

TSAKÓNIKOS (chah-KOHN-ee-kohs)
(Greece)

Source: This dance is from an area in southern Greece (Arcadia, Peloponnisos) called Tsakonía. The name means that it is a dance from Tsakonía. It is one of the oldest of Hellenic dances and it is said to be of Cretan origin. Homer in the Iliad describes a dance which Theseus danced with the Athenian youths. This dance, with its serpentine twists and turns, is supposed to be the present-day Tsakónikos. In ancient times, it was known as the Geranós. This dance is described in these two books:

Greek Folk Dances, M. Vouras and R. Holden (New Jersey, 1965)
Elleniki Hori, V. Papahristos (Athinaí, 1960)

There are Greeks from the area of Tsakonía in and around the San Francisco Bay Area, and on occasion, some of the old timers will request the Tsakónikos and dance it.

Music: 5/4 time. Some music is in a slower tempo, while other recordings are a bit faster in tempo. There are two readily available recordings:

Greek Folk Songs and Dances, Dora Stratou, RCA Victor
LPMG 9 (slow)
Greek Folk Dances, Folkraft LP 3 (fast)

Formation: An open circle with hands joined, fingers clasped. The forearms should be together so that the hands are joined palm to palm. The arms are bent at the elbow so that the forearms are parallel to the ground.

Characteristics: The dance is for both men and women. Depending on the tempo of the music, the steps are either slow and controlled, or quicker with more of a bounce. Because the dance represents Theseus leading the Athenian youths from the labyrinth of the Minotaur, the line should wind around in a serpentine pattern.

Meas I FIRST STEP 5/4 time
cts

- 1 Step sdwd to the R on the R ft.
- 2 Step slightly to the R and fwd on the L ft.
- 3 Step sdwd to the R on the R ft.
- 4 Step on the L ft next to the R ft (releasing wt from the R ft, but leaving it in place).
- 5 Pause, wt is on L ft, R ft is ready to step to the R.

The first melody of the song allows us to dance the above step eight times. At this point the second melody is played and the second step is done.

Continued...

TSAKONIKOS (continued)Meas I SECOND STEP
cts

- 1 Step sdwd to the R on the R ft.
- 2 Step slightly to the R and fwd on the L ft.
- 3 Step sdwd to the R on the R ft.
- 4 Hop on the R ft.
- 5 Step across in front of R ft on the L ft.

The second melody of the song allows us to dance the above step eight times. At this point, the first melody is played again and the dance is begun again.

Abbreviations added to fit U.O.P. syllabus format.

Presented by John Pappas