

KOPAČKA (KOH-potch-kah) = a female person who digs

CROSS-INDEX TERMS:

Derviško -viško, mome - the second song of the medley

Digging - Kopačka - a misspelt name used for *Dimna Juda, mamo*

Dimna Juda; Divna Juda - probably misspellings

Dimna Juda, mamo - the first song of the medley

Kapacka - probably a misspelling; **Kopačkata** - "the female digger"

DO NOT CONFUSE THIS DANCE WITH:

Derviško oro - same tune, different dance

Kopačka - a Serbian "gankino"

BACKGROUND:

The Macedonian song and dance ensemble "Tanec" exhibited *Kopačka* in about 1951 as a medley of two dances choreographed to two popular or folk songs of the 1930s and 1940s. The first dance was a deceptively mild anticipatory walking sequence to the song *Dimna Juda, mamo*. Sources do not tell who originally choreographed it, but I speculate that it was a simple stage pattern based on an expanded *u šest/kokonješte* pattern (see the 1993 *Problem Solver*). Dragan Petruševski choreographed the exuberant second dance (which follows more closely that *u šest* pattern) to the song *Derviško -viško, mome* from material brought to Tanec by "Stojče Zahariev and Nikola Arsov, village dancers from the Delčevo area." (Dunin and Višinski, 1995, *Dances in Macedonia*, p. 180) On the other hand:

The two songs are from the Delčevo area of East Macedonia. They were put together by a local dance group for the Oteševo festival in the early 50s and the Tanec ensemble later added the dances to their repertoire. (Trudy Israel, 1981, *Laguna Folkdance Festival*, referencing Dick Crum)

But there's more! On the EEFC list, Yves Moreau wrote about the history of *Kopačka* as told in *Makedonski Narodni Ora* (Gančo Pajtondžiev, 1973). Bob Leibman discussed again on May 22, 2012 the portions of that book that relate to *Kopačka*:

Note that [*Derviško -viško, mome*] and ... *Dimna Juda, mamo* are learned from a single dancer and musician, Nikolačko Ilčov Arsov, of s. Vetren, Pehčevo. These are the two melodies used by Tanec for their version of the 10 measure dance *Kopačka* - though the dances shown by Arsov for both melodies are in the 8 measure group. The dance *Kopačka* was made famous by the group "Kopačka" from the nearby village of Dramče.

I speculate that the medley we know as *Kopačka* consists of local variants of the 8-bar *u šest* dance family, combined and changed radically in length and rhythm in about 1950 for stage presentation. Other regions have appropriated the result, and many groups throughout the Balkans now perform *Kopačka*, or just *Derviško -viško, mome*, many of them only to *tâpan* (large drum) accompaniment.

Ivan "John" Filcich learned the *Kopačka* routine from members (allegedly from Atanas Kolarovski) of Tanec when that group toured North America in 1956. He presented the routine at the 1958 Kolo Festival in San Francisco, and it became a tremendous hit among the recreational international folk dancers who could perform the rapid footwork. Some dancers could not, however, and by 1967, teachers were using versions of *Dimna Juda, mamo* alone for their students (e.g., Geddes, 1967, *Folk and Square Dances*). Other former Tanec people such as George Tomov, Pece Atanasovski, and Stanimir Višinski later presented variations of the *Kopačka* medley in North America.

Kopačka means "female digger"; *kopač* is a male digger. Some say *Kopačka* is a miner's dance, and others say that it is a farmer's dance, with the movements of the dance depicting typical farmer's chores. Those who have performed similar movements in *čtvorno* and *grânčarsko* dances might question that "digger" story. RTB LP-22-2570 describes it as a ploughmen's dance to a shepherds' song. Ah, that eternal struggle between the sheep herders and the farmers (and the miners!). Guys, IT'S JUST A DANCE! Perhaps Tanec named it after the *Kopačka* dance ensemble -- "Hey, let's do that *Kopačka* dance!" I describe below the earliest, simplest version, with its early, simple variations.

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Kopačka (continued)

MUSIC and SOUND RECORDINGS:

Jugoton EPY-3009a, *Kopačka* = Folkraft 1565b = Festival 4001b = Express 66b
Monitor 444, *Macedonia*; A-5, *Dimna jada mamo* [sic, and no *Derviško -viško, mome*]
Fiesta 1362, *Reflections of Yugoslavia*; B-2, *Dimna Juda - Kopačka* = Atanas Kolarovski AK 008,
Songs and Dances of Yugoslavia; A-3, *Kopačka*
RTB 0000, *Sixteen Yugoslavian Dances: Vol. 4*; B-1, *Kopačka*

Instrumental, or using different songs:

AMAN 106, *Dances of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Iran*; A-4, *Kopačka*
Nevofoon 15016, *Joego Slavie Zingt en Danst*; A-5, *Kopačka*
RTB 1394 = Olympic 6156, *Makedonski Narodni Ora: Macedonian Folk Dances*; B-1, *Kopačka*
RTB 22-2570, *Traditional Folk Music Yugoslavia*; B-10, *Oro-Kopačka* and B-11, *Derviško, viško mome*
Folkways 80/3, *Songs and Dances of Yugoslavia*; A-6, *Kapacka* [sic]. Not the same two songs.

DIMNA JUDA MAMO - as learned from Tanec dancers in 1956 by Filcich and described by Virginia Wilder and Dick Crum (who said he learned it in Yugoslavia)

FORMATION: Tanec performed this dance in lines of 6 to 9 men in an open circle, holding belts, left arm over your neighbor's right arm, probably because they used that formation for their subsequent dance. Currently, men and women form an open circle (a curved line). The leader at the right end leads the line in circular and serpentine figures around the dance floor during *Dimna Juda, mamo*, and in a semicircular formation during *Derviško -viško, mome*, hopefully facing the audience. Forgot your belts? Hold your neighbors' hands down at sides. The free hands at the ends of the lines may wave handkerchiefs or be held on hips (for women) or at the small of the back (for men).

BARS ACTION

2/4 Introduction 1.

1- No action during the possible drum or gajda (bagpipe) introduction.

Introduction 2: Enter dancing area and promenade. Face to right of facing center.

1-16 Starting onto right foot, walk 32 steps forward and CCW around the dancing area once, ending facing the audience.

17-20 With feet shoulder-width apart or a bit wider and weight on both feet, sway to right (bar 17), sway to left (bar 18), repeat (bars 19-20).

Note: Introduction 2 is optional in some groups. Jump right to Introduction 3.

Introduction 3: Walk to right and "grapevine" to left. Face to right of facing center.

21-22 Starting onto right foot, walk 4 steps forward and CCW around the circle (cts 1,2,1,2).

23 Turning to face center, step to right onto right foot (ct 1), swing left foot across right foot (ct 2), with men lifting the left knee hip-high.

24 = 23 with mirror footwork (step-swing to left).

25 = 23 (step-swing to right).

26 Facing to left of facing center and starting onto left foot, walk forward and CW around the circle 2 steps (cts 1,2).

27 Turning to face to right of facing center and starting onto left foot, step back but still CW around the circle 2 steps (cts 1,2).

28-30 Turning to face center, step-swing to left (bar 28), to right (bar 29), and to left (bar 30).

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Kopačka (continued)

Alternate Introduction 3. Dunin and Višinski described this optional alternate figure.

21-28 = 21-28 above.

29 Step far back onto right foot, leaning a bit forward (ct 1), with left knee still forward, swing left foot to right ankle (ct 2).

30 = 30, above, standing up straight again.

Folkraft Introduction 3: "Grapevine" to right and left.

1-21 = 1-21 above (walk walk walk walk walk).

22 Turning to face to left of facing center and starting onto right foot, step back but still CCW around the circle 2 steps (cts 1,2).

23-30 = 23-30 above.

31- Dance bars 1-30 of the Introductions until the music pauses or stops. With vocal recordings, dance Introduction 2 during instrumental music and Introduction 3 during vocal music. Or, dance Introduction 3 continuously after dancing Introduction 2 once. Or, dance only Introduction 3. We don't care!

DIMA JUDA [sic] - described by Jack Geddes (1967, *Folk and Square Dances*, no source given)

FORMATION: Open circle, hands joined. Bend elbows to raise hands shoulder-high.

BARS ACTION

1 Walk to right and CCW around the circle 2 steps (cts 1,2).

2 Turning to face center, step to right onto right foot (ct 1), touch left foot to floor beside right toe (ct 2).

3 = 2 with mirror footwork (step-touch to left).

4-15 = 1-3, 5 times in all.

16 = 2 (step-touch to right).

17 Walk to left and CW around the circle 2 step (cts 1,2).

18-20 Step-touch to left (bar 18), step-touch to right (bar 19), step-touch to left (bar 20).

Dance bars 1-20 to the pause or end of the music.

KOPAČKA - DIVNA JUTA [sic] - described by Despović (1978, *Sixteen Yugoslavian Dances Created by Ciga i Ivon Despotović*, vol. 4), "based on the Tanec version."

FORMATION: Men form an open circle, hands joined and down.

BARS ACTION

1 Step to right and CCW around the circle onto right foot (ct 1), step behind right foot onto left foot, bending over to left (ct 2).

2-4 Turning to face to right and CCW around the circle and starting onto right foot, walk 6 steps forward and CCW around the circle (cts 1,2,1,2,1,2).

Dance bars 1-4 to the pause or end of the music.

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Kopačka (continued)

Lyrics - some words may have been misunderstood by the recorders. Use your imagination.

Dimna Juda, mamó grad gradila,
na planina, mamó, na Vlaina.

Što je kolje, mamó, pobivala,
se ergeni, mamó, za glavenje.
(za gledanje.)

Što je priče, mamó, zapričala,
(Što je prake, mamó, zaplikala)
(Što je kriče, mamó, zakričala)
se devojki, mamó, za maženje.

Što je straži, mamó postavila
postavila, mamó, se dežica
se dežica, mamó, pelenžinja.

Što je vrati, mamó, zatvorila
zatvorila, mamó, se nevesti
se nevesti, mamó, pod telove.

Dimna Juda (a wood nymph), oh mother, a town built,
on the mountain, oh mother, on Vlaina.

What for posts, oh mother, she drove,
were boys, oh mother, ready for engagement.
(ready for matchmaking, to be seen.)

What for a story, oh mother, she began to narrate,
(What for dust, oh mother, she began to knit/weave)
(What for screeching, oh mother, she began to screech)
all were girls, oh mother, ready for marrying.

What for guardtowers, oh mother, she set up
she set up, oh mother, all of them children
all children, oh mother, all babies.

What for doors, oh mother, she closed down
she closed down, oh mother, all were brides
all brides, oh mother, under wire fences.

Once upon a time, oh Best Beloved, an old crone named Dimna Juda lived on Mount Vlaina in Macedonia. Juda enjoyed killing folks to build her house with their bones, sort of like the IRS. One day, long, long years ago, she told the villagers who lived near Vlaina to deliver three men, three women, and three children so that she could build a house in compliance with local building codes. But the people offered gold, instead, so Dimna Juda took hundreds of folks and built an entire town, solving the housing shortage from both the demand and supply side simultaneously.

As with many folk tales, this one can have a deeper meaning. Dimna Juda can be viewed as a figure similar to the Pied Piper, but some folks say that the crone also can be seen as a metaphor for death. After all, when death finishes with us, we end up with nothing but bones.

DERVIŠKO, VIŠKO MOME - as learned from Tanec dancers in 1956 by Filcich and described by Virginia Wilder and Dick Crum (who said that he learned it in Yugoslavia). Dance each figure until your leader twirls his handkerchief. Twirling the handkerchief would be sufficient in a village in which all the dancers knew the sequence of figures. In America, however, some leaders prefer to shout commands such as '*Ajde!*' ('Let's go!') or pre-established cardinal integers greater than zero (in Macedonian, of course) such as *Jedan, Dva, Tri,*

BARS ACTION

- 2/4 1. Basic motif - "scissors". Face center (which should be toward the audience).
- 1 Hop to right on left foot (ct 1), step to right onto right foot (ct &), step beside right foot onto left foot (ct 2).
- 2 = 1 (hop-step-step to right).
- 3 Step beside left foot onto right foot, scissors-kicking left foot forward a bit (ct 1), scissors-kick onto left foot (ct &), scissors-kick onto right foot again (cts 2,&).
- 4 = 3 with mirror footwork (3 scissors-kicks starting left).
- 5 = 3 (3 scissors-kicks starting right).
- 6-10 = 1-5 with mirror footwork (2 hop-step-steps to left, and 3 scissors-kicks, starting onto left).

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Kopačka (concluded)

2a. Basic variation.

- 1-4 = 1-4 of the Basic motif (2 hop-step-steps to right, and 2 scissors-kicks, starting onto right).
5 Hop on left foot, touching right toe beside left foot (ct 1), hop on left foot, brushing right foot forward across left foot and turning right toes out (ct 2).
6 Scissors-kick, starting right.
7-8 Hop-step-step twice to left.
9 Hop on right foot, touching left toe beside right foot (ct 1), hop on right foot, brushing left heel forward across right foot with left toes out (ct 2).
10 Scissors, starting left.

2b. Basic variation. Described by Dunin as learned from Tanec, 1957.

- 1-4 = 1-4 of the Basic motif (2 hop-step-steps to right, and 2 scissors-kicks, starting onto right).
5 Step to right onto right foot (ct 1), hop on right foot, raising left knee a bit and brushing left heel forward and across right foot with left toes turned out (ct 2).
6-7 Hop-step-step twice to left.
8 Step to left onto left foot, swinging right heel back (ct 1), hop on left foot, swinging right foot forward (ct 2).
9-10 Scissors, starting right (bar 9), scissors, starting left (bar 10).

3a. In and out.

- 1-10 = 1-10 of the Basic motif, but bending forward "quite low" and dancing forward during bars 9-10.
11-20 = 1-10 of the Basic motif, but straightening up and dancing back during bars 11-12.

3b. In and out. Described by Dunin as learned from Tanec, 1957.

- 1-8 = 1-8 of Figure 2b, but bending forward from the hips during bar 8.
9-10 Starting onto right foot, run forward 6 steps, but bending forward "quite low" (cts 1,&,2, 1,&,2).
Note: Repeat this figure (or dance the next figure) moving diagonally back to right, or you'll end up in the orchestra pit.

As time went by, other variations appeared, reflecting (I speculate) artistic changes in the Tanec repertoire and marketing dynamics among dance teachers in America and in Europe. The figures presented above are the earliest five documented in the Society Archives.

Typical lyrics:

Derviško -viško, mome, Derviško dušo.
(Derviško -viško, mome, Derviško -viško.)

Rob će ti bidam, mome, rob će ti bidam,
rob će ti bidam, mome, vreme tri godini.

Dali e bilo, mome, dali e bilo,
dali e bilo, mome, kako što beše?

Samo da ti vidam, mome, samo da ti vidam,
samo da ti vidam, mome, beloto liko.

I da go vidiš, ludo, i da go vidiš,
i da go vidiš, ludo, fajde si nema.

Derviška -viška, girl, Derviška, dear.
Derviška -viška, girl, Derviška, -viška.)

Your slave I will be, girl, your slave I will be,
your slave I will be, girl, for three years.

Has it ever happened, girl, has it ever happened,
has it ever happened, girl, as it used to be?

Only that I see you, girl, only that I see you,
only that I see you, girl, your fair face.

And if you see it, crazy guy, and if you see it,
and if you see it, crazy guy, it will get you nothing.

End of **KOPAČKA**.