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# My Heart Simers Up Like a Cauldron: (A Backdrop of the Elegiac Poetry in the Balochi Literature)

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#### Abstract

The elegy is approximately found in all nations of the world. A few nations have practiced it as the part of literature, and developed it as the essence of their classic literature, but the other nations have yet adopted it orally. The elegy is considered to be an eminent part of the Balochi folk literature and society. Elegy is the part of folk literature, which was brought into written shape during the British era as well as after the formation of Pakistan. The paper illustrates all aspects of the Balochi elegy, its written and unwritten history and also its concepts among the Baloch people.

Keywords: Elegy, Balochi elegiac poetry

#### Introduction

The origins of elegy involve poetic form and subject matter. The word elegy derives, the dictionary tells us, from the Greek elegos, meaning 'mournful song' but the earliest surviving examples are not funereal. Elegies written in the Greece in the seventh century BC by poets such as Archilochus, Callinus and Tyrtaeus dealt with war and love, offered philosophical advice or sent good wishes to travelling friends. These poems came to be known as elegies because they were written in elegiac couplets which alternate dactylic hexameters and pentameters. They were traditionally accompanied by the flute or the oboe-like two piped aulos. As Martin L. West observes, elegy merely denotes a large body of verse in which the poet spoke in his own person often to a specific addressee, and in the context of a particular event or state of affairs. West argues that the sheer diversity of subject matter makes it unlikely, the poems were originally called elegies, because the ancient Greeks named forms according to the occasions for which they were written, for example paean or hymenaeus. The earliest elegies had no name because they had no single function. We can also point to the collection of elegies Lyde by Antimachus who flourished around 400 BC.

It was named after the poet's mistress and in it he attempted to find consolation in her death by working through a series of examples derived from methodological stories of unhappy love affairs. The Greek poems that have had the greatest influence on funeral elegy are those of the third century BC poets Theocritus, Bion and Moschus. Theocritus generally acknowledged as the creator of pastoral poetry, wrote a series of 'edullia' literally, little poems' but commonly called idylls. These idylls, also known as eclogues, establish not only a range of characters and imagery such as nymphs and shepherds or singing and weaving but also the close relation between pastoral and elegy, hence the term pastoral elegy.

Theocritus's 'first Idylls' begins with thyrsis, shepherd meeting a goatherd at noon. They praise each other's piping and the goatherd persuades Thyrsis to sing ' The Afflection of Daphnis' for the prize of an elaborately decorated cup.

The idea of elegy as a manner continued into the Romantic period and beyond but with an important modification. Coleridge was able to able to remark that, "Elegy is a form of poetry's natural to the reflective mind. It may treat of any subject, but it must treat of no subject in itself; but always and exclusively with reference to the poet. As he will feel regret for the past or desire for the future, so sorrow and love become principle themes of elegy. Elegy presents everything as lost and gone, or absent and future." (Coleridge, 1835: 268)

The Origin of the elegy as a literary form is obscure. Even the Alexandrian Grammarians could not decide who had been its inventor. Some suggested Archilochus others Mimnermus, Aristotle in his dialogue 'On Poets' seems to have favored Callinus. Those were obviously the authors of the earliest elegiac poems known to the Alexandrians.

"Quis tamen exigos elegos emiserit auctor grammatici certant, ET adhuc sub iudice lis EST.""But the critic's dispute who was the first to produce slender elegies and the controversy has not yet been settled". The word 'elegy' appears several times in the lyrical passages of Euripidian tragedies where it means invariably a ' song of mourning'. One should remember the unparalleled monody of Hector's wife lamenting her husband in elegiac couplets. In fifth century Greek usage this seems to have been the accepted meaning of the term. Hence, later grammarians derived their fanciful etymology 'to cry woe'. In Rome this etymology was accepted by many. Marcus Terentius Varro, the great Roman scholar and friend of Cicero compares "elegia and nenia", the latter being a dirage, combining lamentation and praise, sung at Roman funerals to flute accompaniment. The same instrument accompanied the early Greek elegy. The Greek elegy of the archaic and the classic period embraces a large number of themes. Semonides of Amorgus wrote a history of in two books of elegaics which are lost. An elegy on the shortness of life and the vanity of human illusions, attributed toSemonides of Cesus, is probably of his work. (Goerg Luck, 1969: 25)

In Arabic elegy is called Rithā or "marthiyya" was intended to memorialize and eulogize someone who had recently died in earliest times, that often implied death in tribal conflict or as a result of one of the many ways by which desert life could be an agent of imminent death. The large quantities of elegies composed by women that have been recorded suggest that this communal function was the particular province of women poets, the poems themselves being part of the burial ritual. The two most celebrated names in the early history of this type of poem are Tumadir bint Amr renowned under the name of Al-Khansa and Layla Al-Akhyaliyya.The elegy will often end with words of advice for the tribe, and, if the incident is the part of a continuing feud, with calls for retribution against those who carried out the foul deed (Allen, Roger, M.A, 2000: 93-94).

Through the agency of the elegy composed by the patronized poet a family loss becomes a communal tragedy, and yet the presence of the enlightened Muslim ruler is a continuing source of consolation. The sense of the disaster becomes more intense, needless to say, when the very fabric of the Islamic society is attacked. In 871 for example, Al-Basrah, the garrison city and port in southern Iraq that had become a major intellectual center, was devastated by the Zanj, an army slave laborer. Inb Al-Rūmī (d. 896) composed an elegy bemoaning the fall of the city and the massacre of the inhabitants. During the ensuing centuries to fulfil this role as public as a public record of the Community's direst moment. Ibn Al-Mujawir (d1204) recounts the fall of the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem to the Crusaders. (**Ibid, : 96**)

### The Balochi Elegiac Poetry

It's conspicuous that the elegy is regarded as an eminent style of the oral literature. It has its own approach in Balochi, which is different than that of other oral literatures of the world. In Sayad Ganj, the elegy has been defined as "a song of lamentation which is sung over the death of a person".

Mōtk o mōdagē pirbandān Durrēn laččahān sindān I'll recite an elegy and dirage (To) pluck up the pearled poems. (**Sayad Hashmi, 2000: 785-786**).

If we look into the Balochi classic literature, the elegy has been the part of it, but by the passage of time, the elegy vanished itself, as the other classic literatures, and we have a rarity of elegies except a little bit "*motk Laččha* (*elegic poems*).

#### (Sayad Hashmi, 1986: 115)

In 1884, Mansel Longworth Dames in his book "The Popular Poetry of the Baloches", has illustrated only one elegy on the demise of Mir Jamāl Khān which is consisted of 164 verses, in which the elegy praises the generosity of Mir Jamāl Khān Leghārī, narrated by Panjū Khān Banglānī. Here some verses of the said elegy are pointed out.

Hazrat Sohrān Rasūlā yād k<sup>h</sup>anāņ Yād k<sup>h</sup>anāņ Pīrā, p<sup>h</sup>allavā shāhīg<sup>h</sup>ā girān Man dī gōņ pākēn K<sup>h</sup>āmdā ardāsē k<sup>h</sup>anāņ Loţt<sup>h</sup>o īmān bach<sup>h</sup> gōň shēr dīd<sup>h</sup>aghāň Bashk gunāhāň ma'AF kanay kullēň bandaghāň Sēzdamī samēň ummtē k<sup>h</sup>ōţāēň zawān Jūfo ē j<sup>h</sup>ateň droheň p<sup>h</sup>a dīn-brād<sup>h</sup>arāň P<sup>h</sup>ar dafā īmān lōţit<sup>h</sup>ā Shāhēň Qādirā, Do jahāň bashkāň mārā p<sup>h</sup>a razik<sup>h</sup>ēň dilā Mālikā ardāsē k<sup>h</sup>ut<sup>h</sup>ē Jāmēň Shāhirā, Sayyad auliyā rāh saxī āňhī bā churā. (Dames, Longworth: 1988: 105)

Let me commemorate the holy Sohrān and the Prophet, Let me celebrate the Pīr, and lay aside all wickedness, And let me make my supplication to the Pure Creator. I have asked according to my faith for a son with milky eyes. Forgive my sins, and pardon thy all slaves. In this thirteenth century mankind have false tongues, And show greed and deceit towards their brothers in the faith. With my mouth I have sought favour from my King and Creator, Who bestows upon me the two worlds with willing heart? I have made my petition to the Lord Jām Shāh,

## To the Sayid and saints (walīs) to be bountiful to his children.

Sayad Hashmi writes that "one of the eminent elegies which has ever been narrated by the elegist is the elegy of Mulla Bahādur Omarzaī. He had three sons, Dād Karīm, Tāj Muhammad and Yousuf. Mulla Bahādur Omarzaī loved his son Dad Karim very much and he messaged to a respectable family of Mand for betrothal of his beloved on his own consent. They accepted the engagement, but demanded a huge amount for dowery. Mulla Bahādur Omarzaī was a poor man and he could not fulfill the demand.after the passage of time, when Dād Karīm came to know that the said girl is going to be married to an affluent man of the area, he sowrn in not to drink the water of that area and left the area to India. When he didn't come back home after a long time, the second son of Mulla Bahādur Omarzaī owed to bring his brother back from India. When both sons of Mulla Bahādur Omarzaī didn't return, he narrates a "Zahīr laččha" in remembrance of his both sons. When the third son of Mulla Bahādur Omarzaī listened the "Zahīr laččha" of his father in remembrance of his brothers, he also sweared to go India to search out his brothers.

All of a sudden, someone informed the news of the death of his son Dād Krīm; he became much grieved and narrated this elegy.

"Dād Karīm, like the brave lion, The Sword tied back like a biting Scorpion And left away for a long journey While he reached in India And drank the bitter cup of death there, hearts of those mothers are praiseable where, there sons are soldiers in India and (are )companions of Hindus and Sindhis, mothers for their children and children for their mothers, Cried in midnights, like a dove (Sayad Hashmi, 1986:117)

The Elegy is at a bare minimum performed in the nations throughout the globe and each nation is recognizable relating to this term. But the Balochi elegiac poetry renders a...... The Balochi Elegiac poetry has been a part and parcel of the Balochi Oral literature from centuries. The recitation of elegies has been a part of Baloch culture and tradition throughout the history.

Sardar Khan Gishkori opines that "the women of deceased family used to display feats which were no less than barbarism. They used to beat their heads with stones, tear their garments, and sprinkle ashes and dusts on their naked heads. They profusely followed the Arab custom of mourning which was prevalent in the Days of Ignorance." (Gishkori, 2010: 544)

The custom of mourning, as in the case today, may last for three days within the family. The women of the bereaved family and the clan assemble in the house of the departed soul and recite dirges (elegies) till tears stream fast and full of their eyes. The scene may continue to the exhaustion of their eyes and energy. Offerings are given on the third day after the burial. Beside such customs, no special attention is paid to the graves of the dead. The graves of the nomad or desert Baloch are marked only by cairns or flat flags of stone. In some cases, a tall headstone distinctly marks the grave. The dirges thus recited differ in the text and composition. At the demise of a tribal chief, his bravery and bounty, sword and noble steed, generosity and genius were praised.

He further writes that the women amass in the bereaved quarters in a mourning dress and form an encircle while the women of dead sit inside and the coterie mourn with one voice reciting patent funeral songs which gives a picture of the house, spear, sword assemblies, gay parties, love episodes, beauty and strength, generosity and valor, wars and exploitations etc. generally commencing with the adventures of *Chākar*, *Bībagr*, and sometimes of *Hōt Punnū*.

In the case of mourning a dead woman, her household affairs, severe management, needle work, beauty, simplicity, her male progeny's worth and value and her parent's qualities are praised. In the case of a bachelor or a virgin they are quite different. The term for this mourning and reciting elegies extends for 3 days and the Arab custom is followed copiously.

In the case of virgins, her beauty and brevity, chastity and charms and her fidelity in the service of her parents, brothers and sisters are recounted. And that of a married woman, her chaste character, manners and managements, her needlework, care and cautions constitute the main theme. The entire elegiac poetry that we have at our disposal has been composed by anonymous poets of the past, all of whom perhaps regarded elegy as their special prefecture. As a rule the Balochi elegy has been very simple. The energy of passion and noble simplicity of style marks a clear distinction between elegiac poetry and the rest of the Balochi composition. In fact to recite the elegies with an intensity of feeling could only be the business of women. (Ibid: 545).

Dr. Badalkhan writes that "in some parts of Balochistan, especially in the north, until recently, mourning, mostly of men but also of women if they

belong to an important family, included singing elegies, in some places accompanied by drums if it was the funeral of a tribal chief."(Badalkhan, Oral Tradition 18/2 (2003): 230)

The Balochi elegy demonstrates the thorough psyche of love and attachment to their loved ones. There are different ways to express the elegies on the demise of different persons by age. The enthusiasm and passions describe that much the Baloch love their inmates, relatives and friends. On the departure of an infant or newborn child, a Baloch mother would be so grieved and distressed, and laments all the day without eating and drinking. She expresses this a huge loss in her life, because she carries her child out in her womb for approximately nine months, and tolerates pain and tenderness. The loss of this child lets the mother mourned and lamented. She articulates her catharsis and expresses the recollections of her child and says:

"Gwānzagī tiflāň māt sahŗēn ant Manī dilā heč kas na sahŗīnīt Māt parā čukkā, čukk parā māsā Čō kapōtī kūkū kutag pāsā Dil manī jōš kārīt čō lūhīe lahđā Zahīr manā zūrān kāyāň taī kabr ay sarā Ča sarūna hišt o pādūnā gil ē Taī sarūn ay hišt manī dil ay darmān nabāňt Manī dil ay darmān taī dap ay pullēň kandagāňt" (Int: Bibi Hūrān: 15<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2012: Turbat)

### **Translation:**

Mothers soothe the cradled infants; (But) none can soothe my heart; Mother for the child and child for the mother; Cried in midnights, like a dove. My heart boils up like a simmered cauldron, (When) thy recollections take me to thy grave, A brick from thy head-side and a clay from thy feet-side, The bricks on thy head-side do not soothe my heart, The remedy of my heart is thy flowering smiles.

On the death of a brother, a sister laments with sorrow and grief, expressing the bygone fantastic days at home. She considers her brother a lion, and the death of her brother the death of a hero. She further articulates that Almighty God never takes away brothers from their sisters, because this is difficult to endure the moments of their life and death. The following elegy represents such sort of a picture.

"Murtagant šēr o būtagant kabrānī mayār Na murtgant māt o na murtagant šēranī gwahār Allāh makant bēbrātēň gwahārānā Brāt gwahārānī āhinēň pall ant Māt pa pussagāň hayrāt ant Gwahār pa nōk barōtēň brātāň Kas pa kasā bazzag na bīt Bazzag bebant māt o gwahār Tāň zindagāň apsōz kanāň Gōň naryānī taylāň bastagāň"

### (Int. Rec: Sahtī: 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. 2012: Turbat)

Translation:

The lions have died and took shelter in the graves Neither the mothers nor the sisters of the lions demised God may never leave sisters without brothers The brothers are the iron-claded walls of their sisters Mothers sacrifice for their offsprings And the sisters for their juvenile brothers No one laments for the others If laments, may the sisters and mothers I mourn, till the last breath I've been tied to stallion chains.

Another elegy which shows that the demise of an inmate pours up salts over the injuries of the relatives and make them grieved. In this regard, the following verses confirm grievances and upset.

Azagēň tapp pa darmān o dawā drāh nabant Ey hamā datagēň soġāt ant ke bēgwāh nabant Wārtagiš kaddahēň čammānī subakkēň tīr e Aňčō wašwāb int dāň kyāmatā āgāh nabīt (Nasreen Baloch, 2009:.70) Translation: The unsullied injuries are not nursed by medicines

These are the gifted rewards, which cannot be vanished

They have consumed the light arrows of the cup-like eyes He's in sound sleep, doesn't wake up till the doomsday.

### For old persons:

Ohe man bātāň gōň watī bahtā Zurtag nasībā o kismat ay bahrā Baht manī sīmurgā na tarrēntag Āxirī mullā ā ham na tarrēntag Bahtā manā rāh e nēmgwarā drōhit Bahtā ča gwarbāskā šikist wārtag Ey nasīb ay o kismat ay kār e (Int. Rec: Ganj Khātūn: 15<sup>th</sup>, Dec. 2012: Turbat)

## Translation:

Alas! Me with my luck The luck has taken me, with the part of fate The Phoenix hasn't turned away my Luck The last clergy hasn't turned it away too The luck deceived me on the midway The luck has broken up from the sidearm This is the routine of luck and fate

Love is a universal truth and actuality and it is performed throughout the globe as well as the lamentation. Occasionally, we have seen that the lovers mourn a lot on the demise of their beloved. This elegy is the true picture of a lover and beloved. In this elegy, how the husband laments over the death of his wife and how his relatives become so grieved.

Hajjī hājī e ke pākēň nēk jan ay Mā tharā hajjā dīdā gōň phullēň rayţhawā Pākēň Fātima bād har dam thaī wāharā Phullāň šuštī gōň wadī šoxēň nokarā Manī bānukh grāňmahδawā wadī khull e tahā Bāňđawā misk o sar čhēdēň zawār Zind gwāzēňthā gōň ōšīšēň gubā Na pa drōy na rū riyāī gwašāň Māň janāň Laylā o gwahārāň pērōzay it Thāl o kūdī māň jahāz e jāh khanāň Māň tahārāň čhōň girōxī čīlk janāň Surx rawāň hizm mazan pāňdēň mēŗawāň Mahōle khan ay azh hamāň aršī khōkhirāň Mahōlā gōň šafī o xāsawāň bazār kan e Bānukhā sraōδ kanant kauθrī jō e sarā Bānukhā šōδāň phašk o sarīā nōx kanant Bānukh ay nyā $\delta$  až hākimī ganjāň gēštir int Bānukh ay nām až nāfayī miskāň ziyāda ant nāfayī miskā o až suhrēň thaňgawā ziyāda ant thangawāň mayl, bānukhā mayl mān na'int larzita zardēň dīyar tahārīēň šafā bānukh e lađđā thānahī nō*§e šam khafā* thānahī nō*ðe šam khafā hīrthī šanzalā* vak dame wavlum nava dērēň ātka nī may niyāmā khaptayāň dīrpāňdēn dayār malkamī $\theta$  di $\theta$ ēň o šaf thīre ja $\theta$ ēň šaf thīre jaθēň gōň naptēň tūpakā gind navāň ranjay may šafānī šafčirāy heč bare thaī hātirāň āp dard baňd navī $\theta$ (Gishkori, Sardar Khan 2011:548-551)

### **Translation**:

She is a pious lady or a Haji While performing the pilgrimage, We have seen thee dressed in clean elegant clothes: May the holy Fatima, be thy support always, And send thee flowers through her swift and steady maid servant: With sedate demeanor, our mistress would alive in her house. Her shelf of stone would contain musk and scents, She passed her life, attired always in white and clean clothes; It is not asserted through flattery or falsehood, That among the women she was Layla, And turquoise amongst her sisters; Her trays and cups for drinking were so numerous That a ship could be fully loaded, (and the utensils) would Glitter like the nightly flash of lightening; Her heirs feel honored in huge assemblies (because of her chaste character). (Likewise) her husband feels proud in the gatherings of kins; A dromedary bedecked with riding saddle and Pannier descends from the heavenly clouds, Adorn with carpet and a white sheet of cloth;

They shall wash the corpse of the mistress With water of the spring of paradise, Fair ladies will bathe her, and dress the corpse With new shirts and shawl;

Association with her was more soothing and graceful Than the glittering scenes of the kingly treasures, Her sweet name was more fragrant Than the fragrance of musk;

Even musk had no comparison with her name, Which glittered more than the red gold, Gold might have some impurities, But the name of the mistress remains ever pure;

A little before sunset they carried the corpse for Burial in the dark of night, Let a great cloud shower drops of rain on the Caravan of the mistress, A cloud that should rain with drizzling drops;

We couldn't endure thine absence for a moment, Now between thee and us, lies a distant unknown bourn;

Had we seen the Angel of Death, We would have fired at him a musket ball With our deadly musket;

Thou, the firefly of our dark nights, do not be vexed, The gates of thine house will be kept open For thine associates (in thy absence too)

In the Baloch society, the sisters mourn for their brothers, because the sisters consider them as the moral fiber of themselves. In the Baloch society, when a sister hasn't a brother, she considers herself as one of the unluckiest persons of the world. In this regard, on the bereavement of the demise of their brothers, the sisters mourn a lot. These verses correspond to the love of the beloved brothers. Such verses are narrated in a Corus.

Har wahd kāyaňt nōd sipāhānī

Brāt nayatk ant šūm gwahārānī Corus: par watī rāj ay wājahā Man dilā dārāň Dil manā naylīt Dil manā brāt ay trānagā gījīt

Corus: par watī rāj ay wājahā

# **Translation**:

The breeze of water dews always come (But) the brothers of unlucky sisters never came Corus: for the master of our nation I want to cover come my heart, but vain. The heart makes me remember the memories of my brother. (Int. Rec: Sahtī: 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. 2012: Turbat)

# For an aged person:

Oh'e man bātāň gōň watī bahtā Zurtag nasība o kismat ay bahrā Baht manī Sīmurgā na tarrēňtag Āxirī mullahā ham na tarrēňtag Bahtā manā rāh ay nēmgwarā drōhit Bahtā cha gwarbāskā šikist wārtag Ē nasīb ay o kismat ay kār ē Int. Rec: Sahtī: 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. 2012: Turbat

# **Translation:**

The luck and part of fate has taken me The Simurgh hasn't turned aside my luck Even the last mullah hasn't (turned it away) too The luck has deceived me on the midway My luck was defeated from the arm-side This is the game of luck and fate. Apart from this, the Baloch poets have compiled a lot of elegiac poetry narrated in different parts of Balochistan. A few elegies are compiled and preserved but the bulk of the Balochi elegiac poetry is still in oral form, which is performed on the death of a family member. The areas where media has still not penetrated, preserved the elegiac verses, but in the cities where the penetration of media has rooted the elegiac tradition up.

The lamentation of Bālāch over his brother Dōdā is very famous in the Baloch folk-loric history. Bālāch was a kid when his brother Doda was

killed in the battle. He swore to take the revenge of his brother from his enemies. He struggles to incarnate  $D\bar{o}d\bar{a}$ . When he kills a man from the clan of the enemy he is psychologically obsessed to destroy Bivargh and reincarnate  $D\bar{o}d\bar{a}$ . In the eyes of his mind,  $D\bar{o}d\bar{a}$  is of course, re-incarnated but as the same fallen hero bathed in his own blood, and back to his settlement he finds himself dejected and depressed with the devastation inflicted by the enemy upon his clan and laments with others and sings:

Doda, thy lordly armor, The harness and knightly weapons, Thy feathered arrows the plunderers divided The women in the camp are scattered. Mothers mourn for their sons Sisters for their brave brothers Mothers-in-law for their sons-in-law Tears of blood they shed on their shoulders, And bodices which were wet with their grief. And: I see the bay mares running loose, The women go to earn their bread in dreams. No lovers come to comb their hair. And spread it over their shoulders. My lordly body grows hot At the sight like the log of *Kahīr-wood* (charcoal) Like wax, it melts and wastes away In its soft outer garments. I sit and fight with my heart that answers me, "Bālāch is a tiger, a hailstorm."(Hakim Baluch, 2012: 42)

Apart from this, a lot of elegies have been narrated for the beloved ones. Elegy recited by Sardar Abdul Karim Mirwari on the death of Faqir Muhammad the chief of Bezenjo. He was the governor of Kech in 1832-1874 and he died in 1880 at Kech.

Mulla Gwahram is considered to be one of the greatest poets in the Baloch history and he is the contemporary of Mullah Fazil and Mullah Qasim. Gwahrām became grieved the death of his newly spouse whom he loved immensely. The sudden and untimely death of his better half shocked him thoroughly. His brother Mulla Murad who was also a great poet orated an elegy on the death of his brother Mullah Gwahram. (Rahim, Ishaq, 2012: 80)

#### Conclusion

The elegy has been the part of Balochi folk poetry. The Balochi Oral Literature, in fact, has come in the written shape in the mid nineteenth century, and the Europeans collected them from different parts of Balochistan. But most of the collections carried out after the foundation of Pakistan, when the Baloch writers felt that their folk is being lost.

Now much has been written in the Balochi oral literature, especially on the Balochi elegy. It is also a fact; the most of the elegies are yet to be collected. A bulk of elegies has been lost, because of the nomadic life of the people of Balochistan. Un-educatedness and illiteracy left the composition of the elegies uncompleted. There is still an expectation to collect the elegies, what the people still narrate them by heart.

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