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# Migration of People and Melodies in the Taiga Area of Southern Siberia

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## Introduction

Southern Siberia is an area of residence of several small Turkic-speaking communities, some of which still characterized by various forms of semi-nomadism. Since the region is geographically characterized by a combination of *steppe – mountain – taiga* landscapes, pure nomadism has not been typical of the area. Moreover, even in the predominantly steppe areas seasonal vertical migrations of pastoralist families and their herds within the assigned territories have been the most common type of economy. Such routes can be represented as a form of circle in three-dimensional space with starting and finishing points at more or less stable winter camps, similar to Mongolia (Lugli 2013; 2016). Nowadays this semi-nomadic type of traditional economy in many parts of Southern Siberia – for example, in the Central Altai – is transforming into what could be more correctly defined as *transhumance*.

Usually this term is attributed to a particular type of pastoralism in the Mediterranean zone (Fabietti and Remotti 1997). Considered in a broad cultural sense, it could be applied to a vast number of cultural phenomena. Its main sense, in our opinion, is based on a dichotomy of ‘departure – return.’ The idea of departure and, then, returning home is probably the most archetypical and essential for any culture at large. The model of ‘departure – return’ in semi-nomadic cultures is multi-polar, because each of the camps on the annual route can be regarded as a place of both return and departure, with a special role for the winter camps. In the transhumance kind of pastoralism, the ‘departure – return’ model becomes bipolar. A village or small town is a point of departure as well as a point of return. The same

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could be said about the destination – upper alpine pastures, to which herds return every spring or summer and which they leave in the autumn.

Continuing to examine the ‘departure – return’ model in various societies, we discover that transhumance of some kind can be found in many of them. Probably, it is more logical to speak of *transhumances* instead of *transhumance*. Transhumance can be vertical or horizontal; bi- or multi-polar (triangular, square, round); seasonal or continuous, etc.

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Furthermore, the transhumance of peoples and animals causes another sort of transhumance: the transhumance of cultural phenomena. This is probably one of the most important mechanisms in the distribution of cultural artefacts, including melodies, poetic forms and so on. Below we examine a particular case of transhumance in this sense.

### Chalkans and the transhumance in the *taiga* area

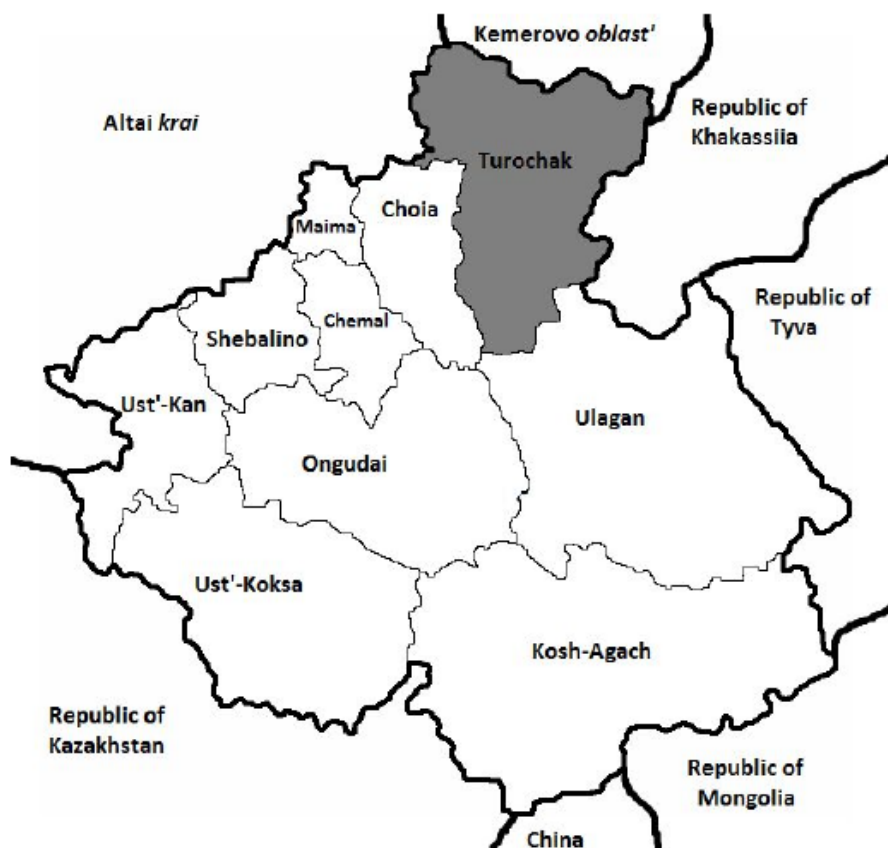
The northern zone of Southern Siberia geographically includes the northern foothills of Altai, Kuznetzkii Alatau and the upper reaches of the River Abakan. It is characterized by *taiga* landscape and snowy winters that contribute to the development of a special type of economy. Small-numbered Turkic-speaking groups – the Shors, Chalkans, Sagais and others – living in the *taiga* zone have developed a rather complex type of economy consisting of hunting, fishing, gathering, cattle- and horse-breeding, farming, as well as a variety of crafts. The Northern Altais (Chalkans, Kumandins and Tubas) and Shors were the first to meet Russian colonizers and to start contacts with them. Some cultural phenomena were adopted by both groups of the population – the indigenous and the outsiders – from each other.

The Chalkans represent a typical model of the hunting culture of the *taiga* zone<sup>2</sup>. They live in the Turochak district of the Republic of Altai in Southern Siberia (see Fig. 1 and 2).



**Figure 1**  
The Republic of Altai in the Russian Federation.

The Turochak district is located in the north-east of the Republic of Altai, on the border with the Altai *krai*, Kemerovo *oblast'* and the Republic of Khakassia (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2**  
The Turochak district of the Republic of Altai and neighbouring regions.

Cattle-breeding was predominant among the Chalkans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the abundance of grass in the summer and feeding hay in the winter. Such husbandry is not subject to migrations; moreover, simple herding has no special needs: in many cases the cattle move freely in search of food, fairly close to settlements, with impassable *taiga* and rivers serving as a natural barrier (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3**

Cattle and horses in the Kurmach-Baigol village. Photograph: Galina B. Sychenko, 2005.

Scientists believe that the Chalkans adopted cattle-breeding from the Russian settlers no earlier than the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Before that, only horse-breeding was known amongst them (Belgibaev 2001). The importance of the horse in traditional Chalkan culture is regarded as evidence of the nomadic past of their remote ancestors (Belgibaev 2001). This is confirmed by the presence of the sacrifice of a horse of light colour in clan and tribal rituals<sup>3</sup>. Even now motifs of horse-hitching pole are popular in the decoration of houses and fences in the Chalkan village of Kurmach-Baigol (Fig. 4 and 5).



**Figure 4**

Motive of horse-hitching pole as a decoration of the house. Photograph: Galina B. Sychenko, 2016.





**Figure 5**

Motive of horse-hitching pole as a decoration of the entrance to the court-yard. Photograph: Galina B. Sychenko, 2005.

The lyrics of songs often provide parallels between a horse and a girl (see, for example, the text of the second song in this article).

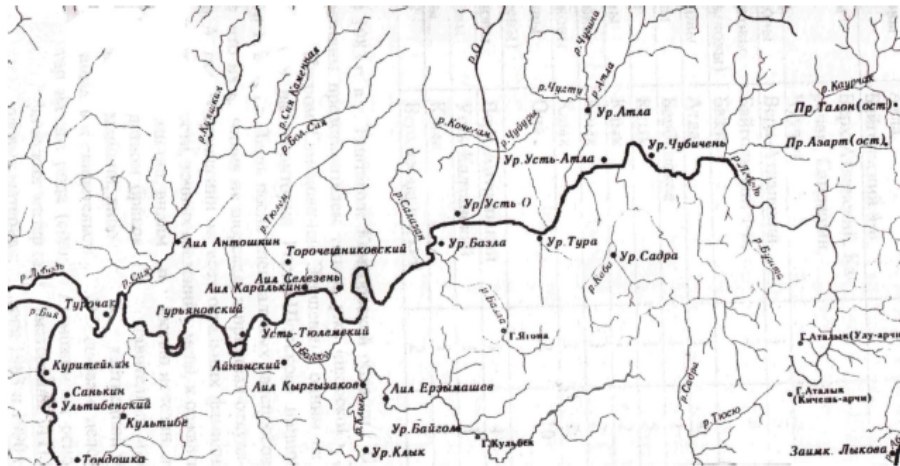
At the same time, another type of migration process was – and still is – extremely important for the *taiga* peoples. We are talking about the seasonal migrations of the men of a society for commercial hunting. There is no doubt that hunting has been the basic economic activity of the Chalkans since ancient times. Scientists assign to the hunt a paramount role in the traditional economy (Belgibaev 2001).

Hunting includes several periods of different lengths. Most important is the one-month autumn period of hunting with dogs for fur-bearing animals: squirrel, kolinsky, ermine, and sable in particular, as well as a longer period of winter hunting for different animals without dogs<sup>4</sup>. During both periods, the males leave the settlements.

Traditional settlements typical of this type of economy are small and scattered along minor rivers belonging to the right-hand basin of the upper Biia. The most important of these is the River Kuu (Lebed' in Russian, Swan in English), a right-bank tributary of the River Biia<sup>5</sup>. The River Baigol – a left-bank tributary of the River Lebed' – was of secondary importance for the Chalkans.

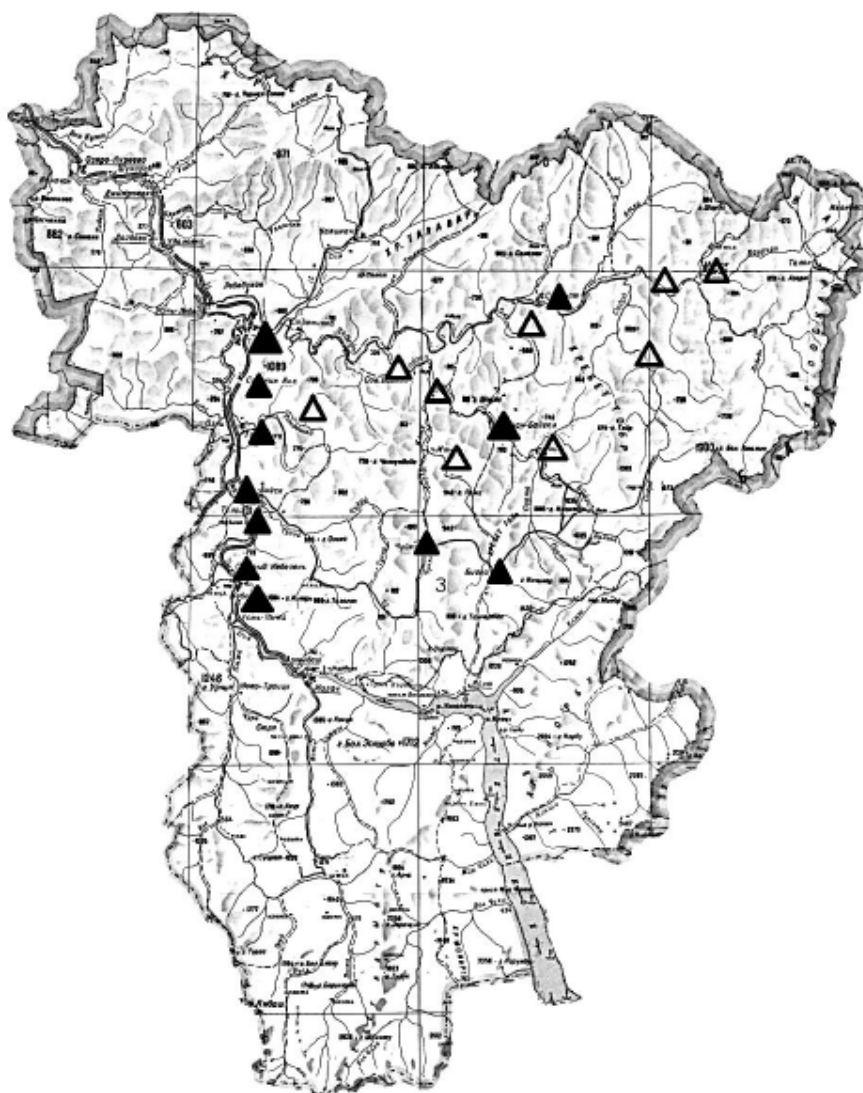
Their way of life before colonization is unknown, but we may suppose that Chalkan families always chose for their settlements the estuaries of small streams and rivers flowing into the main arteries of the Lebed' and Baigol, as well as others. All lists and maps of such settlements demonstrate a similar picture, although the number of households varies. Thus, in 1893 there were 22 settlements with 111 households – from 1 to 11 in one settlement (typically, 3–5) – registered by the authorities. In 1911, 24 settlements were registered, with 256 households – from 4 to 21 in one settlement (mostly, 6–14)<sup>6</sup>. As we see, the number of settlements

is almost the same, but the number of households in a single settlement has increased significantly. It may therefore be stated that, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a process of growing village-like settlements definitely took place amongst the Chalkans. In 1922 the picture was similar, but several new villages were built along the Turochak – Artybash road (towards Teletskoe Lake) outside proper Chalkan territory (Fig. 6).



**Figure 6**  
Chalkan settlements in 1922 (taken from Funk 2000)

The situation changed only in the collectivization period in the 1930s and, in particular, in the 1950s– 1960s, after the so-called ‘politics of consolidation [укрупнение],’ when a large number of the settlements were recognized as unpromising [неперспективные]. The main village of the Turochak district and villages along the road were growing, but in the *taiga* zone only very few villages were left. On the following map the shaded triangles show the places where informants were recorded in the second half of the 1980s until the early 1990s. Empty triangles mark the places where they were born (Fig. 7). In the period of recording only the village of Suranash existed on the River Lebed’<sup>7</sup>. and there were three villages – Kurmach-Baigol, Biika and Chuika – in the River Baigol zone (on the right of the map).



**Figure 7**

Places where Chalkan songs were recorded in the 1980s–1990s (shaded triangles) and places of birth of the performers (empty triangles).

The mountain-*taiga* landscape thus predetermined the traditional way of life of the inhabitants of the *taiga* area, living in small groups in convenient locations with limited territorial resources. However, all the wealth of the *taiga* and first and foremost the animals compensated for the lack of opportunity for the unlimited development of cattle husbandry. The settlements were located not too far from each other (normally, 5–10 km), making it possible for people living there to make contact, communicate and exchange. Major rites and feasts provided opportunities for the gathering of the Chalkan clans. Such events usually finished with eating, drinking and performing non-ritual music, songs in particular. Marriages were another important institution, firstly of mobility within Chalkan society and, secondly, for social gatherings.

What music was performed at these meetings and how were the melodies distributed? What kind of transhumance existed at that time? Are there any methods of reconstructing long-gone processes that have



been left without any written evidence? In order to answer these questions we should pass on to

musical analysis, but our basic assumption, derived from the preceding analysis, is that the lyrics and melodies of the songs and other genres migrated together with people and were distributed largely over the whole area.

### **Song tradition of the Chalkans: sources and methodological issues**

The intonational culture [интонационная культура] (IC) (Kondratieva, Mazepus and Sychenko 1999) of the Chalkans is described in general (Kondratieva, Mazepus and Sychenko 1999; Kondratieva and Sychenko 1997). Some genres – shamanic and epic music, tales with songs, lyric songs and lullabies – have been studied (Gorbacheva 2017; Kondratieva 1998; 2002; Mazepus and Sychenko 1992; Sychenko

1990; 1997; 1998; 2004; 2005; 2016; Sytchenko 2009). The IC of the Chalkans is thus now known on a primary level. Currently, the song tradition of the Chalkans has become the subject of advanced and more detailed studies. It forms part of the current research project by a group of Siberian scholars, focused on a comparative study of the local song traditions of the Turkic and Slavic peoples of Siberia<sup>8</sup>. No documentation exists about the musical culture of the Chalkans before the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>. We

do not even know whether or not they performed lyric genres, and if they did, what kind of songs they were.<sup>10</sup> It is clear however that they may have done so and that the distribution and migration of songs – both texts and melodies – could have taken place in the cultural context discussed above.

The songs of the Chalkans have been recorded rather late. The first recordings were made only in the 1960s. Then, in the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the main body of musical materials (about 500 items, half of which are traditional lyric songs) was made available by Natalya Kondratieva and the author in collaboration with the Altaian scholars Ekaterina Kandarakova, Anna Kandarakova (Pustogacheva), Mira Demchinova.<sup>11</sup> In 2005<sup>12</sup> and 2007<sup>13</sup> the situation was rather different – members of the expeditions met only a few people who could perform songs. The last generation which kept traditions and with whom we – students and young researchers – worked in the 1980s until the 1990s has now been replaced by a more modern generation.<sup>14</sup> Tab. 1 demonstrates this situation rather clearly.

N. Leonova, E. Tiron, Zh. Yusha and the author (head of project). It was financed by RHF, then RFFR in 2014– 2016 (project 14-04-00171a). For more details about the project see Leonova, Sychenko and Yusha (2015).

**Table 1**  
Sound recordings of Chalkan songs.

Years	Recording locations	Collectors	Number and characteristics of song genres	Notes about performers and/or circumstances of recording
1960s	Suranash (?) or Gorno-Altaisk	S. S. Surazakov (?)	3 songs of the disappeared genre (presumably, <i>koghyp saryn</i> [холып сарын])	Unique pieces by famous story tellers M. D. Kandarakov and K. B. Pustogachev
1984	Gorno-Altaisk	Z. S. Kazagacheva, K. E. Ukachina and other Altaian folklorists, Yu. I. Sheikin, M. L. Didyk (sound recordings)	Several lyric songs from A. M. Kandarakova (Pustogacheva) and E. P. Kandarakova	Performers – representatives of Chalkan intelligence, connoisseurs of traditional culture
1985	Turochak district (Kurmach-Baigol, Turochak, Suranash)	N. M. Kondratieva, G. B. Sychenko, K. G. Tarasov	49 examples of song genres: <i>saryn</i> , <i>kyska/kychash saryn</i> , <i>uzun/ulu saryn</i> , <i>takpak</i> by 15 performers	Musical ethnographic expedition, full examination of the territory
1989	Turochak district (Turochak, Suranash, Kurmach-Baigol, Tuloi, Kebezen', Verkh-Biisk, San'kin Ail, Buika, Chuika)	A. M. Kandarakova (Pustogacheva), E. P. Kandarakova, N. M. Kondratieva, (sound recordings)	71 examples of song genres: <i>saryn</i> , <i>kyska/kychash saryn</i> , <i>uzun/ulu saryn</i> , <i>takpak</i> and others by 23 performers	Complex expedition, full examination of the territory, re-recordings
1992	Turochak district (Kurmach-Baigol, Suranash)	G. B. Sychenko	18 examples of song genres by 12 performers	Target ethnomusicological expedition to record shamanic practices; the recording of songs made mostly during the First Congress of the Chalkans
2000	Kosh-Agach district (surroundings of the village of Kokor'a)	N. A. Alexeev, N. R. Baizhanova, T. A. Kozyrev, E. N. Kuz'mina, G. B. Sychenko (sound recordings)	Three performers: one traditional, one modern, and A. M. Kandarakova (Pustogacheva)	Complex expedition; the recording of a few songs made during the National Altai Festival "El-Oiyn"
2005	Turochak district (Kurmach-Baigol, Turochak)	E. V. Nikolina, A. A. Ozonova, Uu. S. Popova, G. B. Sychenko (sound recordings), A. V. Tazranova, N. S. Urtegeshev	In the village of Kurmach-Baigol the only performer was able to sing 8 <i>kyska saryn</i> with melodies combining the features of traditional tunes and <i>chastushka</i>	Complex expedition by linguists and ethnomusicologists
2007	Turochak district (Turochak), Gorno-Altaisk	Uu. S. Popova, G. B. Sychenko (sound recordings)	Re-recordings from the shamaness A. K. Abasheva, A. M. Kandarakova (Pustogacheva)	Target ethnomusicological expedition

It is evident that the modern generations do not preserve song tradition even as recorded in the 1980s until the 1990s. The situation was similar in 2016 during our last expedition.<sup>15</sup> Reflecting on these materials, I have formulated some important methodological issues, which may be relevant in many similar cases. First of all, we have an important archive collection, capturing a song tradition that has now

almost disappeared from everyday practice. It is very difficult nowadays to find experts within the Chalkan community who can discuss related anthropological issues. On the other hand, it is not a 'mute' collection, like so many other archive collections. It is well documented, we know a

lot about the performers: their names, clans, phratries,<sup>16</sup> years and places of birth, educational level, profession and occupation, and so on.

What kind of research can be done and what information can we extract from these materials? In my opinion, in this particular case we may combine three different approaches. First, traditional musical analysis will allow a classification of the song tradition and lead to an understanding of how it was arranged in the recent past, as well as reaching conclusions about its typological position in the circle of other Turkic cultures of the Altai-Saian region. Second would be an indirect contextual analysis of ideas and concepts about songs, including linguistic analysis of song terminology. Third, the historical approach: meaning the juxtaposition of analytical and all available historical data. Together, this should make it possible to trace at least the relative chronology of the process of distribution of melodic patterns in the studied area.

### **Song traditions of the Chalkans: historical strata**

The recorded materials, from an historical point of view, can be divided into three groups: 1) the 1960s;

2) mid-1980s until early 1990s; 3) the 2000s. The first group contains three of the earliest samples representing disappeared genres. The second group includes the main part of the Chalkan collection. The third group contains materials demonstrating its rapid destruction and disappearance.

The earliest examples were recorded by two prominent representatives of the epic tradition: two songs by Manakop Denisovich Kandarakov (end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1972), and one song by Karylep Baiakovich Pustogachev (1900–1971). The three songs are very similar and can be considered as two versions of the same melody. Taking into account the dates of birth and death of the performers, and the fact that the songs were recorded in the 1960s, it is possible to associate them with a period at least from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the 1970s. The melodies of these songs differ both from the epic tunes recorded by the same performers, and from the main body of lyric songs recorded in the second period.

During the second period of collecting materials on the musical culture of the Chalkans almost all genres were recorded, including most of the lyric songs. There are several stylistic groups amongst them, which we also may attribute to different historical periods. Thus, the majority of songs belong to the group of so-called songs with model tunes (Sychenko 2013), which were considered by all performers as ‘traditional Chalkan songs.’ This group – traditional lyric songs – includes a relatively small number of tunes of other types. Taking into consideration the years of birth of our informants (1900s–1930s) and their reference to the previous generation, from whom they adopted these songs, this stylistic layer of the songs could be correlated with a period of more than one hundred years – from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is quite likely that this

chronological border could be pushed back at least another generation or two.

*Chastushka*<sup>17</sup> is reliably present in Chalkan culture at least from the 1930s. In this case its appearance could relate to a new Soviet reality: collectivization and the creating of the *kolkhozes*. But it could have appeared earlier, before the revolution, because contacts with Russians started much earlier than the revolution. The adoption of economic forms could have accompanied the adoption of musical- poetical genres, among which *chastushka* is one of the most likely candidates. This question requires careful study. On the contrary, songs of the Civil War, of course, could not have appeared earlier than the end of the 1910s.

All these groups of songs coexisted for a considerable period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, we may arrange them in a chronological sequence; their progressive disappearance from Chalkan culture correlates with this list.

### Lyric songs with model tunes

In the 1980s the most popular category of songs were lyric songs with so-called universal model tunes (UMT). Practically, all people born between 1900 and the 1930s could perform this kind of song (Sychenko 2013; 2016). It should be stressed that this kind of melody in particular was connected with 'Chalkan-ness,' i.e. played an important role as an ethnic marker.

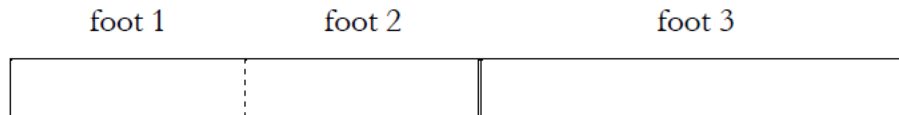
The songs were performed by men and women solo with no accompaniment. Their performance requires no special abilities or professionalism. Most songs reveal the theme of love, family and kinship relations. The modality of discourse ranges from the philosophical to the humoristic.

As in all other cases for model tunes, free connection between the topic of the song and its melody is typical. Both temporal and pitch parameters of the songs are determined by a sort of generative grammar which allows a creation of the 'right' melodies (Mazepus and Sychenko 1997; Sychenko 1997; 1998; 2013). A very short description of the main traits of the grammar is provided below on three important aspects: versification, rhythm and pitch.

Versification in Chalkan lyric songs with UMT is of the free-syllabic type with a stable post- caesura part:  $n + 3$ . Normally,  $n = 4, 5$  syllables, therefore, one verse contains 7–8 syllables, but in some cases it may vary up to 11 syllables. In most examples, only the pre-caesura part of the verse varies.

Rhythmical organization is based on the combination of three musical feet per line (corresponding to verse).<sup>18</sup> Pre- and post-caesura parts are almost identical in length (usually minim); the first part consists of two feet, also equal in value (usually crotchets):



**Figure 8**

Model tune framework in the song tradition of the Chalkans.

Melodies are based on the diatonic scales, mostly of octave diapason. They belong to two types: major and minor alike.<sup>19</sup> Previously, I determined them as 3H- and 3L-scales (Sychenko 1997).<sup>20</sup> Actually, there are different variations of major and minor scales: parallel major-minor; eponymous major minor; Dorian; scales with a diffuse value of the steps; uncertain scales. However, the contrast between melodies in 3H- and 3L-scales seems to be an important stylistic determinant.

Below are two examples demonstrating this kind of melody.<sup>21</sup> Both belong to the category *kyska saryn* 'short song.' The first example is based on the 3H-scale, the second on the 3L-scale.<sup>22</sup>

### 1. Kyska saryn

Staff 1:  $\text{♩} = 0,63$  5,0 s  
Kas pa \_ la \_ sy ka \_ kyl \_ dap

Staff 2: 5,5 s  
Ka \_ mysh \_ tu sas \_ ta u \_ iam, dei.

Staff 3:  $\text{♩} = 0,6$  4,5 s  
Kys pa \_ la \_ sy kym \_ na \_ nyp

Staff 4:  $\text{♩} = 0,55$  3,6 s  
El ai \_ mak \_ ta d'or \_ tem, dei.

**Figure 9**

Example of Chalkan song with 3H-scale.

## 2. Kyska saryn

8 Ka \_ re le kös \_ tü ka \_ ra [a]dym 5,1 s

8 Kar \_ sh'a kai \_ la \_ nap kish' \_ te \_ ve. 6,3 s

8 Ka \_ ry ly kös \_ tüiei ba \_ lam 4,7 s

8 Ka[r] \_ sh'a kai \_ la \_ nyp kom \_ na \_ ve (crying) 3,8 s

**Figure 10**  
Example of Chalkan song with 3L-scale.

Two examples demonstrate typical cases of verse structure:  $7 (8, 9) = 4 (5) + 3 (4)$ :

1		
Kas palazy kakyldap (7)		Goose's child cackling,
Kamyshtu sasta uiam, diit. (8)		In a reed marsh his nest is, says.
Kys palazy kymnanyp (7)		Girl-child whispering,
El aimakta t'urtym, diit. (7)		In a middle of a people her home is, says.
2		
Kare le köstü kara adym (9)		With black eyes my black horse,
Karsh'a kailanyp kisteve. (8)		Turning back, don't neigh.
Kare le köstü ey, palam, (8)		With black eyes, <i>hey</i> , my child,
Karsh'a kailanyp komnava. (8)		Turning back, don't grieve.

The rhythmical structure of these songs is based on the combination of musical feet consisting of 2 or 3 elements. In the odd lines of the second song the last foot ends with a short element:



modal parameters, which is important for the melos. Thus, we take into account the final tones of the lines as well as the different quality of the tones: tones not appearing in the first position of a league are regarded as weak. Every scheme is thus a sort of projection of the melody. Each unit refers to one strophe, regardless of whether it is a separate song or not.

Below I give a complete list of all possible modal-scales with their frequency in the material available.<sup>24</sup> In Tab. 2, capital letters mark the final tone of the strophe, underlined letters show temporary stops (final tones of lines), weaker tones are in brackets.

**Table 2**  
Scales in the model tunes of the Chalkans.

3H-scales (72 cases)			3L-scales (38 cases)		
Scale	Final tones	Total	Scale	Final tones	Total
D-(fis <sup>25</sup> )-g-a-h	4141	2	D-e-f-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup>	1111	1
D-(fis)-g-a-h	5141	1	D-(e)-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup>	1111	2
D-fis-g-a-h	1151	1	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup>	1111	12
D-e-fis-g-a-h	1111	2	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup>	3151	1
D-e-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup>	1111	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2
D-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1131	1
D-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1151	1	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1111	4
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	5111	1
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	2	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	7151	1
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	4141	1	D-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	3131	1
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1151	1	D-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> /cis <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -es <sup>1</sup>	3131	1
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	5151	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	1131	1
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	6	D-e-f-g-a-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	7131	2
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	2	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	7131	1
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	4141	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -f <sup>1</sup>	3131	2
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	6141	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-(c <sup>1</sup> )-d <sup>1</sup> -f <sup>1</sup>	3131	2
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1161	1	D-e-f-g-a-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -f <sup>1</sup>	3131	2
D-(e-fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	1	c-D-e-f/fis-g-a-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup> /f <sup>1</sup>	II131	1
D-(e-fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	1			
D-(e-fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1151	2			



**Table 2(continuation)**  
Scales in the model tunes of the Chalkans.

D-(e)-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	14			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	2			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	4141	2			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1121	1			
D-g-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1121	4			
D-g-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	2121	3			
D-fis-g-a-h-(c <sup>1</sup> )-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-(c <sup>1</sup> )-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	5			
D-(fis)-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	6161	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1151	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	6161	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	5141	1			
D-(e)-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1111	1			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> /cis <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	1111	1			
D-e-fis-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> /cis <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -es <sup>1</sup>	1111	1			

As we can see, major scales are almost twice as many as minor ones.

<sup>26</sup> Exceeding the octave limits is more typical for the latter. Besides this, the minor scales include more steps and are therefore fuller, or more complete. In the major scales very often one or two steps are missing and the core of the mode reveals itself rather clearly: **-fis-g-a-h-d**. (steps found in all variants of 3H-scales are in bold type). It is very similar to the epic mode: d-fis-G-a-h. Minor scales also have a common part: **-e-f-g-a-c**. As far as the 6<sup>th</sup> step is concerned, in the minor scales free alternation is typical (b/h).

All this suggests that tunes with minor scales appeared in the Chalkan culture later than the major ones. In order to prove this thesis, we try to trace the distribution of scales a) across settlements and b) in accordance with the gender of performers.

Among the settlements we have chosen Suranash and Kurmach-Baigol as two key locations where Chalkans concentrated during the Soviet period: the Chalkans living along the Lebed' and its tributaries mostly migrated to Suranash; the Chalkans from the Baigol basin concentrated in Kurmach- Baigol. Tab. 3–6 shows the distribution of modal-scales in all villages where songs were recorded. Before the double line the data for the main villages are shown and after the data for other villages according to the place of birth of the informants. Data for men and women are given separately.

Table 3

Distribution of modal-scales in the culture of the Chalkans from the Lebed' basin (women).

3H-scales (50 examples)			3L-scales (10 examples)		
Scale	Final tones	Total	Scale	Final tones	Total
<b>Suranash</b>					
D-e-fis-g-a-h	1111	2	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup>	3151	1
D-e-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup>	1111	1	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	5111	1
D-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	1	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	7151	1
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2	D-e-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -f <sup>1</sup>	3131	2
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-(c <sup>1</sup> )-d <sup>1</sup> -f <sup>1</sup>	3131	2
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	5151	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2			
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	1			
D-(e-fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	1			
D-(e)-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	11			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	2			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	4141	2			
D-fis-g-a-h-(c <sup>1</sup> )-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	1			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-(c <sup>1</sup> )-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2			
<b>Turochak</b>					
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	4			
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	4141	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-c-d <sup>1</sup>	5141	1			
<b>Chuika</b>					
D-(fis)-g-a-h	4141	2			
D-(fis)-g-a-h	5141	1			
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	1			
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	4141	1			
D-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1151	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	6141	1			

Table 3(continuation)

Distribution of modal-scales in the culture of the Chalkans from the Lebed' basin (women).

D-(e-fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1141	1			
D-(e-fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1151	2			
D-g-(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1121	1			
<b>Biika</b>					
			D-e-f-g-a-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	7131	2
			D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	7131	1

Table 4

Distribution of modal-scales in the culture of the Chalkans from the Lebed' basin (men).

3H-scales (5 examples)			3L-scales (3 examples)		
Scale	Final tones	Total	Scale	Final tones	Total
<b>Suranash</b>					
			D-e-f-g-a-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -f <sup>1</sup>	3131	2
			c-D-e-f/fis-g-a-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup> /f <sup>1</sup>	II131	1
<b>San'kino</b>					
D-fis-g-a-h	1151	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1161	1			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	1			
D-e-fis-g-a-h-(c <sup>1</sup> )-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	1			
D-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1151	1			

Table 5

Distribution of modal-scales in the culture of the Chalkans from the Baigol basin (women).

3H-scales (8 examples)			3L-scales (25 examples)		
Scale	Final tones	Total	Scale	Final tones	Total
<b>Kurmach-Baigol</b>					
D-g-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1121	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2
D-e-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> /cis <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	1111	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1131	1
D-e-fis-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> /cis <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -es <sup>1</sup>	1111	1	D-e-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	1131	1
			D-f-g-a-b-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -e <sup>1</sup>	3131	1
			D-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> /cis <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup> -es <sup>1</sup>	3131	1
<b>Turochak</b>					
D-e-fis-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2	D-e-f-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup>	1111	1
D-e-fis-g-a-h-(c <sup>1</sup> )-d <sup>1</sup>	1111	2	D-(e)-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup>	1111	2
D-(e)-fis-g-a-h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1111	1	D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup>	1111	12
			D-e-f-g-a-b/h-c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	1111	4

Table 6

Distribution of modal-scales in the culture of the Chalkans from the Baigol basin (men).

3H-scales (9 examples)			3L-scales (0 examples)		
Scale	Final tones	Total	Scale	Final tones	Total
<b>Biika</b>					
D- <u>e</u> -(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	1121	3			
D- <u>e</u> -(fis)-g-a-h-d <sup>1</sup>	2121	3			
<b>Chuika</b>					
D-g- <u>a</u> -h-d <sup>1</sup>	1151	1			
<b>Verkh-Biisk</b>					
D-(fis)-g-a- <u>h</u> -c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	6161	1			
D-fis-g-a- <u>h</u> -c <sup>1</sup> -d <sup>1</sup>	6161	1			

Analysis of the data of Tab. 3–6 makes it possible to draw several very important conclusions. First of all, the proportion of major and minor melodies in Suranash and Kurmach-Baigol is different. In the first village this proportion for women is 32/7, in all villages where women from the Lebed' basin live it is even higher for the major scales: 50/10. In the second village the proportion is 3/6; for all villages 8/25. This means that the number of melodies with major scales is higher for the Lebed' settlers, while melodies with minor scales are more typical for women from the Baigol area. Another picture is revealed when we analyze the data for men. The proportions are 0/3–5/3 (Lebed') and 6/0–9/0 (Baigol). That means that in general men perform melodies with major scales regardless of their places of birth or where they live. The negative result for the village Suranash may be an accident because records made for men are fewer than for women. Each village is represented by one man and more than one (2–8) women.

Men's preference for major tunes may therefore correlate with a different style of performance. Men prefer energetic march styles, while women prefer more relaxed lyrical styles. As a result, minor melodies with an abundance of passing notes and more complete scales are distributed amongst women much more than amongst men.

Returning to the distribution of major and minor melodies, a very intriguing and simple question might be: Why is there any such distribution? What kind of transhumance of melodies and modes took place in the past? The answer could be found in the geography of the territories. Thus, the basin of the Lebed' is much more impassable than the Baigol basin. There were not and still are not any roads except the winter road on the River Lebed'. The first stable villages were created on the River Baigol in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Soviet times there were several villages, connected by country roads, whereas Suranash was accessible only by river in summer, winter road and by helicopter. Naturally, this caused a much larger influx of people into Kurmach-Baigol than into Suranash, where only local people migrated. On the



contrary, in Kurmach-Baigol not only the Chalkans lived, but also the Kumandin, Tubalars, Russians and other nationalities.

The presence of each of the listed peoples could contribute to the process of transhumance and forming differences in song performance styles. Thus, melodies similar to the Chalkan ones are also characteristic for the Kumandins. Kumandin melodies belong almost exclusively to the minor scales, so it is reasonable to assume that this is how they appeared in Chalkan culture. The modal structure D-f-g- a-c is also typical of the Tubalars, with whom the Chalkans had close marriage relationships. Russian influence also could have taken place, but this question needs more careful study.

Another observation concerns the nature of modal-scales in mixed villages built along the main roads. As we can see in Tab. 3–6, there are many examples of modal-scales with a diverse combination of final tones. This indicates a process of melodic development and a gradual departure from the core of tradition.

## Preliminary conclusions

At the present stage of the research, we may formulate some preliminary conclusions about the migration (or transhumance) of the melodies and, warily, about the history of this process. Traditional Chalkan society was based on the mobility of small family groups within a prescribed territory. They were mainly attached to the rivers Lebed' and Baigol, and the basin of the second one was more open to the influx of people from outside. The Chalkans made different contacts and would therefore adopt song melodies from each other, but local micro-traditions – if they existed – were rather mobile. The way of life – scattered over the *taiga* – and solo character of the performance did not allow stable local traditions to form. With people's migration to the *taiga* zone, their melodies migrated too. Only the establishing of new and bigger villages was favourable to the process of forming local traditions. We may assume that melodies with major scales were more characteristic of the Chalkans in the past. They are closer to epic tradition; they are better kept in the more isolated village Suranash and, last but not least, they are better kept by men than by women. So, women might adopt the new minor style of performing in settlements with mixed populations. It could have happened as early as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Now we may speak about two local traditions: Suranash, or Lebed', and Kurmach-Baigol, or Baigol.

Outside the Chalkan context, we find similar kinds of melody among the neighbouring Turkic cultures: the Kumandins, Tubalars, Shors, Teleuts and Sagays. All these cultures use them in a very limited quantity. Only in the Kumandin culture have they the same position as in the Chalkan one, which again poses the question about the historical relationships between the two North Altai ethnic groups and, possibly, about transhumance of musical artefacts from one group to another.

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## Notes

- 2 In the scientific literature there are two modes of transliterating the ethnonym: Chelkans [челканцы] and Chalkans [чалканцы]. We prefer the second, used by linguists, because it is closer to the original term in the Chalkan language.
- 3 Unpublished field materials by Galina B. Sychenko (1992).
- 4 Unpublished field materials by Francesca Lugli and Galina B. Sychenko (2016).
- 5 This river gave the endoethnonym kuu-kizhi 'people from Kuu-river' and exoethnonym lebedinskie tatar used in Russian documents up to the 20th century.
- 6 The data are taken from Belgibaev (2001, 289–93)
- 7 I do not include two other villages in the upper reaches of the River, built for gold mining.



- 8 The project is conducted by the group of Novosibirsk scholars, ethnomusicologists and philologist T. Daineko, The project is conducted by the group of Novosibirsk scholars, ethnomusicologists and philologist T. Daineko, N. Leonova, E. Tiron, Zh. Yusha and the author (head of project). It was financed by RHF, then RFFR in 2014–2016 (project 14-04-00171a). For more details about the project see Leonova, Sychenko and Yusha (2015).
- 9 The first notations were made by A. V. Anokhin in the 1910s or 1920s, only two of which are known and published (Khokhlov 1989, 21).
- 10 This may be definitively stated about the existence of epic and shamanic traditions, folk tales and non-tale prose, hunting rites and spells and so on.
- 11 These expeditions were financed by the Government of the Gorno-Altayskaya avtonomnaia oblast' (1985; 1989) and by the Altai Centre of Biospherical and Humanity Research (1992).
- 12 Expedition financed by RFFR-DAAD (project 03-06-04001) and by RFH (project 05-04-18028e).
- 13 Expedition financed by RFH (project 07-04-18033e).
- 14 They perform mostly modern authors' songs; when they perform songs with traditional melodies, the timbre and intonation are very different from the traditional ones.
- 15 International expedition, financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (participants Dr. F. Lugli and the author), aimed at researching the man-dog relationship in different societies of nomads and hunters of Eurasia.
- 16 Most of the Chalkan clans belong to one of the two phratry-like groups: Shalgany and Shakshylyg.
- 17 The term *chastushka* (rhyme, couplet) refers to Russian short songs (short ditties) based on quatrain, or couplet composition with 7/8 syllable verse and typified melodies. For more details see Adonyeva (2004); Alexander (1976); Morgenstern (2007; 2011; 2015); Zemtsovskii (2000), and others). This genre was largely distributed amongst different peoples of the former Russian Empire and, lately, USSR.
- 18 See Sychenko (1998) for a list of binary and ternary feet and their combination; the generative grammar is described in Mazepus and Sychenko (1997).
- 19 These and following terms are used figuratively, because the major-minor tonal system is not relevant for the oral musical culture of the Chalkans.
- 20 The definitions 3H- (with major, or 'high' third) and 3L- (with minor, or 'low' third) scales are used instead of 'major' and 'minor' scales. It is necessary to stress an importance of the quality of the 3rd tone of the octave scale and ambivalence of the quality of the 6th tone, which can be represented by any variant, for distinguishing of the melodic repertoire.
- 21 Examples are taken from Sychenko (2013). Texts in Chalkan language and Russian translation by Aiana Ozonova, notation and English translation by Galina B. Sychenko, computer music set by Ekaterina Tiron. Texts for the present publication are given in another transliteration; some corrections have been made in notation and translation of the text.
- 22 First song was performed by Tatiana Varlamovna Menegecheva, second song was performed by Antonina Pavlovna Prikhod'ko. Taped by Natalia Kondratyeva, Galina Sychenko and Konstantin Tarasov 23. and 24.01.1985 in Kurmach-Baigol, Turochak district, Gorno-Altayskaia avtonomnaia oblast' (now Republic of Altai). Materials are kept in the Archive of Traditional Music of the Novosibirsk State Conservatoire named after M. I. Glinka, Collection A0019, NN 42 and 66.
- 23 It seems that this process took place unconsciously.
- 24 Here terms 'modal-scale,' or 'scale' are used as synonyms. They refer to concrete pitch structure extracted from one particular song, while term 'mode' refers to a more generalized category, which may include several similar scales.
- 25 In the Tab. 2–6 -is means 'sharp', -es means 'flat.'

- 26 There are three examples of melodies in which the traits of the two groups are mixed; there are also two examples of more sophisticated scales, which should be examined separately, but for the moment will be ignored.