

The name of the dance refers to the Devolli region in southeastern Albania, an area adjacent to the Resen and Ohrid area of Yugoslav Macedonia where I saw it performed. It is a dance of the Tosk (Southern Albanian) population of that region. It is primarily a men's dance among this Muslim group who normally segregate the sexes totally with respect to dancing, but I saw the slow part done by a mixed line of men and women led erratically by a woman at the yearly celebration of St. Naum's day at the famous monastery dedicated to this saint which is situated on the Albanian border, right at the southern tip of Lake Ohrid. Of course, she did not perform any kneeling or squatting figures. The faster, second part of the dance is almost a separate dance which may also be danced as a tag at the end of Beraçe as well.

SOURCE: villagers in s. Krani, Resensko. I attended two weddings in this village in mid-July 1972 (together with Steve Kotansky and David and Cathy Schochat) and returned there about a week later for a recording session at which we were also instructed in the performance of this dance. Details are also based on super-8 mm film which I made of the dance being performed at the wedding, and also of it being performed on stage, at the 1971 Balkanski folklor festival in Ohrid, by a group of villagers from s. Krani accompanied only by acappella singing.

RECORD: SELO LP-2 Traditional Tosk (So. Albanian) Songs and Dances of the Lake Prespa Area, Side A, Band 1.

FORMATION: Open circle with leader on the right. Hands are joined and held forward at about shoulder height ("W" position.)

METER: Part A is most easily thought of as a 4/4 with a retard (elongation) on the 4th beat.
Part B is 3/4 or 6/4 (like a Greek Tsamikos).

DANCER'S BEATS: pt.A: 1, 2, 3, 4: pt. B: 1,2,3.

DESCRIPTION:

PART A:

Basic Pattern

- | | |
|---|--|
| I1. Face and move right (CCW) about the circle.
Step forward (CCW) on R.
3. Step forward (CCW) on L. | |
| II1. Step forward (CCW) on R.
3. Turn to face the center. Step forward on the L (into the center.) | Free R is raised and brought behind the L calf or knee <u>without emphasis</u> . |
| III1. Step back on R (out of the circle).
3. Step back onto the ball of the L foot behind and to the <u>right</u> of R. The foot is placed so that it points to the left of center.
4. Weight is shifted forward onto the R in its former position. | The body naturally pivots backward (CCW) to face left of center.

Body turns towards the center again. |
| IV1. Step laterally on L to left.
3. Step on R by or behind the L. | Free R remains in its former position. |
| V1. Step laterally on L to left.
3. Step on R by L. | Free R remains in its former position. |
| VI1. Still facing center, step on L across in front of R.
slight crouch (but don't bend forward | This is accompanied by a flexing of both knees so that the step is performed in a
from the waist) |

and then the knees
somewhat.

straighten

2. Bring the free R across in front of L.
It may touch the ground to the left and
forward of L, or simply bend at the knee
and cross in front in the air.

Styling note: the slight dip in measure VI, count 1, may sometimes also be done in measures IV and V, count 1. The steps on count 1 of measures I, II and VI are often performed with a preparatory lift off the other foot before taking the step on the beat. Steps are not always taken crisply on the beat. Sometimes the foot is in place, but the weight is not actually shifted until slightly after the beat.

Variation.

A. Single steps at the beginning may be replaced by triple steps. Anyone in the line may choose to replace one or more of the steps on I,1, I,3 and II,1 by:

1. (3.) Step R (L) fwd. (CCW)
& (&) Close L (R) to R (L).
2. (4.) Step R (L) fwd. (CCW)

B. Turns. The leader and perhaps the next two or three people in the line may do a slow CW turn during measure I. It can be performed with either the two single steps described in the basic Pattern, or the step-draw-step of Variation A.

C. Squats. Performed only by the leader and those next to him. They may be performed while moving to and facing right during the first measure and a half (stepping foot somewhat forward of the other), while moving laterally to the left in measures IV and V (count 1), or while moving to the right and facing center on measure VI, ct.1. Except in the last case, they are generally performed with the feet somewhat further apart than the knees and thighs.

PART B:

Basic Pattern

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| I | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Face diagonally right of center.
Step R to right (CCW). 2. Step L into center of circle. 3. Slight flex of L knee. | <p>emphasis.</p> <p>Hands may be brought forward slightly for</p> <p>Free R is brought behind L calf.</p> |
| II | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step back on R (out of circle). 2. Lift or low hop on R while turning backwards.
End up facing left of center. 3. Repeat ct.2 continuing to move backwards.
End up facing left of center. | <p>Free L is brought through a low arc, knee fairly straight and foot somewhat out to the side, to a position with knee bent and</p> <p>L near R (take counts 2 and 3.)</p> |
| III1 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Step backwards on L (CCW). 2. Step back on the ball of R (or simply touch without taking weight.) 3. Shift weight back onto L in place. | |
| IV | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Large step fwd (CW) on R and begin to turn to face center. | |

2. Turn CW while doing a lift or low hop on R.
End up facing left of center.
 3. Repeat ct. 2 while continuing to turn CW so
that you end up actually facing to the right
of center.
- Free L is brought forward through a low
arc, knee fairly straight and foot
somewhat out to the side. It ends up
forward of R. (This is just the reverse
of the movement on III 2-3.)
- V 1. Leap or step onto L across in front of R (CCW).
2. Leap into a squat on both feet facing center.
Weight is primarily on the L.
3. Rise on L.
right in preparation for the next step.
- Body is turned to face right of center.
- Free R leg is held out forward and to the
- VI 1-3. Stepping R, L, R, make a complete CW turn
in the area just to the right of that occupied
while squatting. (The first step is R to right.)
- VII 1. Leap or step onto L by or slightly back of R.
2. Leap into squat on both feet.
3. Rise on L.
center.
- Face center.
- Free R leg is extended fwd. Face left of
- VIII-XI Repeat IV-VII. (Note that you begin by stepping with the R foot a large step across in front of
L to the left.)
- XII Repeat IV.
- XIII 1. Step forward (CCW) on L.
2. Touch R near L (to the side or slight fwd) without taking weight.
3. Hold.

Note: Theoretically the squat sequence described in measures IV-VII is optional, so that the basic dance could consist of I-III + XII-XIII, or I-III + any number of squat sequences (IV-VII) + XII-XIII. However, as performed at the wedding, the sequence was usually this 13 measure sequence.

Variations

Measure IV, ct. 2: actually shift weight briefly onto L out to left and then return it immediately to R on
ct. 3.

Measure VI: make a double turn on those three steps by pivoting on your heels.