

## Constant progress of the “Arapides”- Niggers custom in Nikisiani, Kavala

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### Abstract:

The purpose of this survey was to study the timeless presence of “Arapides” custom in Nikisiani and to point out any changes which are noticed in its performance because of the versatility presented by social phenomena during any historic and political change take place in our society. Data’s collection was done by the ethnographic method, the researchers’ participative observation and it was based on primal and secondary sources’ use. 1976 was a landmark year for this custom’s performance, since Domna Samiou has come to the village and filmed custom’s performances. All the performances before 1976 and in 1976, 1996 and 2012/2013 were survey’s ethnographic data and their elaboration was carried out by comparative method. Through this method we attempted to show the similarities or the differences as well as this custom’s transformation’s degree of structure and form during this particular time period. After the analysis of the facts, it turns out that: firstly, the custom has lost its auspicious function and it has acquired an entertaining aspect as a result of the changes in the Greek society. Secondly, the most important date in custom’s history was when Domna Samiou has visited in 1976 and it has been presented on her TV show in 1977. Thirdly, there are many changes noticed in both custom’s structure and content. Fourth, “arapides” participation (old men) was introduced in 1976 and since 2009 women’s and children’s dancing groups have been participating in custom’s performances. Finally, performances’ days have decreased, and now the custom is taking place only on 7<sup>th</sup> of January.

**Keywords:** ritual, dance event, folk dance, social change

### Introduction

According to Kakouris (1976) the word “event” refers to the magic-religious, dramatized show, the dramatized divine service which is performed under the faith (irrational) that in this way the good year of the community will be made sure. According to Puchner (1985) the conceptual whole ceremony/ritual/custom/event is a semiotic system of social acts which obey a certain ritual in their repetition, are binding or even obligatory for the community, stress the emotion of ‘us’ and present group’s identity, throw bridge across crucial life stages, restructure the whole social reality, reflect faithfully the current social values and represent visually a micro-society’s or even a macro-society’s ideologies. Additionally, according to anthropology, despite all the difficulties she run into in order to define what is sacred and what is worldly (Puchner, 1989), event is every action which obeys a ritual, is repeated in a typical form or it belongs to an entire, set etiquette, either with a religious or with a magical content or without any obvious meaning.

Considering all the above, it is proved that folk events are connected with important moments of agricultural life and especially with the ones that have to do with year’s crucial periods, like the beginning of the year and nature’s florescence in Spring time.

Since people in traditional communities were unable to explain logically the environmental changes which were happening during several time periods, attributed them to supernatural and magical forces, which were, on the one hand beyond their strength and on the other hand, they had to propitiate and take advantage of them, in any way. Moreover, they had to prevent or to pursue the evil powers within certain time periods in order to ensure happiness and welfare during the whole year. It is all about acts of worship's attribution, which came from the past and they have lost their initial characteristics through the years. Moreover, we can see that even the participants themselves do not know the meaning and the purpose of their actions and when they are asked, they answer that we have found them all in this way and we perform them as we learned or a big curse will find us if we do not do so or our ancestors did it in this way, so do we. Means for this propitiation were several proceedings and behaviours of these crucial periods, such as disguises, dance, satire and food.

Disguise and mask are the main morphological characteristics of these events. There are several disguises which vary from area to area. In mainland’s areas the animal-like disguises are more common, while on the islands the monster and human-like disguises with the official local costumes or underwear and rags are of a greater preference (Ekaterinidis, 1976).

**Auspicious, folk dance events and Greek society.**

Auspicious dance events' people are countryside's people, like the farmers and the stock breeders. This is a world that doesn't have many and profound changes during his pass. Their reproduction is mainly based on verbal speech, on memory as well as on community's members' interpersonal relationships. In such communities, dancing is done in chorostassi, through some team working and conditions. As a consequence, the time which is dedicated is not free and without any intention but a 'social' and almost obligingly participatory. This time has the same meaning as the 'productive' one (Damianakos, 1987).

Each community's dance, as a consolidate and collective action which expresses the social cohesion, is one of community's institutions which, on the one hand, reflects and on the other hand, imposes certain ways of behavior that are formed by community's rules and codes, and they serve the present and the future community's existence (Dimas, 2004). Community's rules and codes are based on and express community's value system. Certainly, society's value system, as a part of the whole society, contributes in society's financial and social structure and conformation. Every change in the structure has repeated effects and can cause changes to the whole community's system. When the community's value system changes, can cause changes to community's members' behaviour, which are also reflected in their expression through the dance.

Until the end of the WWII, there weren't many changes in traditional Greek society. It is remarkable that a lot of feudal societies' elements that had been developed during Greeks' enslavement are still alive, although her transformation began with the constitution of the Modern Greek state. The internal and external immigration contributed to the collapse of the traditional lifestyle (Meraklis, 1986). The countryside and the villages were evacuated and the people were gathered in country's big cities and in industrial centers abroad. Technological development, the development of the new means of communication and the development of the tourism contributed so that the changes to be intensified and get completed. The conditions, in which the reproduction of the traditional community was based on, were overturned because of social and ideological homogeneity's change. The rapid focalization of people in big cities and the industrialization of the means of production resulted in people's behavior change, as well as in changes relating to their culture, the arrival of new currents of civilization and a new lifestyle in the villages and towns. According to the models that were coming from big cities new conditions were formed.

In the new lifestyle, the so-called 'post-modern' social environment prevails and its main characteristics are:

- The inconsistency and extrication in the process of social identity's function.
- Confusion of the sense and rationality with the rationalism.
- Rationalism is now considered as the most recommended and advantageous way of thinking and acting.
- The out-of-work time has stopped being sacred, while the individual free time has developed.
- Weakness in the presence of a whole collectiveness, historical and cultural memory for every city subgroups (Giftoulas, 2003).

All the above corrosive and cohesive, disruptive and synthetic potentials and processes resulted in changes of modern Greeks' dancing identity, where modern and traditional-like trends co-exist (Filippidou, Koutsoumpa and Tyrovola, 2008).

This coexistence is due to:

1. The immigrants and emigrants who transfer, from their place of origin to their place of residence or vice versa, their dancing habits. These dancing habits are influenced by new ways' of entertainment arrival. These new ways were determined by radio's mass spreading; gramophone's first and by pick-up's spreading, which was an alternative type of entertainment for the young people who were differentiated in that way from the traditional view about entertainment (Dimas, 2004). The appearance and the spreading of the television was another situation which stressed the changes in the modern Greeks' dancing habits, as she replaced women's night works and men's presence in cafes, which were places of Greek dance's performances. At the same time, she has stopped the realization of occasional dances, mainly those on Sundays, reducing dancing events and consequently, the places of performances were reduced as well. In this way, the chances for dances and songs creations, acceptable by the community, were reduced.
2. The development of folklorism which developed in Greece in late 70's.
3. The function of several dancing clubs as a result of folklorism.

The purpose of this survey was to study the presence of "Arapides/Niggers" as the local people call it, in Nikisiani village, in Kavala, through the years and to notice any changes in its performance, as we know the versatility that the social phenomena present in both historical and political society's changes.

This research is an occasional study. It refers to the custom of 'Arapis/Nigger' in Nikisiani, Kavala, which takes place on 7<sup>th</sup> of January.

Data's collection was done using the ethnographic method (Gefou-Madianou, 1999; Buckland, 1999; Giurchesku, 1999; Kaeppler, 1999; Filippou, 2014; 2015b), the researcher's participatory observation and it was based on the use of primary and secondary sources. In particular, the primary pragmatological material of the

study comes from a local research (Lange,1984) and it has to do with the material's collection in terms of this event's place, not only in the traditional but also in the modern village's society and it is mainly consisted of oral evidences to open-ended questions for the semi-structural (Filiis,1993) data's collection, which emphasizes in people's evidences, whose memory is proved to be powerful when it refers to life experiences (Samuel & Thompson, 2002). Under these circumstances, some local people's semi-directed interviews were taken, in order to collect some information about 'Arapis' presence in local society through the years. The local study was done in Nikisiani, Kavala, during December 2011-February 2013. The secondary data came, on the one hand, from the ERT TV show 'Music Journey-Carnivals of Christmas period (Dodekaimero) East Macedonia), (year of filming 1976 and year of screening 1977) and on the other hand from custom's filmed performances in 1996 and in2012-2013.

The use of films and TV shows for ethnological purposes is considered to be a problematic one. However, nobody can dispute the fact that we have to do with a clear presentation, through the dance and the custom, of the changes that happen in a society. In the Greek society we can notice social conditions' and structures' change, people's focalization in big cities (Filippou, 2015a) values system's change and also the increasing influence from Europeans and Americans civilizations (Galanopoulou, 2006).

For the event's performance forms comparison, we used the comparative method which facilitates the classification and the evaluation of homogeneous items' content (Tyrovola, 2008; Filippou, 2014). Through the comparative method, an attempt to show the similarities or the differences, as well as the degree of 'Arapis' structure and form transformation during a certain period of time, is being made (Pitsi & Filippou, 2014; 2015b). The comparison concerns four time periods: a. before 1976, b. 1976, c. 1996 and d. 2012 and 2013.

## Results

### November 1966/ January 1967

In early November, 1966, in a neighborhood coffeehouse a group of men is talking loudly:

-It can not be possible. Last year we were 40 people and now we are almost 20, Vasilis says.

-How will we perform 'Arapides' with only 15 people? It will be ridiculous, Vangelis says trying to enhance what Vasilis said. He continues... Eh, what about let women participate with us?

-Ok, guys. It is too early. We have plenty time until Saint Vasilios' Day and Saint John's Day. We will get together again as we do every year so long, and of course we wont let women to take part in it. This is not appropriate. So, what are we going to do? Panagiotis responds, almost 30 years old, trying to reassure his interlocutors.

The dialogue above is not fictional. Some old 'Arapides' were narrating it to us (Informers 1, 2). On the one hand, it proves villagers' anticipation for custom's realization and on the other hand, how early they prepared for this custom. Indeed, all the preparations had to start very early, especially for those who did not have disguise's necessary equipment.

But let's see the rest of the conversation.

-Fine, Panagiotis. Let's calm down. You may forget what happened last year. We were not well-organized and we were running last days to find the tsania (bells). Without the tsania (bells) how can we get dressed like 'Arapides'? What? Are we going to get dressed like others, who did not have the tsania (bells) and put cans with stones inside? What about the other one? Sotiris did not have the barbota (mask) ready. These are not right things. Someone else, almost 35 years old, says.

-Yes, these are true facts; in the end everything was perfect. Panagiotis is right. We found the tsania (bells) and we also made Sotiris' barbota (mask), which was the most successful one. Everyone that saw her for the first time got scared. If we don't have the tsania (bells), we will go to the monastery. The monks will give us some of them for custom's sake. And finally, what happened to me last year, when I had exchanged my horse for the bells in Rodolivos? I had been arguing with my father by the time I took the horse back, another 25-year-old man says.

From the dialogue above, we can easily understand how important the tsania (bells) and the barbota (mask) are. Without them it is not possible for someone to get dressed like an 'Arapis'. Even if the issue was sound's production, the sound of those bells was what they all wished for and they did everything to take them. They even exchanged their possessions in order to acquire them. Some of them borrowed those bells from Panagia Eikosifinissa's monastery. In addition, the barbota (mask) has to be impressive and terrifying.

And it's finally New Year's Eve. Panagiotis' whole company from the previous month gathered in his house, somewhere in Saint Anna's neighborhood.

-Guys, we should do the last check. Tomorrow, we will go 22 people for the performance and Sotiris is going to fight with Vangelis. Sotiris will die. In the morning, 3-4 old 'Arapides', who know about our costume, will be here to help us get dressed. On Saint John's Day we are going to be more people. As soon as the church's bell rings and the Holy Service finishes, the children will go out. When they come back, at around 1 o' clock, the engaged men will get dressed. After them, the old men will do the same. We will go all around the village and we will end up in the square with the fighting. As soon as we take off the barbota (masks) we will dance the song 'galazia peristera' and one or two more. Then we will go to any house that invites us for a treat. With the money we will collect, we are going to buy the 'Arapki'. We will gather all together at my house on Saint Athanasios'

Day to celebrate.

As we can understand from those people's information, the 'Arapdis' on Saint John's Day were the most important custom for Nikisiani's residents. We can say that the 'Arapdis' on New Year's Day were the formal rehearsal to fix some more things so that they can perform it without any faults on Saint John's Day. We can even get informed about the starting time which was just after the end of the Holy Service and about the route that they were following for ending up in the square. They will go around the whole village and they will end up in its square. There, two people who were pre-arranged will represent a fight and one of them is going to die, in order to come again back to life later. With the rise of the dead 'Arapis', everyone will reveal his face by taking off the barbotes (masks) and after they will start dancing. The end of the 'Arapides' will be in the houses of everyone whose name is Vasilis. But all these will happen only by the old 'Arapides' who will go out last. The young ones, who are going out first, are like the messengers of the 'Arapides' custom and then the engaged ones. In the end, the old ones, who have the most experiences, will go out, because it is not easy for all to carry and ring the bells (tsania) as they have to do, in order to produce the suitable sound.

We are also informed about the ending of the 'Arapides'. They will visit the houses where people are celebrating, they will have fun and with the money they will collect, they are going to buy meat and drinks to celebrate all together on Saint Athanasios' Day on 18<sup>th</sup> of January.

### **January 1976**

The years passed away. The whole village is upset. Since November 1975 they have been informed that the 'Arapdis' on Saint John's Day will be watched by Domna Samiou, a famous singer of folk songs, but also a producer and presenter of folklore TV shows. She is going to film the whole custom's execution, in order to present it on her TV show 'Music Journey' in January 1977.

For this reason, everyone who had been dressed as 'Arapis' the previous years, gathered in order to make the preparations for custom's execution. The first decision which was made was not to perform it at New Year Eve, in order to avoid the tired and any possible injuries. The second one had to do with groups' formation. They won't go out in separated groups but all together in one group. Third decision was old men's participation (Arapides).

7<sup>th</sup> of January 1976 and once again everybody is in village's square in order to revive 'Arapis' custom. Early in the morning, they start with custom's preparations. Old men who were possibly at the same place of the 'Arapides' years ago, are helping and preparing the younger ones with their costume. The process for costume's preparation requires basic knowledge and good mood 'Arapis' costume is consisted of plenty items.

The biggest emphasis is given on the bells the villagers call them 'tsania', which require special caution during the fastening because of their weight. The processes for 'Arapides' dressing has been done and now everything is ready for the performance. Everybody has already gathered in the square and they are waiting for 'Arapides' arrival. 'Arapides' are being accompanied by two tsoliades. They are following a circular route, one after the other. They are walking slowly but at the same time very impressively. While they are walking, they are raising high their knees, in order to make the bells ring more loudly. All the residents seem to watch with attachment to the 'Arapides' moves. Their walking is becoming more and more intense, faster and faster and they finally start to hop, keeping their line, though. Tsoliades with an 'Arapis' are going in the center of the circle and they are hopping in an intense rhythm. The 'Arapis' who is standing in the middle, is making static steps and opening his arms for challenging another one to fight with him. Now, a second 'Arapis' is coming in the center and the fight between them starts, while the rest of them are walking around. As soon as the fight finishes without the realization of custom's final purpose, the 'Arapides' are leaving the square in order to make a tour in village's narrow streets.

A group of men, who are dressed with the traditional local costume, commonly known as 'Arapides', plays such an important part during the custom. They are accompanied by 'daouli' and 'zourna' which are traditional musical instruments. They have first met in a house and from there they start to walk in the village, due to end up in the place where the custom is taking place. During their tour in the village it is remarkable that they are not walking but they are dancing traditional local dances. These men's group is arriving in custom's place. Musicians are in the center of the circle and Arapides are continuing their dance with village's residents. The musical instruments are accompanied by a local singer, Vangelis Daskaloudis. People are so happy but excited as well by their presence there.

'Arapides' are coming again back to the square, they're following the same processions and now it is the time that the two 'Arapides' will fight. Their fight will be a strong one, since one of them, according to custom's purpose, must be 'killed'. One of them is falling down. The rest of them are meeting around him to see what happened. They realize that Arapis' after his 'death', has been resurrected and as they are happy for this progress, they are taking off their 'barbotes' and they all together start to hop or to run by ringing their bells very loudly, while all the people seem to have a great time with them.

### **January 1996**

Two decades later. It is Sunday, 7th of January 1996 and the preparations for the custom have begun. They are all met in the cultural hall of the local authority in order to get dressed as the 'Arapides'. There are

older men age or even younger ones who have either dressed as ‘Arapides’ before or they had the ‘psora’ (strong desire) as many call it, with the specific custom.

The ‘Arapis’ costume is the same. It has not changed at all and it is very difficult and demanding. This costume is still giving emphasis on the bells that they are wearing around their waists since, because of their weight, they should be fastened very carefully.

During the process of the preparation in the hall, there is a great disturbance and anxiety for their final appearance. After a while, ‘Arapides’ are ready. Outside the hall, they start hopping and ringing their bells very loudly, while some people follow them. Afterwards, they are standing in the line, one by one and they start their way to the square. The men who helped them to get dressed are also going with them. They are fixing the last details and accompanying them in their tour. While ‘Arapides’ are walking, in the first square some residents are waiting for their dances in the rhythm of ‘daouli’ and ‘zourna’. When ‘Arapides’ meet them, they are greeting each other and continue their way in village’s narrow streets. However, all the attendants, both local and foreigners, are meeting in the central square, waiting for ‘Arapides’ appearance. Village’s cultural association, where many youngsters are participating in, is dancing, by wearing traditional local costumes, as they are waiting for the ‘Arapides’ to come. Their dance is being accompanied by some traditional musical instruments, like ‘daouli’ and ‘zournas’.

‘Arapides’ have arrived in the center of the square. There, one by one, they are doing their first official appearance, by following a certain way. Their step is slow, impressive but at the same time heavy and steady in order to make their bells sound more loudly. After they complete 4-5 rounds in event’s place, they leave for going for another walk in the village. After them, is dance association’s turn to continue the dance? The people, who have been gathered to watch the custom, seem to watch it with a special attention and happiness but also to take part in it.

‘Arapides’ are coming back again in the square. This time two by two, holding their swords. They are walking following again a certain way. During their walking they stop occasionally hopping and making noise with their bells. Two of them are going in the center of the circle, surrounded by the rest ones, in order to fight. They are leaving their swords down and they form a cross. They start fighting. While they are fighting one of them is falling down and ‘dies’. All the others are coming closer to see what happened. The supposing resurrection of the ‘dead’ is coming next and afterwards, everybody is taking off their ‘barbotes’ and spreading around the venue. They start hopping again in an intense rhythm ringing their bells. Just before the ending of the custom, ‘Arapides’ seem to enjoy their participation in the custom and at the same time to be tired. But they do not give up until the end of the performance. Next, seven old men, the ‘Arapides’, wearing their traditional local costume, are dancing accompanied by the ‘daouli’ and ‘zournas’.

Both the ‘Arapides’ and the dance association are taking part in the dance. The dance stirs up the audience, which is taking part in it as well by making a bigger circle.

### ***January 2012/2013***

5<sup>th</sup> of January 2012. Two days before the Saint John’s Day. A complete silence exists among the young and older men of the village. Everything is peaceful and nothing can show that in two days all these people will perform the custom of the ‘Arapides’, as they call it now. Where are the fuss and the anxiety of the previous years? Custom’s organization and execution are on village’s cultural association’s responsibility. They have called their club ‘Arapis’ because of the custom which has been taking place over the decades now.

The members of the Board have taken care of who is going to participate, what costumes they are going to wear and which way they will follow. There is no anxiety whether they find the ‘tsania’ or whether the ‘barbotes’ will be ready on time. The club and the community have bought ‘tsania’ and ‘batalia’ for everybody and there is no need for someone who wants to get dressed as an ‘Arapis’ to exchange his horse or whatever he wants to, in order to borrow ‘tsania’ from the village of Rodolivos, like their fellow-resident did. They do not have to worry if ‘barbotes’ and ‘kapes’ will be ready on time. The community has bought complete costumes and has donated them to the cultural association.

In the meeting, which took place on 5<sup>th</sup> January in the office of the club for the final rehearsal, there were also some women, who will also dance in the square during both the ‘Arapides’ walking around the village and after the ending of the custom, when everybody dances. ‘Arapides’, who first appeared in the event in 1976, when Domna Samiou visited the village, will be with them too. Their participation is restricted in dancing at the streets and the square, as long as ‘Arapides’ way lasts in village’s streets.

On Saint John’s Eve, as club’s president is announcing, that is in the evening of Theofania, children and young men will go out wearing only the tsania (bells). They will start from the community hall and they will walk around to finally end up in the schoolyard, where they are going to dance. Then, they will return to the hall, in order to leave the bells. On Saint John’s Day, the event is going to take place in the schoolyard again, at 13:30. All the dressed men will be one group and they will walk in the streets two by two. They will stop once in the schoolyard and then they will continue their way. During their walk, in the schoolyard will be some women, wearing local costumes, and some ‘Arapides’ dancing local dances, accompanied by ‘daouli’ and ‘zournas’.

When ‘Arapides’ will appear for a second time, everyone will leave, in order to let the two ‘Arapides’ fight. When one of them will ‘die’ and ‘rise’, everybody will take off his ‘barbota’ in order to reveal his face.

They will dance all together, with the women and the 'Arapides' joining the dance too. As soon as the people come in the circle to dance, 'Arapides' can leave the place.

## Discussion-Conclusion

### *The 'Arapides' over the years*

The changes that have been noticed in the Greek society since the end of the WWII, have influenced people's beliefs and ideas and as a result, Greeks' religious and social events. The daily life in a traditional society was based on some legendary beliefs and prejudices and a lot of events have a magic-religious character. On the contrary, in the Modern Greek society, rationalism is regarded as the most recommended and practical way of thinking and acting. In this way, some folk events of the traditional society, based on legendary beliefs and accompanied by songs and dances, were not possible to exist today since they have lost not only their magic-religious character but also their functionality (Dimas, 2004).

Agriculture's industrialization resulted in the lack of fields' sacredness and consequently, all the dances and events connected to fields' cultivation have lost their social functionality, as their main purpose was the divine execution for successful crops (Filippou et al, 2006).

'Arapides', an eminently auspicious custom, took place in Nikisiani, Kavala, during twelve-day's period, after Christmas, with its climax on Saint John's Day. The event finished essentially and typically on 18<sup>th</sup> of January, on Saint Athanasius' Day, with the 'Arapki', every 'Arapis' meeting and celebration.

The event has been taking place unfailingly since almost the end of the WWII, as our informers claim (informers 3 and 4). It wasn't stopped even during dictatorship or when a funeral was taking place in the village like in 2009. Then, a village's resident has died and his funeral took place on Saint John's Day. The event was carried out normally after the funeral, with the only difference that the young men did not go out wearing the bells on Saint John's Eve.

Comparing the four time periods, we can conclude that the event has changed both in its form (in terms of who takes part) and in its structure.

We can say that the biggest and the most important change was that in event's function. 'Arapides', an auspicious custom, is a chance for people to have some fun. According to some elderly people, custom's execution was done to pursue the evil spirits, by using bells' noise and their terrifying masks in order to gain the welfare of a whole year. People were, afraid that something bad would happen in the village, either the crops wouldn't have been sufficient enough or some kind of disease would have found them, if 'Arapides' had not gone out a year. Besides, the fight between 'Arapides', the 'death' and one's 'resurrection' were a symbol of nature's flowering after the hibernation's period. On the contrary, nowadays, 'Arapides' symbolize a way out for entertainment but also a great attraction for, both Greek and foreign, tourists. Plenty of our informers have protested about this change, claiming that 'nowadays, Nikisiani's residents do not enjoy 'Arapides' as other years did. They perform it just for the tourists and authorities. But how it could be different, when the event has no functional relationships with the community? When 'Arapides' do not serve any community's purposes anymore? There are no evil spirits anymore, so that the 'Arapides' should pursue.

Custom's duration has decreased. The days of the event have lessened from twelve to one. 'Arapides' was a twelve-day's after Christmas custom. It was carried out from Christmas Eve until Saint John's Day. The mass participation was noticed on New Year's and Saint John's Days. Since 1976 the event has been taking place only on Saint John's Day. Furthermore, 'Arapki', the so called participants meeting and their celebration, stopped taking place as well. That was a gathering which was enforcing community's cohesion and friendship.

As far as group's formation is concerned. Before 1976 men's participation has been done in groups of 10-15 people. So, there were a lot of groups crossing the streets without any specific route. For the first time in 1976, during custom's filming by Domna Samiou, all the participants constituted one team that was following a specific route. That way of performance remained for the next years and it was defined as the unique way for custom's execution.

Event's form has been affected in many ways since 1976, when the role of the 'Arapides' was introduced. They were dressed with their local costumes, which the old men used to bring because of their deficiency. They were not wearing the bells but they were just dancing in the square, both during 'Arapides' tour in the village and after, when they took off their 'barbotes' and reveal their face.

Another change in the terms of event's form is participants' costume's one. Until 1976 the only costume had been the 'Arapis' one. And again it was Samiou who imposed some new elements in custom's execution. She introduced two 'tsoliades' as group's leaders. However, the leaders had existed before 1976 as well, but they were dressed as 'Arapides'.

Finally, since the custom's performance in 2009 women's participation was something unbelievable in previous years, because it was not common for the women to take part in public events. Women do not walk around the village but they can participate in the dance, like the 'Arapides', as they're waiting for 'Arapides' to come and also afterwards, when everybody takes part in the dance. Moreover, during the performances in 2012 and 2013 there were also children's dance groups who took part in this custom.

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## Conclusions

1. The event has lost its auspicious function and has acquired a more entertaining aspect, resulted from Greek society's changes.
2. The most important date in event's execution was when Domna Samiou has visited the village, in 1976 and when it is presenting on her TV show in 1977.
3. There are changes noticed in both custom's form and structure.
4. In its performance in 1976 the role of 'Arapides' was introduced and in 2009 women's and the children's groups have gained the right to participate in it.
5. Performances duration has decreased and now the event is taking place only on 7<sup>th</sup> of January.

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