went as far as Zimbouli to drink the famous water. Others went to the Garden of Lemons in the Turkish quarter to buy lemons .These two parks were open solely for the Jews on their religious holidays.

The children dressed in their costumes and masks collected money from their parents and relatives and ran to the Wide Street to spend it.

As in other Sephardic communities some Rhodeslis exchanged plates of sweets called. «platikos»