

Kléftes

Greece (Épiros)

The dance Kléftes (KLEHF-tess) takes its name from “Kléftes Veltistinoi” or “Oi Kléftes Oi Veltsisnoi,” a traditional song celebrating the Kléfts, poorly armed men who fought for independence from the Ottoman Empire. It is attributed ca 1797 to Regis Velertinis aka Regas Pheraios, a native of Velestino in Magnesia Thessaly. He was a Vlach intellectual, schooled in Zagori, who was active in the promotion of Greek interests, including the fight for freedom from the Ottomans. For the latter activity he was executed in 1798. This music, in 6/4 meter, is common to all of the many versions of the dance, a type of Tsámiko with four measure patterns. Here we describe five, identified locally with John Pappas, Stephen Kotansky (2) and Joe Graziosi (2). Because improvisation is common in Épiros, there are also many variations, one of which is described here. It is common for musicians to play medleys of two or more different types of dance music; the later dances are called yirisma (a turning). As is indicated here, the band often finishes with the Stá Dýo (Pogonísios) in 4/4 meter.

Music:	7-in record: DEEG-8008. Dances of Épirus, Greece.	6/4 meter
(partial list)	John Pappas and the Kalákos Band; Cassette: Ellinikí Horí, Greek Songs and Dances, Side B/4; Stephen Kotansky, Cassettes: Kola i Ora iz Belog Luka & Other Balkan Delights, GPP-003, SFDC '88, Side B/6; also, '96 N/S FD Teachers' Workshop, Side B/7. Joseph Kaloyanides Graziosi, Cassettes: Greek Mainland Dances, MFL '83, Side A/3; Greek Dances, '91, Side A/4; Dance Traditions of Northern Greece, '93, Side A/4; Traditional Dances of Greece Compilation, Russian Center '95, Side A/1; CDs: Elliniki Hori 1; Greek Dances (John Pappas), Band 9; Kolo Festival 2000, Band 20.	
Formation:	Open circle of dancers facing center in W-Pos, hands at shoulder height, elbows down and leader on the right. Traditionally the dance was for men; women might dance in a separate line or join the left end of the men's line.	
Steps and Styling:	Slow tempi and improvisation are common in Épirus. The steps in Kléftes are slow and stately, typical of the region. Movements and pauses are strong and deliberate, yet fluid. Men's steps are with generally larger movements than women's.	

Meas	6/4 meter	Pattern
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INTRODUCTION None, or begin with any four-meas musical phrase.

A: John Pappas (learned in an Athens Épriot club in 1970) - Taught at Mendocino Folklore Camp 1993-4.

- 1 Facing diag R of ctr, move in LOD with four steps, L,R,L,R (cts 1-4); swinging L ft in front of R ankle, slightly raise and lower ft twice (cts 5-6).

- 2 Step in RLOD (L,R,L,R), beginning L and stepping R behind L (cts 1-4); turning to face ctr, touch L to L and slightly back (ct 5); hold (ct 6).
- 3 Step fwd twd ctr on L, raising R ft behind L ankle (ct 1); hold (ct 2); step back on R (ct 3); step on L beside R (ct 4); step fwd twd ctr on R, raising L ft behind R ankle (ct 5); hold (ct 6).
- 4 Step back slightly to L on L (cts 1-2); moving to L, step on R behind L (ct &); step on L beside R (ct 3); step on R behind L (ct 4); touch L ft to L (cts 5-6).

B: Stephen Kotansky (learned in 1979 from Lefteris Drandakis) - Taught at Stockton Folk Dance Camp and Kolo Festival 1980; also taught by Dean and Nancy Linscott at UC Berkeley Festival 1982.

- 1 Facing ctr with R leg raised fwd, knee bent, pump R leg twice by bending and straightening L knee (cts 1-2); facing diag R of ctr, and moving in LOD, step on R,L,R,L (cts 3,4,&,5); while turning to face ctr, bring R leg around and raise fwd with knee bent (ct 6).
- 2 Repeat meas 1.
- 3 Bounce on L heel (ct &); turning to face slightly L of ctr, step on R in LOD (ct 1); raising L ft behind R knee, bounce on R heel (ct 2); turning to face ctr, step on L to L (ct 3); step on R behind L, bending knees (ct 4); step on L to L (ct 5); bending L knee, pump R leg in front of L leg (ct 6).
- 4 Facing diag R of ctr and moving in LOD, step R,L,R,L (cts 1,2,&,3); turning to face ctr, raise R leg, knee bent, in front of L (ct 4); with a circular motion, bring R ft abruptly behind L knee (ct 5); hold (ct 6).

Variation staged by Lykion Ton Ellinidon, a women's cultural organization, which originated in Athens in 1911 to preserve Greek traditions. This source was identified by Joe Graziosi.

- 1 Facing R of ctr, kneel on L with R ft fwd on floor (ct 1); bounce three times (cts 2-4); turning to face L of ctr, kneel on R with L ft fwd on floor (ct 5); turning to face R of ctr, kneel on L with R ft fwd on floor (ct 6).
- 2 Bounce (ct 1); keeping R knee bent and taking wt with a small step to R, bring L ft around CW (ct 2); straighten L leg and touch L heel fwd (ct 3); keeping leg straight, touch L to L (ct 4); step on L beside R (ct 5); rise with wt on L (ct 6).

C: Steven Kotansky (learned from Dimitris Barbaroussis) - Taught at Mendocino Balkan Camp 2002 and Razzmataz 2004.

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD with knees slightly bent, step on R (ct 1); step on L with instep beside R heel (ct &); step on R (ct 2); step on L across in front of R (ct 3); step on R (ct 4); swing L leg, knee slightly bent, across in front of R (ct 5); dip and recover by bending and straightening R knee (ct 6).
- 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 3 Facing ctr step fwd on R (ct 1); lift on R, raising L ft behind R knee (ct 2); step back on L (ct 3); facing slightly R of ctr, step back on R to R (ct 4); step on L slightly across R in LOD (ct 5); touch ball of R behind L or raise R ft behind L knee (ct 6).

- 4 Turning to face ctr, step on R to R (ct 1); step on L across in front of R (ct &); step back on R (ct 2); continuing to face ctr, step on L to L (ct 3); raise R leg, knee bent, in front of L (ct 4); with a circular motion, bring R ft abruptly behind L knee (ct 5); hold (ct 6).

D: Joseph Kaloyanides Graziosi, ca 1985.

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr with wt on L, bring R ft around fwd (ct 1); hook R heel across L above knee (ct 2); facing diag R of ctr and moving in LOD, step R,L,R,L (cts 3,4,&5); turning to face slightly R of ctr, begin to bring R leg fwd CCW (ct 6).
- 2 Repeat meas 1.
- 3 Step on R beside L (ct 1); swing L ft fwd (ct 2); bring L ft CCW around next to R calf (ct 3); step on L to L (ct 4); rock R onto R (ct 5); rock back onto L (ct 6).
- 4 Swing R leg fwd (ct 1); step on R to R (ct 2); rock onto L, beginning to swing R leg fwd (ct 3); swing R leg CCW in front of L (ct 4); swing R ft, CW around behind L calf (ct 5); hold (ct 6).

E: Joseph Kaloyanides Graziosi, Greek Folkdance and Folklore - Taught at Balkan Traditions, a series of workshops organized by Neil Sandler at the Slavonic Center in San Francisco, February 1995.

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr, step in LOD on R, L, R, L (cts 1,2,&3); swing R leg fwd in front of L (ct 4); swing R CW so that instep hooks behind L calf (ct 5); hold (ct 6).
- 2 Repeat meas 1.
- 3 Step on R to R (ct 1); raise L ft beside R calf (ct 2); step on L to L (ct 3); step on R behind L (ct 4); step on L to L (ct 5); raise R ft beside L calf (ct 6). (Alternative for cts 4 & 5: step on R across in front of L (ct 4); step back on L to L (ct 5).)
- 4 Step on R to R (ct 1); raise L ft beside R calf (ct 2); step on L to L (ct 3); step on R in front of L (ct &); step on L back to place (ct 4); swing R ft CW to hook behind L calf (ct 5); hold (ct 6). In meas 3 and 4, ft are usually raised slightly behind supporting calf, but may also be fwd and at a height varying from ankle to knee. Ct 2, meas 3 & 4 may be replaced by: step on L behind R (ct 2); step on R in place (ct &).

Repeat Kléftes to end of 6/4 music. Usually the band concludes with Stá Dýo (Pogonísios) in 4/4:

- 1 Facing ctr and moving in LOD, step on R (cts 1-2); step on L behind R (ct 3); step on R in LOD (ct 4).
- 2 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD, step on L across in front of R (cts 1-2); step back to R on R (ct 3); step on L across in front of R (ct 4).
- Repeat Stá Dýo to end of 4/4 music.