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Feasts in Lesbos¹: Highlighting the Social and Cultural Changes

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Abstract

This paper focuses on religious feasts² in Lesbos which motivate participation from both locals and foreigners. We aim at highlighting the changes and the causes that prompted the inhabitants of Lesbos to modify their festive practices and musical preferences. The paper refers to the period from the end of the 19th to 21st century (2022), drawing on previous research by members of the University of Aegean and supplemented by the field research material gathered as part of my PhD thesis. Taking everything into account, we conclude that the changes in panegyria, as well as in the festive practices are the result of social, economic and cultural changes, which are reinforced and/or expanded due to the development of technology and digital media, which in any case should not be considered separate and cut off from social becoming.

Keywords

feasts, cultural phenomenon, panegyria, festivities, festive practices, cultural changes, social changes, technological development

¹Lesbos is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean and the third largest island in Greece. It is in the eastern part of the North Aegean, opposite the Asia Minor coast, and the capital of the island is the city of Mytilene which is built on the southeastern end of it. Visitors and tourists often refer to the island by using the name of the capital.

²panegyria

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1. Introduction

The wide variety of festive events recorded ethnographically are defined either as a communal food and drink consumption event, or they are considered to be ritual events (Kassabaum, 2019: 611; Spielmann, 2002:195; Hayden, 2001:28; Dietler, 2001:65, 1996:89). Musicians, singers and/or dancers may accompany feasts or festivals from the early classical literature (e.g., the description of a wedding feast by Hippolochus in c.300 BC), or it is depicted on image scenes on the "Standard of Ur" (Hayden & Villeneuve, 2011: 434; Tamara, 2003:24). In the liturgical calendar of the Orthodox Church, feasts are a regular phenomenon in which we can distinguish three main types. Firstly, those dedicated to Jesus, secondly, those dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and thirdly the many feasts of the saints (McGuckin, 2011:249). In Greece, these types of feasts are called *panegyria* and they form a multidimensional cultural phenomenon due to the religious and recreational practices they include.

This paper focuses on *panegyria* in Lesbos and their festive practices as a recreational practice which motivate participation from both locals and foreigners. We are about to highlight the changes and the causes that prompted the inhabitants of Lesbos to modify their festive practices and musical preferences. The time period covered by the article is divided into four periods. The first three are drawn from previous research, while the fourth was supplemented by research material arising from my PhD thesis. The division of the periods was firstly based on the differences presented by the music repertoire and in general the musical practices of Lesbos, according to Papageorgiou's³ research. Although we maintained this separation, it was deemed necessary to refer and highlight all the factors that had been mentioned, in order to achieve a holistic approach to the causes of changes in the field.

2. Panegyria in Lesbos: a cultural phenomenon⁴

Panegyria in Lesbos, as well as other places in Greece, are considered as cultural phenomena due to their roots in culture, their influence on the society and their dynamic nature. These key aspects make them significant for understanding their cultural identity and change. For most of them their organization is held in honor of a saint, who is the patron saint of the village or settlement. Sometimes they are (also) connected with a miracle or a related event that is lost in the depths of the years. The expressions of pleasure towards the saint are conducted in several ways: waiting for long hours to make a pilgrimage to the icon of the saint, coming to church on foot, or placing an object, usually a golden or a silver one, on the icon as a gift "tama".

However, communication with the divine does not stop at the pilgrimage. The sacrifice of the bull, the so-called "kurbani", complements the thanksgiving to the saint by offering a meal to everyone. The word comes from the Turkish word *kurban*, which means victim/offering and refers to the animal that is sacrificed as well as to the performance of the sacrificial function. Such functions include the coronation of the bull with flowers and its procession around the village accompanied by musicians who play instrumental folk music which characterizes Lesbos Island. The blood of the bull is used to make crosses on the forehead of the believers, to protect them from any evil. The sacrifice has a popular character since the animals are bought with contributions from the inhabitants, who also offer a lamb, a calf, or even a cow, to complement the meat needed to prepare large quantities of food. The meat of the bull is cooked all night with coarse wheat, making the so-called *kishkek*, which, after being blessed by the church, is distributed free of charge to the pilgrims. Its consumption entails the gaining of the power of the sacrificed bull (Samiotis & Karaiskakis, 1987). Nowadays, this specific custom has caused many reactions from animal welfare organizations and many citizens that characterize it as inhumane, anachronistic and unacceptable. They also talk about the abuse and killing of an animal and call for its immediate abolition. Despite the protests of the cultural associations and the Church, which are defenders of customs and traditions, the public killing of the animal has been abolished as well as the distribution of blood to the bystanders.

Although, *panegyria* in Lesbos Island, like every *panegyri* in the Greek territory, are inextricably linked to religious events, its role is not limited to serving religious sentiment(s) but is also linked to the necessity for feasting. Feasting takes place late at night after the end of the religious ceremonies and reflects the social life and the necessity for gathering and cultural continuity of the community. Typical examples are the participation of various categories of revelers, such as young people, and/or people of Lesbos who do not live on the island anymore and plan their return for vacations, considering the local festive events (Papageorgiou, 2006:21).

³Papageorgiou was member of researcher team working on music practices of Lesbos participating in field work from 1995 till 1998.

⁴The term phenomenon refers to any occurrence worthy of research, especially to processes and events that are particularly unusual or of particular importance.

The desire to revive the religious and recreational practices of panegyria by various cultural associations and the expectation of saving the cultural standards, functions as an indirect representation of historical memory and shared experiences. This representation includes “the body of beliefs and sentiments common to the average of the members of society⁵” which evolve over time and adapt to social, economical and cultural changes, as well as the evolution of technology.

3. The Fourth Periods

3.1. First period: Musical influences (end of 19th century – 1910s)

The feeling of anticipation for the carrying out of feasting was intensive because social gatherings that were combined with music were not a frequent event. Festivities that take place in kafenia⁶ (coffee shops that made up the sphere of socialization and interaction) or at homes, along with other social events, such as weddings or carnivals, etc., periodically interrupted the strict routine of work. By the end of the 19th century the musical preferences of the inhabitants of Lesbos were strongly influenced by their contact with the opposite coast of Asia Minor, and their social stratification. The population growth that took place on the island in the 18th and 19th centuries resulted in the constant migration of the inhabitants of Lesbos to the coasts of Asia Minor, to be employed in agricultural or technical work that took place from May to October (Xtouris & Barkaraki, 2000:61). As a result, (possibly) by the end of the 19th century, feasting practices included songs and dances called amanedes, zeibekika, tabachaniotika and karsilamades. These types of music hearings were called “Asia Minor songs” due to their (supposed) origin (Xtouris & Barkaraki, 2000:70). During the first period of their performance, which lasted till the end of 1910, the Asia Minor songs were performed at kafenia or at homes by experienced musicians, the majority of whom didn’t have knowledge of music theory and notation. The violin and the santouri predominated, the clarinet was also quite widespread, and the davul represented the percussion family (Papageorgiou, 2000:145, 149).

3.2. Second period: Musical and social changes (1910-1940)

The commercial and industrial development that took place during the 19th century, combined with some immigrant stream from Europe (France, England, Austria, and other European countries), who settled in Lesbos, due to its economic development, contributed to the urbanization of the island. The urban changes that took place from 1880 to 1920 resulted in the consolidation of a strictly defined social stratification. On the one hand, a small ruling class was created, some of which holding positions in the local administrative authority, some (or the same) were involved in oil production as owners of extensive lands with olive trees, and/or owners of oil factories and traders. On the other hand, it marked the appearance of a middle-class social stratum consisting of middle and small-scale merchants, bureaucrats and entrepreneurs, and, finally, a strong population of an economically inferior class, which did not exceed the poverty line (Xtouris & Barkaraki, 2000:63,65). The musical preferences of the urbanized upper and middle class included operettas, serenades, songs from the Athenian and Smyrna revue, and dances such as waltz, and tango, characterized as “European songs” or “light music”. “European songs” were also accepted by economically lower classes. Smallholder farmers, skilled professionals, and workers included this kind in their festive practices, forming the second performance period of “Asia Minor songs”, which lasted from 1910 to 1940 (Papageorgiou, 2000: 135-136).

During the second period, the repertoire of the existing music groups was expanded, since musicians incorporated in their repertoire both “European” and “Asia Minor songs” with a certain sequence in the average festivity context (European songs, syrtos, ballos, karsilamas, zeibekikos and hasaposerviko). This sequence was maintained until 1960, and to some extent it was preserved in panegyria until the 1990s. The quality of the musical performance was also improved, due to several musicians who began to acquire theoretical music knowledge. At the beginning of the 1920s, music bands fully adopted the systematic use of the brass instruments, such as the trumpet, the cornet, the trombone, and the euphonium, and from the 1930s, the tambourine was replaced by a percussion “set”, the so-called “jazz”, which consisted of the grand casa, the drum, and the cymbal (Papageorgiou, 2006:145). Such instruments required musical expertise, resulting in the gradual transformation of feasting from dialogic⁷ to monologic. The

⁵Aron, 1971:15

⁶Kafenias (usually) are in the center of a village and serve Greek coffee as well as ouzo, beer or retsina accompanied by small amount of food and in some cases with full meals. It used to be a place exclusively for men. Few women who attended there had to be accompanied by family members or husbands. Nowadays, women can also enter it without being accompanied by a man.

⁷The dialogic feasting is characterized by the participation of all revelers in the vocal performance using improvised musical instruments or household utensils, such as tubercles, tambourines, pans, and even tins. It was the main music practice from the

monologic feasting began to develop at the end of the 19th century at panegyria, kafenia, and urban music events. Unlike the dialogic feasting, the human voice is downplayed and was (more or less) replaced by one or more melodic instruments. Musicians present themselves to the public as specialized artists and develop into professional entertainers with the goal of profit (Kavouras, 2000:194). In panegyria, they were paid by the audience who ordered and bought the songs and dances they wished listen to. The amount of money was given in paper money, which was (still) called “hartoura” (banknotes). At the same time, the owner of the kafenio became the intermediate manager, who arranged the music band, and the duration of the musical performance as well (Papageorgiou, 2000: 153). Gradually, the feasting was transferred from the houses to the kafenia and the taverns of the area. Villages, famous for their panegyria, were Agia Paraskevi, Mandamados, Kapi, Plomari, Gera, Skoutaros, etc.

Changes were observed at the festive practices among the men and women. The role of women in feastings was limited to their participation in those of panegyria. They were always accompanied by the men of the extended family, while they were excluded from the feastings in kafenia or taverns. On the contrary, men (especially young ones) adopted extreme practices of displaying their masculinity during feasting, such as violent fights among them. This practice usually took place early in the morning after heavy drinking. On rare occasions some revelers used to cut themselves with a knife during the dance, to express the intense emotions that the dance evoked in them (Papageorgiou, 2000: 155).

3.3. Third period: The beginning of the era of electricity and technological equipment (1950^s-1990^s)

The gradual spread of electricity and the subsequent development of musical technological applications and equipment transformed the festive practices of the Lesbians. Wider technological changes additionally influenced social priorities and relations. Signs of women's emancipation make their appearance at the feasts. In addition, the subvention of cultural associations by local administration for the organization of cultural events, which began in the last two decades of the 20th century, changed the way cultural events (and therefore panegyria) were presented, as they were seen as means of tourism promotion and economic reinforcement of the island.

To begin with, before 1960, the feeling of anticipation for the carrying out of panegyria was in intense because social gatherings that were combined with music were not a frequent event. Certain revelries that took place in kafenia or homes, along with other social events, such as weddings or carnivals, etc., periodically interrupted the strict routine of work. The participation in the festivity of panegyria by residents of distant but also neighboring communities was efficient on foot or by using carts (“arabas”), horses and sometimes donkeys, which guaranteed a long and uncomfortable journey. Thus, spending the night in the houses of relatives and friends who resided at the village where the festivity was held, functioned as a necessary practice, which created strong bonds and enhanced the feeling of anticipation between hosts and guests. The gradual replacement of arabas and animals by automobiles affected the dynamic of relations between hosts and guests. The quick access throughout the island at any time of the year made the overnight stay unnecessary and led to the loosening of the feeling of anticipation among relatives and friends (Charalampi, 2023: 254).

The access in electric power, which was (generally) established in Lesbos in about 1950, affected the performances of the music bands. The use of the first amplifiers from the mid-1950s supported the prominence of the bouzouki accompanied by the guitar in the bands and changed the “traditional” repertoire: “songs and dances from Asia Minor” were enriched with popular songs of the time called “laika” (in Greek) and some (older) “rempetika”. The use of some other instruments which were previously thought as indifferent components of a band, like the bass viola or the contrabass was neglected as unnecessary, and the use of the brass instruments was reduced drastically. The violin, the santouri and the clarinet remained partially in a (more or less) peripheral role, except for occasional improvisations (mainly) by the violin. From the 1970s, the use of the keyboard dominated along with the guitar and the jazz. In general, the music bands included fewer members, due to the economic decline that limited the possibility of large expenditures on the part of revelers (Papageorgiou, 2000: 149).

second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th and was used in weddings, births, panegyria, etc. An additional characteristic is a shared desire among the members of a group to revel without requiring any preparation or special expense for food, drink, or music. This type of feasting took place in kafenia or houses. Until the 1940s, even during the German Occupation (to some extent), feasting in domestic spaces were a continuation of the entertainment from the kafenia, which took place late at night (Kavouras, 2000:192 Papageorgiou, 2000:155).

⁸The Second World War, the Occupation and then the Civil War in Greece and the political persecution of people with left-wing beliefs affected the festive practices of the island's inhabitants (as well as throughout Greece). Most of the entertainment centers were closed, while the social conflicts between the residents degraded the musical events (Papageorgiou, 2000:138).

The improvement of transportation services with fixed ferry routes contributed to the participation of female singers in music bands, mainly coming from Athens, a practice which lasted 'till the 1970s. The conclusion of the partnership was coordinated by special offices which undertook the task of their removal as well as the terms of their contracts. But due to high costs, since the late 1960s, the role of the singer has been almost exclusively performed by men, local inhabitants, some of whom were also members of the orchestra (Papageorgiou, 2000: 156, 160).

Some festivities of the panegyria were held (and still are) on the hills or mountains close to villages where certain chapels are located⁹. Due to the lack of electricity and the absence of a kafenio, people prepared the food and sweets at home, placed them in big baskets along with the necessary household equipment, such as glasses, plates, forks, etc., and loaded them onto animals to carry them up the mountains. Beers, wines, water and whatever needed to be cold, were placed in barrels filled with ice. When they arrived at a hill or mountain, they spread a blanket on the ground, and they ate and sang all night. Additionally, the blanket had the meaning that the space was occupied, and no other company could sit there. The groups of friends and families usually numbered from ten to thirty people. Some groups included amateur musicians while others paid a music company to celebrate. Everyone could sing and play simultaneously, without disturbing each other due to the lack of a microphone setup. The next day the revelers would bring the remaining supplies in the kafenia of the village or they would prepare fresh food in their houses for the continuing celebration. It must be mentioned that although by the end of the 1950s the kafenia in villages had been electrified, the owners did not have the equipment to prepare food in large quantities. They could only offer olives, onions, some bread and tomatoes and their profit were based on the consumption of drinks (Charalampi, 2023:202).

From the 1970s, festivities ceased to be held in homes and were removed exclusively in kafenia. During the festivity of panegyria, kafenia owners still served as the intermediate managers who arranged the performance of a music band. The musicians were still paid by "hartoura", although many of them also received a small amount of money from the kafenio owner. Violent fights between men were reduced thanks to the adoption of the practice of a "number" that marked the order of priority for each group of revelers who wanted to dance. Despite this, the fights did not disappear due to the excessive delay of some revelers to empty the floor for the next group of dancers, irritating their successors or others waiting even further in the row.

It is worth noting that participation in the festive practices was a family affair and the youth were integrated into the group defined by the parents. Participation in festive events, especially in the festivity of a panegyri, was conducted according to specific social rules, the violation of which was considered as disrespectful and/or anti-social behavior. The first outing of young people without the accompaniment of their parents took place at the revelry in pre-adolescence. While the young "lads" danced, they received several treats from relatives and friends, as a practice of acknowledging and accepting their display of manhood. On the other hand, on the eve of the festivity, young girls and women were not allowed to attend festive events in kafenia without the accompaniment of their husbands or other relatives. Social conventions limited communication between the two social sexes. By the end of 1990s, the festive practices of women were differentiated, since they systematically participated in panegyria and danced the traditionally male dances such as the zeibekiko. Although their participation was still accompanied by the men, however, the male companions were not necessarily relatives, spouses or fiancés (Papageorgiou, 2000: 161, Charalampi, 2023: 228).

During the last two decades of the 20th century, changes occurred in the way cultural events (including panegyria) were presented and managed. In the context of promoting the island and increasing tourism, the local administration had the right to finance the cultural associations for the organization of cultural events. Cultural events and panegyria usually took on a folkloric character, where local tradition and local products were showcased, targeting permanent residents, seasonal holidaymakers (people holidaying in the place of origin) and of course tourists. Characteristic examples of promoting local products were (and still are) the ouzo festival in Plomari and the sardine festival in Kalloni (Kavouras, 2000: 217-218). In the long term, the cultural management and promotion of cultural events by the cultural associations resulted in the acquisition of great power and range of their artistic action.

⁹Some of the most known according to the participants: Panegyri of Profitis Ilias (Prophet Elijah) on a slope of Mount Olympus close to Agiasos, Panegyri of "Tavros" (The Feast of the Bull) in the chapel of Saint Charalampos in a plateau close to Agia Paraskevi, Pigi and Komi, Panegyri of Agia Triada (Holy Trinity) in Afalonas and Panegyri of Saint Kirika in Cape "Korakas" (Cape Raven) close to Kleo.

3.4. Fourth period: Technology expansion and the use of digital media (1990ς – 2022)

Technological expansion and some (radical) changes in the social life and relations over the last 20 years or so have affected the festive practices of the participants. The transformation of the role of women from housewives to employees, as well as their dynamic involvement in cultural events and issues has also been reflected in the festive practices of panegyria.

To begin with, deep-rooted perceptions embedded in modern Greek society associating a university degree with prestige, social recognition, and professional security, led the majority of young people to Higher Education studies. This fact contributed to the gradual transformation of the profile of the revelers in panegyria, as a considerable portion of them do not any more belong to the working class (farmers, breeders, blacksmiths, etc.) but to the middle class (working in the public and private sector, such as teachers, doctors, pharmacy employees, lawyers, etc.). As a result, the requirements of their profession reduced the time available to spent at panegyria, thus also contributing also to the reduction of the panegyria's duration, except for the panegyri in Agia Paraskevi, which still lasts three days.

Both middle and working classes transformed the use of the horse from an auxiliary tool in agricultural work and a means of transportation, to a pet that would be recorded only as a participant in the religious and secular customs of the festivity¹⁰. Therefore, the owner ensures that the horse has been suitably prepared before the feast, in order to make a remarkable impression during its participation in the festive events. Owning and caring for a horse for recreational purposes is understood as a hobby¹¹, therefore, it is treated as a means of returning to nature and escaping from the problems of everyday life, a practice that was unthinkable in the previous century. Within this context, the original meaning of the rider's participation in panegyri shifted from a practice of serving religious sentiment, mostly to a practice of display¹².

The use of cars and the possibility of a daily return to their place of residence for the revelers of panegyria weakened the ties with potential hosts. The acquisition of private transport by young people, boys and girls, influenced feasting practices in (each) village and transformed the way families used to in the past in panegyria. Young people could move easily and quickly from the villages and small settlements to the urban centers of the island, where there was (and still is) an abundance of modern entertainment centers (clubs, bars, restaurants, etc.). Given that and combined with the decrease in the population of permanent residents of the villages, the moveableness of the young people has contributed to the overall decline of kafenia, resulting in their closing down. In addition, the use of cars disengaged them from (socially appropriate) participation in festive practices (including panegyria) with the family. Even when participating in local festivities, the youngsters are no longer accompanied or supervised by parents, they sit at a separate table with their friends and classmates (boys and girls), simultaneously transforming the way the two social sexes communicate.

The loosening of the social imperatives that prohibited communication between the two social sexes also transformed the way women participated in the festivity of a panegyri. Although the matter of the changes of the festive events was related to social gender presupposes a wider dimensioning of the role of women in the festivities, however, it may be important to point out that, due to a process of gender equality and the developments that promoted, women (gradually) claimed their participation as active members in the festive events and, by extension, in panegyria. Thus, new identities emerged, such as:

1. Independent reveler, who participates with other women and is not necessarily accompanied or assisted by husbands or any other male relatives. Except for the dance performance of zeibekiko which was (and still is) considered as a male dance, they open champagnes when the revelry is at its peak, order at the music band the songs they wish to dance, and pay with "hartoura" the music bands, like men (exclusively) did the previous years.

¹⁰The participation of revelers in the festivities of Lesbos Island with the horse serves, is considered a duty to make a pilgrimage and to accompany the procession of the saint's image. The rider also participates in a sequence of customs, which include the decoration of the horse, the horse races and the participation in the revelry. Horses were originally seen in Agia Paraskevi and in Agiasos. In the last twenty years or so, this practice has been adopted by other places of the island, where the managers of the festivities use the horse as an attraction, expecting an increase in financial profit from the massive attendance of revelers and the participation of equestrian clubs.

¹¹Nowadays, horse owners are usually members of equestrian clubs, some of which also organize the fairs, e.g. Agiasos equestrian club "Profitis Ilias". The aim is to get to know the nature of the horse, through the organization of seminars and trainings.

¹²A typical example is the "Horse Dance" that takes place on the second day of the festivity in Agiasos, where the most elegantly decorated and obedient to the rider horse is awarded.

2. Horse rider, who participates with her horse in panegyria, thus entering a male-dominated space. The number of women following this practice has been increasing in recent years, reinforcing the phenomenon of the “Amazon women” as the inhabitants of Lesbos used to call them.
3. President or active member in a cultural association, who has the responsibility of organizing festive events and
4. Kafenio owner, who contributes equally to the family budget, which is quite burdened by the expenses required to maintain a modern home, as well as the upbringing and education of children, combined with the additional expenses arising from the use of items of technological development, such as cars, motorbikes, mobile phones, Internet, tablets, etc.

The supply of electricity to the mountain using generators allowed the cultural associations and the locals responsible for organizing the festivities, to organize an outdoor kafenio. The necessary equipment (tables, seats, refrigerators, grills, glasses, plates, forks, etc.) is transported to the mountain by trucks, where “glenti” will take place. Additionally, plastic tableware has been widely used. Plastic chairs and tables are easy to transport, while plastic plates, glasses, and forks are disposable. Thus, it is not necessary to hire additional human resources to wash them, while at the same time, they have a low purchase cost. Modern catering equipment has led to the preparation of a variety of foods and the preservation of chilled drinks and soft drinks. This ensures participation in the feast without effort and discomfort for the revelers. However, it puts a strain on the family budget, since product prices have increased due to the hiring of the music band from the cultural club. The use of the microphone installation and performance at increased volumes prevents the coexistence of many musical bands, resulting usually in the recruitment of one and only musical company. Apart from that, in a lot of panegyria, festivities were moved from the mountain into the village, making it a more convenient and easier way of entertainment for the revelers but also more profitable for the kafenia due to their gradual conversion into taverns.

The technological development in mass catering strengthened the service provision of those kafenia owners who continued to operate. Contemporary artifacts of mass catering facilitated kafenia owners to be able to prepare a variety of food in large quantities. The kafenia were modified into taverns: few and easy-making foods were replaced by an abundance of choices, increasing the cost of entertainment, due to the expense of hiring additional staff and paying the music band. It is necessary to point out that, until the accession of Greece to the Eurozone in 2000, the financial prosperity of the lesbian revelers allowed for the musical bands to be adequately paid by “hartoura”. The economic transition from the drachma¹³ to the euro reduced the amount of money given as “hartoura,” resulting in it being topped up by the owners of kafenia. The economic crisis that the country experienced in 2010 prompted the cultural associations to allocate a part of the grants they receive as managers of cultural events, for the full payment of the musical bands. A positive sign in the changes recorded as a result of the reduction of money available for revelry practices is the reduction of fights, due to the minimization of drinking and the limitation of the desire of individuals to pay to dance.

The evolution of music technology further transformed the kafenia from taverns to midnight entertainment centers: there is table reservation, while the music program starts after sunset, much later than it used in the past. Kafenia serve a variety of alcoholic beverages: in addition to the traditional drinks that used to be served at panegyria (ouzo or beer), revelers can choose wine, champagne or whiskey. At the same time, the development of music technology brought about significant changes in the number and the composition of musical bands, as well as in the way songs are performed. Initially, the use of microphone equipment reduced the coexistence of multiple musical bands in a panegyri due to the increase in volume, as an imposed practice which is consistent with the concept of entertainment. In addition, the use of keyboard, which can reproduce all the rhythmic patterns, as well as sounds that imitate “natural¹⁴” musical instruments, including the so-called “traditional” ones (the santouri, the clarinet, etc.), contributed on the loss of job positions for the musicians, even that of the drummer. However, the possibility of choosing natural instruments in a musical band has not been definitively abandoned but depends both on economic conditions and on serving revelers, given that some of them prefer the performance of “Asia Minor” songs with natural instruments.

The evolution of digital and social media (YouTube, Internet, Facebook, etc.) affected in many ways the festive practices in panegyria:

¹³National currency of Greece before euro.

¹⁴Musical instruments are those whose sound is produced in a natural way, i.e., by insinuation, e.g. the violin, by blowing, e.g. the trumpet, and by hitting, e.g. the drum.

1. The members of the musical bands abandoned the time-consuming and expensive practice of buying and repeatedly listening to vinyl records and/or cassettes for the renewal of their repertoire, and turned to the electronic media (Radio, Television, etc.) and the use of social media (e.g. YouTube) to learn new songs quickly, easily and inexpensively. Besides, they take advantage of the new forms of digital communication, to present samples of their work and advertise the place and the date of their musical performance.
2. From the "marketing" point of view, digital and social media significantly influenced the musical preferences of the participants, resulting in constant and rapid renewal of the repertoire.
3. The use of new technologies by the youth shifted their attention to festive practices and reinforced the estimation that these practices can be treated as an additional entertainment of no particular importance.
4. Cultural associations reinforced the original printed form of advertising, but finally established digital forms for easy and quick transferring information to the public at reduced or even zero cost, in order to attract tourists as well as visitors¹⁵.

4. Discussion

At first glance the above description of four periods that reflect the formation of the musical preferences and festive practices in Lesbos may give the impression that technological progress is the main factor for the transformation of festive practices. Although the evolution of technology and the incidental development of digital media has greatly influenced the practices of festivals, their influence is not predominated but interconnected with social, economic and cultural factors that co-shape social becoming.

The musical preferences of the inhabitants of Lesbos in all the above periods were shaped mostly by the influences which were interconnected with external cultural networks. During the first period, these networks referred to the influences from the musical tradition of Asia Minor where the inhabitants of Lesbos migrated to find work. During the second period the musical performances were enriched with music affiliated with western tradition known in Lesbos as "European songs", including parts from operettas, waltz, tango, etc., reflecting influences from the great urban and commercial centers of the Ottoman empire such as Smyrna (Izmir), Constantinople (Istanbul), Alexandria, Thessaloniki, European trade destinations like Marseille, or mainland Greece (Athens). From the 1950s (third period), a new configuration of the repertoire is observed, which is influenced by Greek hits, as they are introduced by the recordings of the era. These songs were mostly known through the radio and later television, while after the development of digital media (fourth period), they are spread across them. Some songs of each period are also included in the repertoire of the next period where over time they were either preserved or discarded. A typical example is the "Asia Minor songs," some of which are still performed at panegyria today, in contrast to the "European" ones, which have disappeared. An important difference between the periods is the time of transmission and formation of the repertoires, which is transformed relatively quickly, with incremental progress from the third period onwards.

Education and changes in labor relations are additional causes of changes in festive practices. By the term "education" we refer, on the one hand, to the education of the musicians, who established themselves as professionals with financial rewards ("hartoura"), transforming (perhaps subconsciously) the festivity from dialogic to monologic. On the other hand, we refer to the education of young people, who were moving from the island and returning to it with new experiences. This gradually led to changes in the ways the audience hires the festivities. In addition, the new working relationships that have been established did not allow uninterrupted and long-term participation in panegyria, an attitude which was reinforced using private means of transport and by the development of multitude options for entertainment in everyday life.

The reconfiguration of the relations between the sexes as well as the reconfiguration of the relations between children and parents led to additional festive rearrangements. The pursuit of female emancipation led to the equal inclusion of women in festive practices and the adoption of roles and behaviors that were considered strictly male.

¹⁵Another way to increase the number of tourists and visitors was the transfer of the date of a panegyri. A typical example is the festivity of the Bull in Agia Paraskevi, which took place in the last ten days of May, definitely before the feast of Ascension (Ekaterinidis, 1979: 5). However, school exams and educational obligations of the students, as well as the lack of tourists, resulted in the transfer of the festive events. According to on-site research, the festival had been moved several years ago (in 1992) to the last week of June (Haland, 2011:5). In recent years it has been celebrated in the first week of July.

Thus, they have deservedly earned the term "merakloutes/meraklouta", a term that was previously only attributed to men (meraklides/meraklis¹⁶). In addition, the emancipation of young people, at a very early age, from the obligations of family gathering in every manifestation of everyday life, was also noticed in the festive practices, since young people can have fun anytime and anywhere without strict restrictions, as was customary in the past. The financial flexibility of the modern family (also) plays an important role in the change of the mentality of the youth, as parents do (or at least they are trying to) support the entertainment choices of their children, as well as, their consumer desires that may concern clothing, studies, hobbies, mobiles, computers, cars, etc.

Finally, an important role plays the emergence of the concept of cultural management, which contributed equally to the social and economic changes interconnected with the transformation of the meaning of the festive practices. Now a days, the organization of the panegyria focuses on aspects of the folk "tradition" as a revival representing cultural continuity. Panegyria appears as an indirect form of historical memory which revives an expectation for the rescue of cultural standards, as well as a desire to bond with the place of origin. This tendency is combined with the modernization of catering and the transformation of leisure centers into entertainment centers, where the physical presence of musical bands is supported by technology. This has led to the degradation of the influence of panegyria. Furthermore, they are not treated as hubs of cultural practices according to previous generations' beliefs, but more as an additional form of entertainment with ambivalent meaning and importance.

5. Conclusion

The festive practices of panegyria were transformed due to general social, economic and cultural changes, accompanied by the development of technology and technological means. The resulting changes reshaping practices, bonds and relationships, can be distinguished in the following fields:

- Reshaping the meaning of the festive practices,
- Reshaping of social ties,
- Reshaping family relationships,
- Re(configuration) of the relations between the social sexes and
- Extension of female emancipation in festive practices

Within these fields, social, economic, cultural factors and the evolution of technology develop and intertwine, and they cannot be separated. For example, the reshaping of festive practices can be considered: a) as a result of social changes, if they are seen in the light of the multitude ways of entertainment that weaken the importance of festivities, b) as a result of economic changes, if they are seen in the light of economic prosperity that allows revelers to choose between a variety of entertainments, c) as a result of cultural changes, if they are seen in the light of an attempt to revive the cultural phenomenon and d) as a consequence of technological developments if they are seen in the light of the use of proprietary means that allow quick access to all kinds of entertainment throughout the island.

Under these terms, we can assume that technological progress is involved in social and economic rearrangements and although it (seems to) occupies a leading role, in fact it has an equally important role with social, economic and cultural changes and is intertwined with them, thus co-shaping social becoming.

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¹⁶The reveler who feasts from the bottom of his hurt without paying attention in what other people think.

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