

INTRODUCTION

The first awakening of Greece was ushered in to the rhythm of a dance. Rhea, daughter of Earth taught the dance to her priests the Corybants, and the Kouretes in Crete. Youths and maidens at the religious rites at Knossos welcomed the coming of spring with dance. Maidens danced at the Panathenaic Festival for Athena. In those days dance was religion, prayer, worship. In Homeric times the dance spread beyond the precincts of sacred ritual and expressed warlike exaltation, and feelings of love, joy and recreation. By the classical age, two hundred different dances were known, and with Terpsichore as its patron muse the dance became an art, a noble contest without distinction to age or station. Anacreon says, "when old age leads the dance, his white hair only tells his years but youth is in his heart". Plato extolled dancing and in his own words said that "the uneducated man is not likely to have the ability to dance, whereas on the other hand the man of education must be considered perfectly apt to do so". An examination of ancient frescoes, vase paintings and bas-reliefs show the striking resemblance between the ancient dances and those of the Greeks today. That the dances have not been altered by invaders is shown in the intention of the 7/8 and 5/4 beat.

Dances were done either by a group or by a couple and often combined with song. Folk song-dances called EPILENIA expressed the movements of the collection and pressing of the grapes. Another song-dance was the ANTHEMA, danced by two groups in popular feasts in honor of the coming of spring. Lucian describes a dance called ORMOS which is very similar to the neo-Hellenic folkdance, "ormos" meaning necklace. The passion of the dance still plays an important part in many national, social and domestic affairs. A leader is linked by a handkerchief in a circle and dances with flexible movements turning, bending, leaping and beating his heels. Whereas the men display agility and virility, the women dance "demurely with downcast eye".



SIDE ONE

1. MAYIA

Epirotiko Tsamiko

Formation: An open circle holding hands of adjoining dancers with hands raised a little above shoulder height. Men and women dance in separate lines. The steps are slow and deliberate. Start with Right foot.

Measure:

- 1
 - a) step R ft to R in LOD (ct 1)
 - b) bring L leg across R and raise to knee height (ct 2, 3)
 - c) with a small knee bend on R knee, circle L leg around to back of R leg, bringing L ft back of R knee (ct 4, 5) hold (ct 6)
- 2
 - a) step L ft across R ft, large step (ct 1)
 - b) bring R leg (bent) and swing in front of L, knee height (ct 2, 3)
 - c) a small knee bend on L leg, bring and swing R leg in back of L bringing R ft back of L knee (ct 4, 5) hold (ct 6)
- 3 Repeat all of measure (1)
- 4
 - Step with L ft to L (ct 1)
 - cross R ft front (ct 2) stepping on R ft (ct 3)
 - step L ft to L (ct 4)
 - * step R ft to L ft (ct 5) close (ct 6)

Repeat from measure 1.

* For variation on the very last step do a deep knee bend and immediately straighten up, raising arms.

2. FISSOUNI

Formation: Holding hands at waist level in an open circle. Hands rise at 4th ct of each measure. Leaders hold handkerchiefs and twirl them as they dance. When in place on the step swing, sway body side to side. Rhythm is 9/8 counted 1, 2 - 1, 2 - 1, 2 - 1, 2, 3 or Q Q Q S

Measure: Fig. (A)

- 1 Turning slightly to R, and moving step to R with R ft (Q), step L ft crossing front of R (Q), step R ft to R (Q), raise L ft in LOD (S)
- 2 Moving in LOD, repeat measure (1) using opposite footwork
- 3 Same as measure 1
- 4 step L ft to L (Q), step R ft to R crossing back (Q), step L ft to L (Q), raise R ft in RLOD (S)

REPEAT MEAS. 1 - 4

Fig. (B)

- 1 facing LOD, take three bouncy steps R, L, R, (QQQ) lift R ft (S), while swinging L leg across R leg
- 2 facing LOD, take three bouncy steps bwd L, R, L (QQQ) lift L ft (S) while swinging R leg across L leg in RLOD