

“YOU CAN GET NEW CHILDREN. . .”

*Turkish and other parallels to ancient Greek ideas in
Herodotus, Thucydides, Sophocles and Euripides*

BY

ROBERT S. P. BEEKES

1. ‘You can get new children. . .’: Thuc. II 44,3.

1.1 Thucydides relates how, at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War, the dead were officially buried in Athens. He gives at length Pericles’ funeral in which he praises Athens and Athenian democracy, which is rightly regarded as one of the high-points of human civilization. Here we find the well-known passage where, trying to console the parents of the dead (τούς τοκέας... παραμυθήσομαι), he says (II 44,3): ‘You should also take courage from the hope of other children, if you still have the age to get children.’ (Καρτερεῖν δὲ χρὴ καὶ ἄλλων παιδῶν ἐλπίδι, οἷς ἔτι ἡλικία τέκνωνσιν ποιῆσθαι). This idea baffled the modern reader, all the more because of the context in which it is found. The commentaries are not very helpful. Classen-Steup have the interesting remark: “τέκνωνσιν ποιῆσθαι nach der überwiegenden Neigung des Th. zur Umschreibung der einfachen Verba.” Gomme, II p. 142, points out his (and our) embarrassment, but adds the equally embarrassing remarks: “for not only very few parents of sons killed in war are likely to have more, however philoprogenitive the Greeks were (sic!), but many must actually have had other sons who would help forgetfulness of the loss (sic!), and these are ignored;”. I need not comment on these comments. As far as I know, no parallels have been found to the idea which Thucydides puts in the mouth of Perikles. I came across one in a Turkish poem to which I wish to draw attention. But let me first point out four parallels in Greek literature, for even those are not mentioned in the commentaries on Thucydides.

1.2 We find the same thought in Herodotus III 119, where the Persian king Darius, who has arrested the whole family of Intaphrenes on suspicion of revolt, allows Intaphrenes' wife to choose one of the arrested 'whom you want most of all' (τὸν βούλεαι ἐκ πάντων). She asks for her brother, for 'I can get another man, if it is god's will, and other children, if I were to lose them; but as my father and mother are no longer alive, I can in no way get another brother.' (ἀνὴρ μὲν ἄν μοι ἄλλος γένοιτο, εἰ δαίμων ἐθέλοι, καὶ τέκνα ἄλλα, εἰ ταῦτα ἀποβάλοιμι· πατὴρ δὲ καὶ μητὴρ οὐκέτι μευ ζώντων ἀδελφεὸς ἄν ἄλλος οὐδένι τρόπῳ γένοιτο.) We shall return to her choice in section 2, but here we note that she argues that she can still get new children.

1.3 Exactly the same thought is expressed in Sophocles' *Antigone* 909-912:

πόσις μὲν ἄν μοι κατθανόντος ἄλλος ᾔην
καὶ παῖς ἀπ' ἄλλου φωτός, εἰ τοῦδ' ἤμπλακον.
μητὴρ δ' ἐν Ἄιδου καὶ πατὴρ κεκευθότιν
οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἄν βλάστοι ποτέ.

'I might have another husband if mine would die, and a child from another man if I were to lose him. But as my mother and my father are hidden in Hades, it is impossible that ever a brother would sprout (be born).' It has been supposed, for several reasons, that the passage is not original (e.g. Jebb ad loc. and App.), though Aristotle already knew it, and that it was taken over from Herodotus in any case.

1.4 We find the same thought in Euripides' *Alkestis*. Admetus must face an untimely death unless he can find somebody else to die in his place. Everybody refuses, even his old parents, but then his wife Alkestis offers herself. In Euripides' play she says (290-294):

καίτοι σ' ὁ φύσας χῆ τεκοῦσα προὔδοσαν,
καλῶς μὲν αὐτοῖς κατθανεῖν ἤχον βίου,
καλῶς δὲ σῶσαι παῖδα κευκλέως θανεῖν.
μόνος γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἦσθα κοῦτις ἔλπις ᾔην
σοῦ κατθανόντος ἄλλα φιτύσειν τέκνα.

'And even who begot you and who brought you forth did forsake

you, though it was well becoming for them to die from life, though it was well becoming to save their child and die with honour. For you were their only son, and they had no hope, when you would die, to beget other children.' The idea is: if they refuse, it is nearly certain that their only son will die; and they could not comfort themselves with the hope of getting new children. This is exactly what Perikles said. (We shall return to the Alkestis motive in section 3.)

1.5 Aly (1969, 315 Nachtr. ad p. 109) mentions a late occurrence of the motive, in Lucians *Toxaris* 61 (p. 565): 'Children, he said, I could make rather easily again. . .' (for the full text see 2.1).—So in ancient Greek literature we find the idea expressed a few times. I now wanted to point out a Turkish parallel.

1.6 In a heroic tale of the Oghuz Turks, 'The Sack of the House of Salur Kazan', we find the following story. When Khan Kazan is out hunting, his camp is attacked by the infidels (the Georgian Christians), who take all his treasure, his camels and horses, and his people, among them his wife, Lady Burla the Tall, and his only son, Uruz. The infidels celebrate their raid, and their king suggests that, to bring shame on Kazan, they make Lady Burla their cupbearer (the implications become clear below). Lady Burla overheard this and instructed her forty maidens that they should all call out together that they are Kazan's wife. Unable to find out who is Lady Burla, the king orders: 'Bring Kazan's son Uruz, hang him on a hook, chop up his white flesh and make a nice brown roast, and offer it to the forty-one ladies. Whoever eats it is not the one; the one we want is the one who refuses it.' Lady Burla, who heard this too, asks her son: 'Shall I eat of your flesh or shall I enter the bed of the infidel of foul religion and defile the honour of your lord Kazan?' Uruz rebukes her very roughly and then says:

'Lady Mother, why do you scream in front of me?

. . . .

Mother, where the Arab horses are,

Is there never a foal?

Where the red camels are,

Is there never a young one?

Where the white sheep are,

Is there never a lamb?
 Live, my lady mother, and let my father live;
 Will there never be born a son like me?’

Below we shall see what happened immediately after this. They are saved at the last moment.

The same idea is found in another story, ‘How Prince Uruz was Taken Prisoner’, where, again, Uruz is a captive. When his father arrives, he is allowed to speak to him. Uruz asks his father to go back (‘Shame it is for a father to die for his son’) and says:

‘If all is well with the black mountains, the people go up to the
 summer-pasture;
 If all is well with the blood-red rivers, they overflow in blood-
 red spate;
 If all is well with the horses of the paddock, foals are born;
 If all is well with the red camels in the stalls, they bring forth
 young;
 If all is well with the white sheep in the folds, they bring forth
 lambs;
 If all is well with heroic princes, sons are born to them.
 Let all be well with you and with my mother,
 And God will give you sons better than I’.

Khan Kazan answers:

‘When yonder black mountains are old,
 No grass grows on them, the people do not pasture on them in
 the summer;
 When the lonely eddying rivers are old, they do not overflow
 their banks;
 When the camels are old, they give no young;
 When the horses are old, they give no foals;
 When manly warriors are old, they get no sons.
 Your father is old, your mother is old;
 God will give us no better son than you;
 Nor could any take your place.’

Here, then, we find exactly the same idea as in Thucydides. It is quite clear that it is a normal way of thinking. Here, in poetic

words, it is accorded its place in nature; it is natural. I do not know whether the idea is found elsewhere in Turkish stories. I have found no reference, nor do my colleagues for Turkish know of any other occurrence.

1.7 This story is found in 'The Book of Dede Korkut', a collection of twelve stories about the heroic age of the Oghuz, one of the most powerful Turkish tribes. They came with the Seljuks from Central Asia to Iran in the eleventh century, and to Anatolia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The substratum of the stories is the struggle against other Turkish tribes in the region South East of the Aral Sea. This substratum has been overlaid with more recent memories and the stories are now set in Eastern Turkey, east of Bayburt and Diyarbakir to (Soviet) Azerbaijan. Dede Korkut is the bard supposed to have composed the tales. We have two manuscripts, both from the sixteenth century. The stories acquired their present form early in the fifteenth century, as appears from the language and other considerations. But many ideas are much older.

The book is now easily accessible in the translation of Geoffrey Lewis (1974 = 1982). Other translations are Hein 1958 and Sümer a.o. 1972.

1.8 The idea is also known in China. My colleague E. Zürcher informs me that one of the best known instances is found in 'The 24 examples of filial love', a collection of anecdotes from c. 1200. The seventh story is called 'Kuo Chü buries his children for the sake of his mother'. It is supposed to have happened around the beginning of our era. It goes as follows. Kuo Chü and his family (his old mother, his wife and his three children) are destitute; there is not enough food for the whole family. He notices that his mother, for love of her grandchildren, is eating less and less in order to keep them alive. He then says to his wife: 'Because of our poverty we are no longer able to feed all mouths; moreover the children are a burden to my mother so that she does not get enough to eat. The best thing to do is to bury the children. *Children we can have again, but a mother you cannot get again.*' The story has a happy ending, for, when digging Kuo Chü finds a pot of gold, with the inscription: 'Heaven presents this gold to parent-loving Kuo Chü; the authorities will not be able to take it from him, and the people will not rob him of it.' Zürcher is no doubt right when he adds that such

decisions are cruel, but that circumstances in the pre-modern world and in the present-day third world are that cruel, so that such decisions often had to be made.

2. 'But you cannot get a new brother': the Intaphrenes Story.

2.1 Above we recalled the story of Intaphrenes in Herodotus, III 118-9, where a woman who can free one of her relatives, chooses her brother. We saw that in Sophocles' *Antigone* the same idea is found, but it teaches us nothing new. Aly (1966, 315 Nachtr. ad p. 109) noted the passage in Lucianus' *Toxaris* (61 p. 565), where Abauchas saves not wife and child from the burning house, but his friend: 'Ἀλλὰ παῖδας μὲν, ἔφη, καὶ αὐθις ποιήσασθαί μοι ῥάδιον καὶ ἄδηλον εἰ ἀγαθοὶ ἔσονται οὗτοι, φίλον δὲ οὐκ ἂν εὐροίμι ἄλλον ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ τοιοῦτον. . .

'Children, he said, I can make rather easily again and it is not certain if these will turn out to be good ones, but such a friend I may not find for a long time...' On p. 109 the same author pointed to a story in Apollodorus, II 6, 4, "vermutlich nach einer Tragödie", where after the death of Laokoon and all his sons, Hesion chooses her brother Podarkes, when she is allowed to free one of the captives. "Der stark gekürzte Bericht lässt nicht mehr mit Sicherheit erkennen ob das zur Rede stehende Motiv tatsächlich vorliegt. Überdies würde eine Tragödie nur als unmittelbar abhängig von Herodot gedacht werden können."

2.2 Such a choice is also found in the book of Dede Korkut, in the story about the Sack of the House of Salur Kazan. Immediately after the passage cited in the preceding section (when his son is on the point of being killed to find out who is his mother), Khan Kazan arrives. He talks to the infidel king, saying:

'You have taken my heavy treasure, my much silver;
Let them be yours to spend.
You have taken the Lady Burla with her forty slender maidens;
Let them be your slaves.
You have taken my son Uruz with his forty warriors;
Let them be your bondmen.
You have taken my stables full of falcon-swift horses;
Let them be yours to ride.

You have taken my camels, file on file of them;
 Let them be your beasts of burden.
 You have taken my little old mother whose white milk suckled
 me,
 Her of the plaited hair;
 Infidel, give me my mother.
 With no fight, with no battle I shall retrace my steps'

. . . .

I note first that here the choice is made by a man, not by a woman, secondly, that his brother was not taken captive, and thirdly, that at the end of the story it says 'Kazan Bey recovered his son, the members of his household, and his treasure, and turned homewards.' No mention is made of his mother. I take this to mean that the story about his mother was a well known motive, brought into this story without being an essential element in it.

There is no explanation of his choice. You *could* argue in the same way as Intaphrenes' wife: I can get another wife and another son, but not another mother. The Chinese story in 1.8 is an exact parallel of the Turkish story, and it presents the arguments clearly.

2.3 It was noted long ago that there are close parallels to Intaphrenes' story, elsewhere. How and Wells in their commentary on Hdt. III 119 thought that it was originally Greek, 'a piece of Greek cleverness . . . borrowed in the East.' As I think this view is wrong, I will briefly discuss it here. As long ago as 1893 Pischel noted that the same argument is found in the Indian epic the Rāmāyana (6, 24, 7.8). 'Irgendwo könnte ich eine Gattin, einen Sohn und (alle) anderen Verwandten bekommen; aber den Ort sehe ich nicht, wo ich einen Bruder erlangen könnte. Parjanya regnet alles herab, ist eine Lehre des Veda; aber das Sprichwort ist auch wahr, dass er einen Bruder nicht herabregnet.' (Parjanya, the god of the rain, is the source of all life.) This is said by Rāma when his dearest brother is killed. (Note that here too a man is speaking.)—In India it is also found in a buddhist story, Jātaka 67. A woman, whose husband, son and brother are arrested on suspicion of being robbers, is allowed to choose one of them. 'Ich kann, o König, während meines Lebens einen Mann bekommen, ich kann einen Sohn bekommen, da aber die Eltern gestorben sind, ist ein

Bruder nicht zu bekommen.' In a variant she cites the verse of the Rāmāyana 'den Ort sehe ich nicht. . .' The king thereupon gives her all three of them.—Nöldeke (1894) adds that there is a Persian variant (from the twelfth century, going back to a tenth century version). A woman, whose husband, son and brother will be fed to the snakes that arose from King Dāhak's shoulders, asks for her brother with the same argumentation. She gets all three of them.

Nöldeke argues that Herodotus' version, where besides her brother the woman gets only her son back, is crueler and therefore the oldest version. I do not think that this is a decisive argument. Though cruel elements were often mitigated in later times, this does not mean that all folktales must have been originally cruel. Also, in Herodotus' version it would be strange if a (supposed) usurper were to be released; so there was a reason for Herodotus (or his source) to change the story.

How and Wells conclude: "The more natural view is that a piece of Greek cleverness has been borrowed in the East." This seems to me to be the most unnatural interpretation. First of all, we just saw that Herodotus has to change the number of people released. Second, Herodotus' story is clearly the most recent, as it is illogical. It implies that the woman could (and should) have asked for her husband, which in fact was quite impossible, since he was a usurper. Also it is not very probable that a Persian king would be impressed by the crying wife of a traitor. On the contrary, in the Jātaka story everything is quite natural: the men are normal criminals, and the king can be generous. Thirdly, the story is not a piece of Greek cleverness. The argumentation is not a ruse to get more than one relative freed. There is no hint in this direction at all. It is a sincere way of reacting, a normal way of thinking, as we saw in the case of the idea: "I can get new children". It is expressly stated as being based upon this argument. (Though it must have been old-fashioned already at the time the story originated, for the surprise, expressed by the king's generosity, is exactly the reason of the story.) Nöldeke ends with: "Aber so gut wie undenkbar ist es, dass die Stelle des Herodot . . . durch irgend eine Vermittlung Indern und Persern bekannt geworden wäre." Consequently this view that the story is of Greek origin is decidedly wrong. Then it becomes significant that Herodotus' story is situated in Persia.

Nöldeke thought that the origin was Persian: "Hätten wir die griechische Stellen nicht, so wäre die Ansicht durchaus berechtigt, dass die ganze Geschichte mit so vielem andern Erzählungs- und Gnomestoff aus Indien nach Persien gekommen sei. Dass aber schon im 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. etwas derartiges aus Indien über Persien zu den Griechen gelangt wäre, wie Pischel meint, dünkt mich wenig wahrscheinlich." Apart from this question, we saw that the Jātaka version seems the oldest. In India, it was based on old ideas, as evinced through the citation from the Rāmāyana and the reference to a proverb. Also, as Nöldeke mentioned, the normal direction is from India to Persia (though we don't have as many sources from ancient Persia as from India). Therefore, to my mind, everything points to India as the ultimate source. It will then be one of the first Indian stories that ever reached the West.—It should be pointed out that the line of thinking, this view of life, was common to both Greece and India (and undoubtedly Persia), or else Thucydides could not have put it in the mouth of Perikles. The Intaphrenes story, however, is an anecdote, an extreme situation which hardly ever occurs.

3. The Alkestis Motif.

3.1 The Book of Dede Korkut has a version of the Alkestis motif. In Euripides' *Alkestis* it is Admetus who must die young unless he finds somebody to die in his place. His parents and all his friends refuse, but his wife is prepared to die in his place.

The Turkish story is that of Wild Dumrul. He has a bridge built (across a dry river bed) and asks tribute from all who pass over it. And those who refuse to pass over it are beaten and charged more. Dumrul does this in order to challenge everyone who thinks himself braver. When a young boy dies in a troop of nomads encamped near his bridge, he is told that Azrail (the angel of death in Islam) took his life. Dumrul challenges Azrail, and God sends Azrail to take his life. Dumrul is subdued by Azrail but asks God for his life ('I wish to live out more years of my youth'), who grants it on the condition that Dumrul finds a substitute. His father and his mother refuse ('the world is too sweet, and living too dear to spare my own life'). When Dumrul then says goodbye to his wife ('Go, marry another, whomever your heart loves. Let not our sons remain or-

phans.'), she offers to take his place, but not without a reproach: 'What is there in life that your miserable parents could spare not their own lives for yours?'. Wild Dumrul 'that monster of a man', then asks that they both die or both live. God then gives them their lives but takes the lives of his parents.

3.2 The background and the immediate source of this story are clear. Lesky (1925) collected the material then known. (The version of the Book of Dede Korkut was not yet known to him, as far as I see.) The story is found from Sweden to Armenia: in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, amongst the Sorbs, in the Ukraine, in Estonia and Finland; also amongst the Greeks in the North of Turkey (primarily in the region of Trabzon: the so-called Pontic versions) and in Armenia and perhaps in India (see below). It has been shown that the Pontic versions are independent of Euripides' drama. Characteristic of the Pontic versions is that they begin with a wrestling match between the hero and Death (which is an originally unrelated motif) and have a happy ending: the hero gets thirty more years, provided that somebody gives half of this time from his own life; this is also clearly a younger development. In the Armenian version (Chalatianz 1909; not accessible to me), Kaguan Aslan hears that one of his poor men has died. He wrestles with Gabriel. He asks his parents to give their life for his, which they refuse. His wife Margrit offers hers and dies immediately. But God restores life to her and takes that of his parents. It is clear that the Turkish version is closest to the Armenian one. That is not surprising: the Oghuz lived in Eastern Turkey, between the three great lakes, and this is precisely the Armenian heartland. On the other hand the Armenians will have borrowed it from the Greeks around Trabzon.

3.3 As an Indo-Europeanist, I draw attention to the distribution of the attested versions. Lesky says (p. 33) that it is found in a semi-circle with Greece at its centre. This, of course, is correct, but it is irrelevant to the history of the motif. It is clear that the Pontic versions were brought to that region by the Greeks. Lesky argues that they are independent of Euripides, but that does not mean that it cannot be of Greek origin. The Armenian story derives from the Pontic one, and the Oghuz story from the Armenian one. Thus the whole Anatolian branch goes back to Greece. What remains, then,

is the area of Sweden, Denmark and Germany, the Sorbian area, the Ukraine and Estonia and Finland. This is exactly the area in which the Indo-European homeland is being sought, for which Poland is now the most likely candidate. Of course, the Greeks took it to Greece (and the Indians to India if the story of Savitri and Satyavant in the Mahābhārata derives from the same motif). From Poland it must have gone to Estonia and Finland. It seems, then, that the Alkestis motif is of Indo-European origin.

4. The Polyphemus Story.

There is in the Book of Dede Korkut a version of the story of Polyphemus, here called Tepegöz. It begins with his miraculous birth (taken from other motifs). From his fairy mother he gets a ring which makes him invulnerable. He forces the Oghuz into an agreement according to which they provide him daily with two men and 500 sheep. Two cooks prepare the food for him. The hero, Basat, sets out to kill him. Tepegöz catches him and throws him in his cave where the sheep are. Together with the cooks Basat makes the spit red hot and pushes it into the giant's eye. To escape from the cave he kills a ram, skins it and gets into the skin. He succeeds even though Tepegöz knows that Basat is in the skin ("Ho, ram with the spotted head, how did you know my weak spot? Let me smash you on the walls of this cave and grease them with the fat of your tail.") He then offers his ring to Basat, apparently to get a hold of him, but Basat escapes again. Then Tepegöz shows Basat where he keeps his treasures, and tries to smash Basat to pieces with the treasure house and all. Then Tepegöz shows Basat a cave where the sword is kept with which he can be killed. The sword keeps moving up and down and would have killed Basat, but he manages to get it. Tepegöz then asks him his name, which Basat gives him, but it plays no further role (Tepegöz answers 'Now we are brothers. Spare my life.' What this means is not made clear. It could refer to the fact that Basat's father had tried to educate Tepegöz as a child). In the end Basat cuts off Tepegöz's head.

The story is discussed by Mundy 1956. Despite the title (of his article), he does not discuss the relation of the story to the Homeric version. Nevertheless, he rejects Page's conclusions (1966, 1-20) but without listing his arguments. According to Mundy, Page's idea

that the Homeric story is based on folktale and not the other way round (which was already Grimm's view), would "rest upon very uncertain foundations." I completely disagree with Mundy's criticism. Mundy concentrates on the Ring episode. However, whether or not vss. 229, 356, and 517 of the *Odyssey* (ix) are a reminiscence of the ring, I fail to see what conclusions may be drawn on this account. Page's argument is that Polyphemus is blinded with a spit or by a trick. The *Odyssey* clearly has a variant of the spit, but the *Odyssey* is the only version that does *not* have the spit itself. Now if the *Odyssey* had been the source, all stories with the spit must have innovated in the same way, or one version must have undergone this innovation with all other versions deriving from it; both explanations are extremely improbable. Nor is it probable that the *Odyssey* was the source of the stories with a trick, such as melted lead in his eye. Therefore, it remains quite clear that the Homeric story is a reshaped version which was *not* the source of the other versions. This is, of course, what one would expect a priori.

5. An *Odyssey*.

One of the possible links with the classical world is the story of Bamsi Beyrek. On the day of his marriage Bamsi is taken captive. He is a prisoner for sixteen years but manages to escape when he hears that somebody who had 'proved' that Bamsi is dead is going to marry his wife. Outside Bamsi finds his horse which recognizes him. (This is compared with Odysseus being recognized by his dog.) Bamsi comes to his sisters disguised as a bard behaving slightly abnormally. They give him a caftan from their brother which fits him exactly, and they nearly recognize him. Then he finds the man who is going to marry his wife, shooting arrows. He is allowed to try, but breaks the opponent's bow, whereupon they give him Bamsi Beyrek's bow. He shoots the target, a ring, to pieces. He is then admitted to the banquet. There he tests his wife's steadfastness. She withstands the test and recognizes him. His opponent flees and is overtaken, but Bamsi Beyrek forgives him. Another surprise is that the hero then marries someone else.

It should be realized that the episode with the horse has a quite different function from that with Odysseus' dog. The hero needs

transport which means a horse. Bamsi must either steal a horse from the enemy or find his own. In nomadic societies a strong bond exists between horse and rider. So Bamsi finds his own horse, which, of course, recognizes him. Rossi (1952, 59) calls it a part of universal folklore and gives a reference to Ukrainian songs, but he finds the best parallel in a Turkish story.

As to the test with the bow, where also the strength of the hero is shown, note that shooting was a favourite sport with the Oghuz. Some bows are said to require seven men to bend them (Rossi 1952, 52).

I think it more probable that the elements mentioned are common to all times and places than that they go back to the Odyssey. Rossi (l.c.) too refers to universal folklore and considers the Odyssey only as another instance of these motifs. Lewis, in his introduction (p. 16), thinks it simpler to suppose that these stories, like that of Polyphemus, came from the Odyssey. It may be simpler, but it is less likely, and it is a pity that he propagates this simplistic view to the public.

6. 'White-armed'.

I would like to mention one minor point. In Homer, Hera is called 'white-armed', λευκώλενος. It is clearly 'her' epithet: we find it 24 times for Hera, only rarely for other women.

The explanation must be that women of rank stay at home and don't have to work outside. I think this interpretation is generally accepted, though I do not find it in the commentaries on Homer. Stanford notes that on Minoan (and Mycenaean) frescoes "women are conventionally coloured white and men terra-cotta or maroon." (Commentary on Od. 6,186). This shows that in Minoan times this difference was observed and perhaps appreciated in the same way. In classical Greek vase-painting too women were mostly rendered white.

In the Book of Dede Korkut, women have the standard epithet 'white-faced'. (Because this has connotations of fear in English, Lewis replaced it with 'white-skinned'; I would not have done so.) In his introduction Lewis (p. 10) explains: "'delicately nurtured' is what it implies, for in pastoral societies not to be sun-tanned is a sign of wealth and rank." This holds not only for pastoral

societies, I think, but everywhere where you tan quickly when working in the open air.

But it is also said of men of high standing. Thus, a sleeping hero is awakened by his wife when the enemy arrives with the following words:

Wake up! Raise your dark head, O warrior!
 Open your lovely chestnut eyes, O warrior!
 Ere your white hands and arms are tied,
 Ere your white forehead is trodden into the black ground, . . .

The 'white forehead' is often referred to. Interesting is the following incident. The hero just mentioned appears before a king (of a foreign land) to ask the hand of his daughter. There it reads: "Kan Turali rose from his place and came forward, he strutted about, he bared his white forehead, he rolled up his sleeves to show his white arms, . . ." Apparently he does this to show his noble birth.

7. These were just a few remarks that may be of interest to classical scholars, some of them perhaps to students of Turkish literature.

The Book of Dede Korkut has been called the Turkish Homer. But it is not an epic. It consists of short stories (some 15 pages in print each) which are epic in style and content. They are in prose, but what the heroes say is often in verse (as e.g. in Old Irish stories). I find the verse fine (even without reading the original Turkish), but the short stories do not reach the breadth and depth of Homer. But the reader should appreciate that himself.

Let me end with one of the concluding verses of Dede Korkut (from the story of Boghach Khan):

'They too came to this world and left it;
 They camped and moved on, like a caravan.
 Them, too, doom has taken and earth has hidden.
 Who now inherits this transient world,
 The world to which men come, from which they go,
 The world whose latter end is death?'

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