

## Elegiac Dirges and Psalmody Accompanied by Wind Instruments

The Turcoid nations of the Middle East are classed as a firm part of the Ural-Altai family but their original **prosodic folklore** is utterly different from that of Uralids and Mongolids. Kazakh poetry abundantly teems with poems of heroic epic but this is a borrowing from northern cattle-hunting and cattle-breeding neighbours, who rode through their seats in large numbers. Their remote ancestors in the Near East cultivated a peculiar tradition of their own, they composed **gnomic elegiac distiches** (from Ancient Greek *δίστιχον* and Latin *distichon* 'couplet, poem in two verses'), meditative and melancholic poems in couplets. In their original shape elegiac couplets were unrhymed pairs of verses associated only by parallelisms in syntactic structure.

The nomadic fishermen in the Near East were ancient settlers, who had come from regions north of the Euxine Sea. This was a prehistoric homeland of Tungids and acted as the starting-point of several diasporas that scattered their clansmen in different directions. Their ancient colonisations date from time immemorial, but some theories specify possible affinity to the Aurignacian and Levalloisian culture, which exhibited a strong inclination to the habitations of lake-dwelling fishermen. This area has remained in possession of their remote descendants up to now, although they lost their original ethnic and linguistic identity. They now speak Russian but medieval maps remembered them as nationalities affiliated with the Volga Bulgars, Kipchaks and Polovtsians.

Their southward stream moved to the Levant as the nation of Palestinians (the biblical Philistines), while their southwest plantation ended in the Balkans as the seafaring race of Pelasgians (*Pelasgiotes*). Palestinians occupied river shores of the Near East as fishermen wandering southward along the lakes formed by the Great Depression in East Africa. It spanned from the Levant to East and South Africa. The ancient Levantine seats are now assigned to the Mousterian-Levalloisian culture (110 000 BC) and its southward African travels to the Aurignacian people (90 000 BC).

The Levalloisian horizon probably witnessed the split of Palaeolithic flake-tool cultures into Tungusoid lake-dwellers with tepee tents and Turcoid marshland tree-dwellers. Archaeologically speaking, the first offshoot corresponded to Leptolithic industry that excelled in producing long prismatic knives. The second offshoot comprised Microlithic industry focused on manufacturing small triangular and trapezoid flakes inserted into shafts of wooden sabres. The earliest predecessors of Turcoids can be found in **microblade cultures** (70,000 BC), whose heritage can be tracked in tree-dwelling tribes in India (Munda, Urali, Veddahs) and Australia noted for Turcoid *r*-plurals. Their much younger kinsmen with Turcoid *r*-plurals are

Urdu people and Dravidian Tamils who imported grey burnished pottery to the Indian subcontinent (11,000 BC).

Waterside fishermen were surrounded by stalks of reed, and as a result, they learnt to cultivate monodic music accompanied by flutes made out of cane and reeds. Greek tribes of Pelasgian extraction worshipped the sun god Apollo and played auletic hymns to his homage. Their contemporaries knew them as the Sea Peoples or the Pirates of the Southern Seas. Their tribes, mentioned in archives of the pharaoh Ramesses III, may be divided into two ethnic groups: on one hand, lake-dwellers adoring Apollo, and on the other hand, seaside cliff-dwellers venerating Hermes. The first family included the nationalities identified as *Denyen* – *Danaoi* – Danaids, *Peleset* – Pelasgians – Philistines and *Sherden* – Sardinians. The second group comprised *Teresh* - Tyrrhenians – Etruscans, *Shekelesh* – *Siculi* – *Sicilians* and *Lukka* – Lycians.<sup>1</sup> The former were famous for playing the two-pipe flute *aulos* or *syrinx*, the favourite instruments of Apollo. The latter played Pan's pipe composed of five or more pieces, known as the favourite instrument of Hermes' son Pan. Flute instruments were remarkable for high tones and were played by one individual musician. Their mainland relatives could find neither cane nor reed rushes, and so they had to do with a makeshift, with the wind instrument referred to as the horn (Latin *cornu*).

**Elegiac auletics** released sad nostalgic melodies in high tones. This is why they were suitable for bemoaning the dead warriors at funerals after battles. The etymology of *ἐλεγεία* stems from the Armenian expression *elegn* for 'cane'. The melancholic mourning mood is scented from all Mohammedan music and chants sung by muezzins on the top of minaret towers. The Greek elegiac *distichon* is associated with the syllable-counting couplet rhyme scheme *a-a-b-b* and Greek elegies were usually versed in hexameters and pentameters. Both are probably undue additions, the earliest archetype was represented by the Old Babylonian epic *Enuma Elish*, *Avesta* and Greek elegies where the rhymed scheme was missing.

The earliest stage of folk song prosody can be detected in the lake-dwelling nations of East Africa (Xhosa, Zulu, Swahili). Their praise songs are based on **syntactic parallelisms** associating pairs of verse lines. It is a rhetoric figure of 'the biblical *parallelismus membrorum*'<sup>1</sup>, which was sought also in the Karelian epic *Kalevala*. Karelians are regarded as a Uralic nation but represent a progeny of the mythical arctic Hyperboreans remembered as a brotherly

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<sup>1</sup> Eliezer D. Oren, (ed.): *The Sea Peoples and Their World: A Reassessment*. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology, 2000.

<sup>1</sup> Roman Jakobson: *Language in Literature*. Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 146.

people by Greek Pelasgians. Their eastern tribesmen were the Tungus, who spread parallelistic versification to the epic of the Far East.

Wind instruments (aerophones) were typical of all Turcoid nations and their use is documented by the stone stelae with the drinking horn (*rhyton*) stuck behind the belt. The Slavic nations called such statues standing on hilltops *kamennaya baba* 'stone grandmother' although their correct etymology derives from Turkish *abba* 'father, warrior'. Some stelae had a carved inscription with an elegiac *distichon* called **epitaph** (Greek *ἐπιτάφιος* 'funeral oration').

Extract from P. Bělíček: *Systematic Poetics II. Literary Ethnology and Sociology*. Prague 2017, pp. 104-106