

DE-NVÎRTIT

Romania – District of Oaş

Notes by Dick Crum, revised 10/86.

Introduction: *De-nvîrtit* (den-ver-teet, 'turning'), a couple dance, is one of the two basic traditional dances of the tiny district of Oaş in northern Romania. (The other basic folk dance of the area, *Roata*, is a circle dance done by men only.) *De-nvîrtit* is also known under the name *Danţu* (dahn-tsoo, 'couple dance').

At a Sunday afternoon dance gathering, *De-nvîrtit* is usually the opening dance, and it is repeated regularly during the rest of the event. Only the younger, unmarried people dance it on such occasions; older, married people sometimes dance it at less public celebrations (weddings, christenings, etc.).

As performed by the young *oşeni* ('Oaşians'), *De-nvîrtit* can be considered as composed of two phases: at the beginning the couples dance non-turning figures, in place or moving about a small area of the floor. This Phase 1 includes the Basic Step and the Men's Steps (see descriptions below) and serves as a kind of warm-up. After a few minutes of this opening phase, the man leads the woman into a transitional side-to-side figure (Figure 5 below) and then into the various turning figures from which the dance itself gets its name. The turning phase (Phase 2) is the main part of *De-nvîrtit*.

Recordings: Fuge Imaginea FI 102-A, *De-nvîrtit*; Dances of Romania DR 791-A, *De-nvîrtit*.

Rhythm and Meter: *De-nvîrtit* is conventionally notated in 2/4 meter. Its basic rhythm pattern is *SLOW-quick-SLOW-quick-SLOW* and spans two measures of music. (For other rhythm patterns, see "Men's Steps" below.)

<i>Dancer's beats (counts)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Rhythm</i>	S	q	S	q	S
<i>2/4 notation (2-measure phrase)</i>	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪

FORMATION AND POSITIONS

Couples scattered about the dance floor. (In the dance's native setting, they cluster near the musician[s], the better dancers being closest to him/them.) The **Basic Position** is: Partners face, W's hands on M's shoulders; his hands at her waist or a little higher. This position is subject to much variation: often partners grasp each other by upper arms or elbows, especially when this facilitates performance of a particular figure. During the steps of Phase 1 partners are face-to-face; during the turns in Phase 2 they are often turned shoulder-to-shoulder. **Note:** Even when in face-to-face position, the native dancers seldom look at their partners.

BASIC FOOTWORK PATTERNS ("Basic Step" and "Continuation Step")

In its simplest form, *De-nvîrtit* has two different step patterns which are done individually or in combination with each other, depending on the particular figure being done. These two patterns are the "Basic Step" and the "Continuation Step".

Both can be done by men and women, are in the S-q-S-q-S rhythm, and can begin with either foot, depending on the figure being danced.

Basic Step

The Basic Step is done in place or moving in various directions – sideways, forward, backward, twirling in place, etc. – depending on the figure being done.

*Basic Step
when beginning with Lft*

S Step Lft
q Step Rft
S Step Lft
q Step Rft
S Step Lft

*Basic Step
when beginning with Rft*

S Step Rft
q Step Lft
S Step Rft
q Step Lft
S Step Rft

Continuation Step

Though sometimes done in place, the Continuation Step is primarily used as a traveling step in couple turns moving clockwise or counterclockwise.

*Continuation Step
when beginning with Lft*

S Step Lft
q Hop or bounce on Lft
S Step Rft
q Step Lft
S Step Rft

*Continuation Step
when beginning with Rft*

S Step Rft
q Hop or bounce on Rft
S Step Lft
q Step Rft
S Step Lft

MEN'S STEPS

Oaş men embellish their dancing with a variety of taps, stamps and heel clicks, often in syncopated rhythms. They usually do these steps during Phase 1 (non-turning figures, see "Introduction" above). A comprehensive list of such embellishments would be impossible, since they are improvised; four typical men's step patterns are given here.

Men's Step 1 – Basic Step with Heel Taps

Done in place or moving a short distance sideways.

*Basic Step with Heel Taps
when beginning with Lft*

q Audible step with Lft in place
or sideways L
q Tap R heel beside Lft
q Step Rft beside Lft
q Step Lft in place or sideways L

q Tap R heel beside Lft
q Step Rft beside Lft
q Step Lft beside Rft
q Tap R heel beside Lft

*Basic Step with Heel Taps
when beginning with Rft*

q Audible step with Rft in place
or sideways R
q Tap L heel beside Rft
q Step Lft beside Rft
q Step Rft in place or sideways R

q Tap L heel beside Rft
q Step Lft beside Rft
q Step Rft beside Lft
q Tap L heel beside Rft

Men's Step 2 – Continuation Step with Heel Taps

Used chiefly in combination with Basic Step with Heel Taps during Phase 2.

Continuation Step with Heel Taps when beginning with Lft

- q Step Lft in place or passing Rft to continue a turn CCW
- q Tap R heel beside Lft
- q Hop or bounce on Lft
- q Step Rft beside Lft or forward

- q Tap L heel beside Rft
- q Step Lft beside Rft
- q Step Rft beside Lft
- q Tap L heel beside Rft

*Continuation Step with Heel Taps when beginning with Rft**

- q Step Rft in place or passing Lft to continue a turn CW
- q Tap L heel beside Rft
- q Hop or bounce on Rft
- q Step Lft beside Rft or forward

- q Tap R heel beside Lft
- q Step Rft beside Lft
- q Step Lft beside Rft
- q Tap R heel beside Lft

* Many native dancers of the younger generation do this pattern (*Continuation Step with Heel Taps beginning with Rft*) throughout the entire dance, except, of course, for the improvised "Men's Steps", totally dispensing with both the "Basic Step" and the alternating footwork in reversals of direction, etc.

Men's Step 3 – Heel Clicks

Done in place or moving forward or backwards.

- q Land on both feet about 6" apart, bending both knees slightly
- q Low jump into air, clicking insides of both feet together
- q Land on both feet close together
- q Land on both feet about 6" apart, bending both knees slightly
- q Low jump into air, clicking insides of both feet together
- q Land on both feet close together
- q Land on both feet about 6" apart, bending both knees slightly
- q Low jump into air, clicking insides of both feet together

Note: Most native dancers do this step close to the floor without spreading their feet far apart, i.e., it is not a calisthenics-type jumping-jack step.

Men's Step 4 – "Stamp-Hop-Step-Hop-Stamp"

Done in place.

- S Stamp Lft (no weight) across in front of Rft
- q Hop or bounce on Rft in place
- S Step Lft beside Rft
- q Hop or bounce on Lft in place
- S Stamp Rft (no weight) across in front of Lft
- S Stamp Rft (no weight) across in front of Lft
- q Hop or bounce on Lft in place
- S Step Rft beside Lft
- q Hop or bounce on Rft in place
- S Stamp Lft (no weight) across in front of Rft

WOMEN'S STEPS

While the men are doing the Men's Steps, the women adjust their footwork to accommodate the men's movements. In the case of Men's Steps 1 and 2, for example, the woman does the ordinary Basic Step or Continuation Step. In the case of Men's Steps 3 or 4, she might do the ordinary Basic Step, or the following "Step-Hop-Step-Hop-Step":

Woman's Step – "Step-Hop-Step-Hop-Step"

Done in the direction led by partner.

S Step Lft
q Hop or bounce on Lft
S Step Rft
q Hop or bounce on Rft
S Step Lft

S Step Rft
q Hop or bounce on Rft
S Step Lft
q Hop or bounce on Lft
S Step Rft

SEQUENCE OF FIGURES

Aside from the overall sequence of Phase 1 (non-turning figures) followed by Phase 2 (turning and twirling figures), there is no set sequence to the dance as done by the natives in Oaş, and even the phase sequence is not absolutely rigid; sometimes dancers will return to Phase 1 briefly as a kind of break between the more active movements of Phase 2.

PHASE 1 – NON-TURNING FIGURES (M and W use opposite footwork)

Figure 1 – Basic Step in Place

("X" measures) In Basic Position, M beginning Lft, W beginning Rft, couple does Basic Step in place, alternating feet with each new phrase, as if "marking time". This is done as long as the M wishes.

Figure 2 – Basic Step Sideways

("X" measures) In Basic Position, M beginning Lft, W beginning Rft, couple does Basic Step, alternating feet with each new phrase and dancing sideways, first to M's L, then his R, etc., until M leads into another figure.

Figure 3 – Basic Step about Floor

("X" measures) In Basic Position, M beginning Lft, W beginning Rft, couple does Basic Step, alternating feet with each new phrase and dancing casually about the dance floor. Usually the M moves forward, "backing" the W as they travel.

Figure 4 – Men's Steps

("X" measures) In Basic Position, M does any or all of Men's Steps 1, 2, 3 or 4, either in place or traveling, as appropriate. W accommodates her footwork to his movements (see under Men's Steps and Women's Steps above).

Note: There is no rule as to the sequence or length of time devoted to the above figures; these are entirely up to the discretion of the man.

PHASE 2 – TURNING FIGURES (M and W use same footwork)

After a few minutes doing figures from Phase 1, M leads W into various turning figures; note that during these figures the partners use the same foot. This means the woman must quickly change feet as she feels the M's lead into Phase 2.

Figure 5 – Side-to-Side (Transitional Figure)

Meas 1-2 Retaining Basic Position, couple does one Basic Step (beginning Lft), the M doing his in place as he turns very slightly R (CW), leading W with his L hand over toward his R side. She meantime faces in this direction and takes her Basic Step (beginning Lft), ending up almost on his R side and turning slightly R at the very end to face in the direction she just came from.

Meas 3-4 Reversing footwork and direction, M leads W over to his L side (she "returns home" and goes a little beyond), turning slightly L at the very end to face in the direction she just came from.

This figure may be repeated as many times as M wishes.

Figure 6 – Short Turn

Meas 1-4 Retaining Basic Position (or M may "hook" his L hand on W's R elbow), partners turn R-shoulder-to-R-shoulder, and each moves forward so that they turn as a couple CW, using 1 Basic Step (beginning with Lft) plus 1 Continuation Step (beginning with Rft).

Meas 5-8 Reverse footwork and direction of Meas 1-4, i.e., with L shoulders together, turn CCW with 1 Basic Step (beginning with Rft) plus 1 Continuation Step (beginning with Lft).

This figure may be repeated as many times as M wishes.

Figure 7 – Long Turn

Meas 1-8 Identical to the CW turn of the Short Turn, except it is longer, i.e., 1 Basic Step (beginning with Lft) plus 3 consecutive Continuation Steps (beginning with Rft).

Meas 9-16 Identical to the CCW turn of the Short Turn, except it is longer, i.e., 1 Basic Step (beginning with Rft) plus 3 consecutive Continuation Steps (beginning with Lft).

This figure may be repeated as many times as M wishes.

Figure 8 – "Open-End" Turn

("X" measures) If the M wishes, he may extend the Long Turn "indefinitely" simply by adding more Continuation Steps. This is an extremely common, favorite figure among native dancers. The "Open-End" Turn may be done either CW or CCW.

Figure 9 – "Short Stop and Reverse"

- Meas 1-4 Couple does 1 Short Turn CW, stamping onto Lft on the last count and stopping abruptly, not turning to begin Short Turn CCW.
- Meas 5-8 Still facing CW, the couple "goes into reverse", backing up CCW with 2 Continuation Steps (beginning with Rft) moving backwards.
- Meas 9-16 M abruptly shifts W across in front of him into L-shoulder-to-L-shoulder position and they do a Long Turn CCW (see Meas 9-16 of Figure 7).

Figure 10 – Woman's Walk-Around

- Meas 1-4 Couple does 1 Short Turn CW.
- Meas 5-6 Partners release hold; M does 1 Continuation Step (beginning with Rft) in place, his hands loose down at sides, while W moves past his R shoulder, around in back of him, past his L shoulder and around in front of him using a total of 1 Continuation Step (beginning with Rft), her hands down at sides.
- Meas 7-8 As W comes around in front, M takes her in R-shoulder-to-R-shoulder position and they do 1 Continuation Step (beginning with Rft) CW.
- Meas 9-16 Reverse direction and footwork of Meas 1-8 of this figure.

Figure 11 – Woman's Twirl

- Meas 1-2 Partners release hold as M takes W's L hand in his R hand; he twirls her once or twice CCW in place in front of him, both dancers using 1 Basic Step (beginning with Lft). (He does his Basic Step marking time in place as she turns.)
- Meas 3-4 M takes W's R hand in his L hand and twirls her once or twice CW in place in front of him. Both dancers do 1 Basic Step (beginning with Rft), he doing his in place, she using hers to make the twirl.

The number and duration of these twirls is up to the man.