

CHAPTER 2

The zeibek rhythms and dances of Greece and Lesvos Island

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The Greek zeibek dances (*zeibekika*) derive directly from the Zeybeks of Minor Asia. Their dances spread to the Greek Islands of the Aegean coast, and then, later, after the Greeks left Asia Minor, to the rest of Greece. As it was an exclusively male dance it became a trademark for the males to dance and show their dancing abilities in public. In the 1970s it became acceptable for women to dance it too. When the phonograph recording units were available in Athens older musicians from Smyrni started to record traditional dances on record, while as a popular dance they started to record new zeibek dances from the '30s. Even today new zeibek dances are written by the newer generation of composers and are danced in clubs by the younger generation.

Rhythm patterns

The zeibek rhythm pattern types fall into two categories - 9/4 zeibekika and the 9/8 zeibekika. And these are divided into the zeibek dances of the 9/4 zeibekika and the 9/8, which include the faster karsilamas, aptalikos karsilamas and the kamilierikos.

The 9/4 Zeibekika

These are called *varia zeibekika* (heavy or very slow) or *vradika* [Kofteros – *Mytilinio Santouri*] (because they were danced by the old men in Lesvos who wore “*vra*ka” breeches). The vast majority of zeibekika dances have a rhythm pattern of 2+2+2+3, but some zeibekika have a pattern of 3+2+2+2.

Zeybekika of 9/4

These are divided into the plain zeibekiko and the “kofto”, Often these are called the old and new zeibekiko but actually both are old Zeybek rhythms. For ease we will demonstrate the 9/4 as 9/8.

The “old zeibekiko” or plain zeibekiko



Examples:

Aivaliotikos – trad. Asia Minor

Nychtose choris fengari – Apostolos Kaldaras

Prin to charama – Giannis Papaïoannou

The “kofto zeibekiko” or new zeibekiko



Examples:

Ematha pos eisai mangas – trad, Asia Minor

Known also as Zeybekiko of Izmir or in Turkey as **Agir**

Aydin Zeybek Havasi (Slow Zeybekiko of Aydin)**Zeibekiko of 3+2+2+2**

Very rarely found, this is only an example of a song played in Lesvos Island.

**Examples:**

Adramitiano Zeybekiko – trad. Asia Minor. Note that Adramiti is now Edremit a city on the Turkish coasts across from Lesvos Island

Pergamos – trad. Asia Minor, another city, 50km from Aivali (Ayvalik). A slightly different version is played in Turkey, with the same title "**Bergama**".

Kamilieriko

This has the following rhythm pattern:



It looks very much like the zeibekiko, but it is played at a higher speed, metronome = 150

Examples:

To vapori ap' tin Persia – Vasilis Tsitsanis

Ego dhen echo paei sto scholeio – Giorgos Mouflouzelis

Ta limania – Vasilis Tsitsanis.

Karsilamas (Antikristos) 9/8

Karsilamas is incorporated even today in many taverna songs, but only a few dancers can dance it, unless they have been taught in a dancing group. It has a rhythm pattern of 2+2+2+3 and a normal time signature of 9/8. Especially in Lesvos it is the trademark dance of the island; they are able to dance the normal 2+2+2+3 karsilama, the Aptaliko karsilama 3+2+2+2 and the Aidiniko karsilama (fast karsilama) 2+2+2+3. The karsilamas pattern has the same pattern as the zeibekiko, but it is played in a faster mode.

It is the following in the basic rhythm pattern we have the plain basic:



This is the traditional form

**Examples:**

Dhodheka chronon koritsi – trad, Asia Minor)

Anevaino skalopatia (or Komita) – trad, Asia Minor

Vale me stin angalia sou – Vangelis Papazoglou

San ta marmara tis polis – trad, Asia Minor

Aptallkos Karsilamas

This is a more "happy" zeibek dance that is from Asia Minor. The songs played in a regular taverna repertoire may include one or two such songs. Few people know how to dance it properly. Its rhythm pattern is 3+2+2+2 and sometimes, like the karsilama, it is unknown to musicians. It is an extremely popular dance in Lesvos.



Examples:

Aptalikos – trad, Asia Minor, from which it probably it took its name, the most popular of all,

Pino kai metho – Spiros Peristeris

Sto Faliro pou plenesai – Markos Vamvakaris.

In Lesvos Island the Aptalikos trademark song is the **Pingi**

It Turkey the variation of the Aptalikos is the **Apatilikos Havasi** or the **Zeybek Gordon**,

Aidikikos or Petachtos Karsilamas (jumping)

This karsilamas dance it the fastest of all and is danced in Lesvos Island



Examples:

Ayse (Traditional) also a very popular among the young generation of Lesvos who learn karsilama with addition of a chair. This song is also known because of the use of the chair (*karekla*) as "Kareklatos".

In Turkey the variation of Ayse is called Iskender Bogazi Karsilama

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