

MANIFESTATIONS OF ATU 707 TYPE IN THE TALES OF MAGIC OF KARS-SHIRAK REGION¹

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Abstract

Introduction: Tales of magic are prominent in the folklore heritage of the Kars-Shirak region. Through the analysis of basic motifs, this study examines the tales of magic of the region that correspond to the ATU 707 type titled "The Three Golden Children" according to Hans-Jörg Uther's international classification. The main motifs include the birth of the heroes (prince), their removal from the palace with the intention of destroying them, assigning impossible tasks to the hero(es), the revelation of truth, and the restoration of the rights of the heroes and their mother. **Methods and Materials:** This study is based on the tales of magic "Yashifidan and Chnashkharik" from Kars, "The Tale of Golden-Haired Boy", "The Tale of Bildiliki Marjan", "Hazaran Blbul" from Shirak, as well as the non-published "The Tale of Zulumkyar King," which are published in the collections "Kars: The Folklore Tradition of Armenians" and "Shirak: The Folklore Tradition of Armenians". During the research, historical-comparative and historical-geographical methods used in folklore studies were employed. **Analysis:** The selected tales were subjected to detailed study, comparing them with similar plots from other regions of Armenia as well as international analogues. Their typological, structural, plot-related, motivic, and functional characteristics were identified. **Results:** The study shows that the examined tales have more similarities with tales from other regions of Armenia as well as with neighboring peoples' Kurdish and Turkish tales, which are conditioned by regional interpenetrations of folklore material.

Key words: *tale of magic, plot, type, motif, variant, region, hero, function, international classification.*

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ATU 707 ՏԻՊԻ ԴՐՍԵՎՈՐՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ ԿԱՐՍ-ՇԻՐԱԿ ՏԱՐԱԾԱՇՐՋԱՆԻ ՀՐԱՇԱՊԱՏՈՒՄ ՀԵՔԻԱԹՆԵՐՈՒՄ²

Մարինե Հ. Խենյան

ԳԱԱ հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտ, Երևան, ՀՀ

Ամփոփում

Նախաբան. Կարս-Շիրակ տարածաշրջանի բանահյուսական ժառանգության մեջ զգալի են հրաշապատում հեքիաթները: Պարզագույն մոտիվների կտրվածքով քննության են առնվում տարածաշրջանի այն հրաշապատում հեքիաթները, որոնք համապատասխանում են Հանս-Յորգ Ութերի միջազգային դասակարգմամբ «Երեք ոսկեղեն երեխաներ» խորագիրը կրող ATU 707 տիպին: Այդ հիմնական մոտիվներից են հերոսների (թագա-ժառանգի) ծնունդը, ոչնչացնելու նպատակով նրանց հեռացումը արքունիքից, հերոսին (հերոսներին) անիրագործելի խնդիրներ հանձնարարելը, ճշմարտության բացահայտումը, հերոսների և նրանց մոր իրավունքների վերականգնումը: Մեթոդներ և նյութեր. Սույն ուսումնասիրության համար հիմք են ծառայել «Կարս. հայոց բանահյուսական մշակույթը» և «Շիրակ. հայոց բանահյուսական մշակույթը» ժողովածուներում տպագրված Կարսի «Յաշիֆիդան և Չնաշխարիկ», Շիրակի «Օսկեքյանքյուլ տըղի հեքյաթը», «Բիլդիլիկի Մառջանի հեկյաթը», «Հազարան բլբուլ», ինչպես նաև անտիպ «Զուլումքյար թաքավորի հեքյաթը» հրաշապատում հեքիաթները: Հետազոտության ժամանակ օգտագործվել է բանագիտության մեջ կիրառվող պատմահամեմատական և պատմաշխարհագրական մեթոդները: Վերլուծություն. Ընտրված հեքիաթները ենթարկվել են մանրամասն ուսումնասիրության՝ համեմատելով Հայաստանի այլ տարածաշրջանների, ինչպես նաև միջազգային նույնատիպ սյուժեների հետ: Վեր են հանվել դրանց տիպաբանական, կառուցվածքային, սյուժետային, մոտիվային, գործառնային առանձնահատկությունները: Արդյունքներ. Ուսումնասիրությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ քննության առնված հեքիաթներն ավելի շատ եզրեր ունեն ինչպես Հայաստանի այլ տարածաշրջանների, այնպես էլ հարևան ժողովուրդների՝ քրդական, թուրքական հեքիաթների հետ, որոնք պայմանավորված են բանահյուսական նյութի տարածաշրջանային փոխներթափանցումներով:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *հրաշապատում հեքիաթ, սյուժե, տիպ, մոտիվ, տարբերակ, տարածաշրջան, հերոս, գործառնային, միջազգային դասակարգում:*

Ինչպես հղել՝ Խենյան Մ., ATU 707 տիպի դրսևորումները Կարս-Շիրակ տարածաշրջանի հրաշապատում հեքիաթներում, // ԳԱԱ ՇՀՀ Կենտրոնի «Գիտական աշխատություններ»: Գյումրի, 2025: Հ. 2(28): 124-132 էջեր: DOI: 10.52971/18294316-2025.28.2-124

² Չեկուցումը կարդացվել է «Շիրակի պատմամշակութային ժառանգությունը. հայագիտության արդի հիմնահարցեր» 12-րդ միջազգային գիտաժողովում:

Հետազոտությունն իրականացվել է ՀՀ ԿԳՄՍ Բարձրագույն կրթության և գիտության կոմիտեի 25RG-6B114 ծածկագրով նախագծի շրջանակում:

INTRODUCTION: The Kars province formed in the late 19th century (1877) bordered the Yerevan province from the east, particularly the Shirak region. The neighboring Kars and Shirak inhabitants mainly spoke in dialects specific to their regions, which were based on the Karno dialect. In the 1950s-60s, folklore material was recorded mainly in the Shirak province from native Shirak inhabitants and Kars immigrants who had migrated from the Kars region. There are amateur folklore collectors (Anushavan Gevorgyan, Hrach Mkrtchyan, Yeghishe Khachatryan, Parouyr Barseghyan and others) who equally recorded materials from both Kars and Shirak inhabitants, noting the origin of the narrators.

Tales of magic are prominent in the folklore heritage of the Kars-Shirak region. Through the analysis of basic motifs, this study examines the tales of magic of the region that correspond to the ATU 707 type titled "The Three Golden Children" according to Hans-Jörg Uther's international classification. The main motifs include the birth of the heroes (prince), their removal from the palace with the intention of destroying them, assigning impossible tasks to the hero(es), the revelation of truth, and the restoration of the rights of the heroes and their mother. These motifs are presented in the international classification with the following pattern: "Three girls boast that if they marry the king they will have triplets with golden hair, a chain around the neck, and a star on the forehead. The king overhears the youngest and marries her. When she gives birth to three marvelous children the elder sisters substitute animals (dogs). She is imprisoned (banished), her children are exposed but are rescued by a miller (fisherman). When they have grown up, the eldest son sets out to find his father, to seek a speaking bird, a singing tree, or the water of life. He and his brother both fail and are transformed to marble columns. The sister, with the help of an old woman, succeeds in rescuing them and in bringing back the magic objects. The attention of the king is drawn to the children and the magic objects. The bird of truth reveals the whole story. The children and their mother are restored; the sisters are punished" [20, pp. 381-382].

The following tales of magic have been selected for study: "Yashifidan and Chnashkharik"³ from Kars, "The Tale of Golden-Haired Boy"⁴, "The Tale of Bildiliki Marjan"⁵, "Hazaran Blbul" from Shirak⁶, as well as the non-published "The Tale of Zulumkyar King."⁷

***Tales of Magic of the Kars-Shirak Region and Other Regions of Armenia
in the Context of ATU 707***

It is important to distinguish the main, introductory motif of ATU 707, which is the birth of the crown prince. In Armenian folk tales of the same type, although the prince's mother is of common origin, the newborn is the legitimate heir to the throne, and his mother acquires the full right of a queen with the child's birth. The newborn and his mother immediately find themselves at the center of intrigues. The evil sisters, to preserve their place in the palace, slander their sister and

³ Recorded by collector-storyteller Yeghishe Khachatryan in July 1974 in Leninakan. He heard the tale in his childhood years from his father in Chala village, Kars district.

⁴ Recorded by collector Hrach Mkrtchyan in December 1973 in Leninakan from storyteller Suren Sargsyan. Storyteller Suren Hakob Sargsyan was born in 1906 in Chrakhl (now Jrarat) village, Akhurian district, in a farmer's family.

⁵ Recorded by collector Herik Hartenyan in October 1969 in Horom village, Artik district. The tale was once told by his father, ashugh Tsaghkali (Melikset Hartenyan). Melikset Hartenyan was born in 1870 in Horom village, Artik district.

⁶ Recorded by collector Anushavan Gevorgyan on November 29, 1975 in Yerevan, from storyteller Abraham Ghukasyan.

⁷ Recorded by collector Smbat Petrosi Khachatryan in Leninakan in November 1959, the storyteller is unknown.

remove the newborns from the palace. It is also important to emphasize that the golden hair, fingers, golden scepter, chain around the neck, or star on the forehead of the princes are royal symbols, and these children were born to be kings.

In this article, we examine the variant of the crown prince's origin, referring to the Armenian manifestations of ATU 707. Moreover, through comparative analysis of similar tales from different regions of Armenia (Ayrarat, Artsakh, Vaspurakan, Tavush, Bulanykh, Mush, Taron, Kharberd, Kars, Shirak, Syunik, Lori, Gharadagh), tales have been selected in which the hero is sent to accomplish impossible tasks with the intention of destroying him, and then the mother who gave birth to golden-haired children and was dishonored as a result of her sisters' intrigue restores her rights. Such tales include "Hazaran Bilbul" from Ayrarat [4, pp. 17-36], "Hazari Blbul" from Tavush [3, pp. 30-33], "The Kadjanc King" from Syunik [5, pp. 398-410], "Dunya Guzal" from Mush [6, pp. 138-152], "The Tale of Pilpul Hazaru" from Taron [7, pp. 147-153], "Golden-Haired Twins" from Kharberd [17, pp. 245-253], "Hazaran Blbul" from Shirak [9, pp. 20-24], "The Tale of Bildiliki Marjan" [9, pp. 39-55], "The Tale of Golden-Haired Boy" [9, pp. 24-28], "The Vskeyankyul dwuBoy" from Gharadagh [8, pp. 25-34], and others. In these tales, the hero(es), driven by envy and evil forces (the hero's maternal aunts and midwife), journey after miraculous objects, a miraculous horse, a bride, and most importantly, the Hazaran Blbul. Through the speaking, wise Hazaran Blbul (sometimes through the bride), the intrigue is revealed, the evildoers are punished, and the dishonored and imprisoned mother restores her rights as queen.

In the similar tales of the Kars-Shirak region, the plot develops according to the following scheme: promises of sisters from common people → marriage of the king or crown prince with the third or youngest → birth of golden-haired (golden-fingered, with golden scepter, golden embroidery hoop, nacre teeth) twins → replacement of children with animal cubs (dog, cat) or objects (millstone, stump, wood) → removal of children from the palace through the intrigue of maternal aunts (old wit or midwife) → finding and raising of children by a miller (fisherman, baker, hermit, merchant) → discovery of who the children are by the maternal aunts → assigning impossible tasks to the prince with the intention of destroying him → appearance of an advisor during the fulfillment of tasks → revelation of truth through the found girl or Hazaran Blbul → restoration of the rights of children and their mother → punishment of evildoers.

In the non-published tale "The Tale of Zulumkyar King" from Shirak [1, pp. FFIII: 4157.0-4228.00], there are episodes that are absent in similar tales of magic from both the Kars-Shirak region and other regions of Armenia, as well as from other peoples. If in all other tales the king or prince hears the conversation of three sisters, in this non-published tale the king accidentally hears the promises of three sisters while wandering to find those who robbed his treasury. In this tale, the unmarried girls are 150, 100, and 50 years old. From this fact, we can assume that these girls have otherworldly origins and appeared on the king's path not accidentally or by fate, but with a specific mission. The 150-year-old and 100-year-old sisters do not fulfill their promises (to prepare a giant tent and weave a carpet), so the king makes them a swineherd and chicken keeper. The youngest, 50-year-old sister gives birth to a golden-haired and golden-fingered boy and girl [1, pp. FFIII: 4163-4164]. Another difference is that the hero, at the command of the sorceress, obtains a bird that speaks 72 languages. The sorceress also sends the boy after an otherworldly beauty named Yamrchangli. Yamrchangli turns the hero to stone. The sister goes after her brother, and Yamrchangli revives the boy and all those previously turned to stone with her magical pipe. Yamrchangli reveals the whole truth. This tale has another episode that is absent in similar tales. Yamrchangli makes a tent and a carpet with her magical pipe, so that the king's entire people enter that tent and sit on that carpet [1, pp. FFIII: 4224-4225]. That is, the two sisters did not fulfill their promise, considering it unrealizable, but Yamrchangli showed that it was possible to accomplish it.

It is necessary to address in more detail the tale "Golden-Haired Twins" from Kharberd⁸, as it differs from Armenian tales of the same type through the uniqueness of its motifs and episodes and plot developments.

Unlike other tales of the same type, the three sisters are princesses. The king hears his daughters' conversation, marries the eldest daughter to a prince, the middle one to a rich merchant, and the youngest to a man of middle standing. Only the youngest sister fulfills her promise, giving birth to golden-haired twins—a boy and a girl, each with a golden scepter in their hand (symbol of being heir to the throne), and every morning a purse of gold on the pillow. The other sisters do not even try to weave the promised carpet and bake bread, reasoning that it does not befit them as princesses to do work. The envious sisters, through a midwife, replace the twins with two puppies, and throw the children into the river in a basket. If in other tales the children are immediately found (by a fisherman, miller, hermit, wealthy man-like giant), in this tale the children in the basket caught in reeds are fed by a goat for several days until the goat owner realizes that his goat is giving less milk than usual. After eight years of accepting the old man as their father, the children realize that he is not their father and set out to search for their parents. The envious sisters see the golden-haired boy with a golden scepter in the market and realize that the twins have not been destroyed. They first send the golden-haired hero after Hazaran Blbul, then after a girl who understands the bird's language (translator), and finally after Hazaran Blbul's mistress, Tazara. One of the peculiarities of this tale is that if in other tales the hero's advisors are old people (except for the Ayrarat variant, where the advisor was a horse inherited from the father), here initially the advisor is the hero's horse, then Hazaran Blbul's mistress. Through Hazaran Blbul and its mistress, the children are able to reveal the truth and restore their own and their mother's rights.

In the plot of this folktale, archaic episodes have been preserved that give grounds to believe that it has retained one of the manifestations of the matriarchy institution - the issues of maternal lineage priority in society. In the folktale, the heir's mother is a princess, while the father is a representative of the middle class, therefore the child's rights are determined through the maternal line.

The Kars tale "Yashifidan and Chnashkharik" differs in certain episodes from similar folktales. Unlike other folktales, the golden-haired and golden-nailed twins born at a specific time period are placed separately in boxes and thrown from the window into the river. The children are found and raised by a miller. While in other folktales of this type the hero travels several times in search of magical objects (Hazaran Blbul, fiery horse, immortality apple, magical tree, magical millstone, etc.), in this tale the Witch sends Yashifidan to bring Chnashkharik's embroidery hoop (weaving frame), convinced that he too will not return. While in a series of similar folktales the hero turns to stone and is revived through his sister's intervention, in this tale Chnashkharik does not allow Yashifidan to return. The hero's horse returns home, the sister understands that her brother is in trials and sets off to follow him. In this tale, the deception is revealed through Chnashkharik, and the twins and their mother restore their rights.

We have presented the above-mentioned folktales (from Shirak, Kars, and Kharberd) in detail because they differ in certain motifs not only from Armenian folk tales but also from similar tales of other peoples.

Among the examined Armenian folk tales, twins are born in nine of them, three children in one (Taron's "The Tale of Pilpul Hazaru"), and a golden-haired boy in another (Gharadagh's

⁸ The tale was recorded by Susie Hugasyan in the 1950s in Detroit from her grandmother, Mariam Serabyan, a storyteller from Kharberd. Mariam Serabyan was born in 1875 in Kharberd (Kharput) and died in 1953 in Detroit [17, p. 537].

"The Golden-Haired Boy"). In all folktales, the golden newborns are replaced with animal cubs and removed from the palace for destruction (thrown into rivers or seas in boxes or baskets, left in forests or ravines). By God's mercy, the children end up with a miller (in most folktales), and in some tales with a rich man, hermit, lame devil, merchant, fisherman, or solitary old woman.

Due to circumstances, the hero's envious aunts learn that the children are alive and try to destroy the legitimate heir through a midwife or old witch by giving impossible tasks. The impossible tasks in the examined folktales are diverse, and to fulfill these tasks, the hero's advisors demand bringing magical objects (immortal apple, magical tree, special melon, elephant task, master's tools), Hazaran Blbul (Tuti ghush), fiery horse, and finally in some folktales the mistress of the Hazaran Blbul (Bildiliki Marjan, Tanzara Khanum, Dili-dili Marjan, etc.), who reveals the deception. The dishonored or imprisoned queen restores her rights in various ways, while the evildoers are subjected to capital punishment.

Tales of Magic of Other Peoples in the ATU 707 Type Context

Stith Thompson and later Hans-Jörg Uther consider that the earliest literary manifestations of this type of folktale are the third tale of the fourth night in Italian novelist Gianfrancesco Straparola's "Pleasant Nights" (1550), as well as the earlier created Arabian "Thousand and One Nights," which entered Europe through Antoine Galland's French translation (late 17th-early 18th century).

Unlike the ATU 707 type framework, according to which all three sisters boast that they will have golden-haired triplets, in both Straparola's tale and the Arabian tale, and Armenian folk tales, only the youngest of the three sisters promises that she will have golden-haired children.

To emphasize the correspondence with the international type of folktales, let us briefly present Straparola's tale: The youngest of three sisters promises to have two boys and one girl whose hair is made of gold reaching to their shoulders, with necklaces on their necks and stars on their foreheads. At the time of the children's birth, the king was absent. Taking advantage of this circumstance, the envious sisters, at the demand of the king's mother (the king's mother as an evildoer occurs only in Straparola's version), replace the children with puppies born on the same day that had stars on their foreheads, while the midwife, placing the children in a box, throws them into the river. The children's mother is sent to the laundry house, where she lived in unspeakable conditions. By God's care, the miller takes the box from the river and keeps the children. When the children come of age, they understand that they are not the miller's children and leave home. During a hunt, the king sees the children and invites them to the palace for dinner. As a result, the children's grandmother and envious aunts understand that the children did not die and try to destroy them through the grandmother by giving impossible tasks. The brothers are sent after dancing water, singing apple, and bright green talking bird. The white dove helps the brothers with advice. After numerous trials, the children obtain the dancing water, singing apple, and talking bird, who reveals the truth. The king returns his wife from the laundry house to the palace, while the evildoers are burned at the stake.

There is no doubt that this tale by Straparola has a folklore basis, like "Panchatantra", "Thousand and One Nights", or "Decameron." It would be wrong to consider that Italo Calvino's tale "The Beautiful Green Bird" [18, pp. 315-323], recorded and developed in Florence in the 1950s, is a retelling of Straparola's tale. These two tales, despite similarities (dancing water, talking wise green bird), differ greatly from each other. In Calvino's tale, the children are not triplets. They are born separately (the children in Taron's "The Tale of Pilpul Hazaru" are also born separately). The first boy is replaced with a monkey cub, the second boy with a puppy, the third - the girl - with a tiger cub. After the third child's birth, the king imprisons his wife in a dungeon. The children are found by a sailor. The children sent to trials are helped with advice by a hermit (in Straparola's - a white dove). The sought

objects are dancing water, musical tree, and talking wise green bird, through which the deception is revealed. Comparing these two Italian tales, we see that Calvino's version also has connections with "Thousand and One Nights", [19, pp. 391-424], particularly the children's birth motif, which probably penetrated Florence through Antoine Galland's translation.

The Lithuanian folk tale "The Deceived King" [11, pp. 129-133] has connections in the children's birth motif with both Straparola's and Taron's "The Tale of Pilpul Hazaru" similar tales of magic. In all three tales, the king marries the youngest sister, the children are born in turn - one per year. While in the Italian and Armenian tales the children are born with royal symbols (necklaces on necks, stars on foreheads, and golden scepters), in the Lithuanian tale the children - two boys and a girl - do not have such symbols. In the Lithuanian tale, the envious sisters send the brothers through a hermit after a talking bird, singing and dancing tree, and yellow water. The boys do not follow the old man's advice and turn to stone. The sister sets out to search for her brothers. Following the old man's advice, she revives her brothers with immortal water and together with the talking bird, singing and dancing tree, and yellow water, they return to the estate. The talking bird reveals the truth, the children and mother restore their rights.

We will not address the Russian similar folktale series "Up to the knees - gold, up to the elbows - silver" [10, pp. 296-307] because these tales are classified under the SUS 707 type titled "Miracle Children" [13, pp.177-178] and differ significantly from ATU 707.

Among the neighboring peoples' tales of magic, the Kurdish [12, pp.71-80] "Golden Curls"⁹ and Turkish [16, pp. 77-84] "Jan-Ghushu, Chor-Ghushu"¹⁰ tales are noteworthy. In both tales, the opening motif is the same: the padishah orders that no one in his city light a lamp after dark. The command's execution is violated by three weaver girls. The padishah, hearing the girls' conversation (promises in case of marrying the king), takes all three as wives. Then the folktales' plot developments change. Unlike Uther's framework, in the Kurdish tale the miracle newborns removed from the palace for destruction are fed by a wild goat until they can independently care for their livelihood, while in the Turkish tale, the box with children is found by a dervish, and the children are fed by a mother deer sent by God, which came down from the mountains. The feeding of newborns by goats or deer has mythological roots. In ancient Greek mythology, Zeus's mother Rhea, to save the child from Kronos, hides him in a cave on Mount Ida in Crete, where he is fed by the goat Amalthea. Later, Zeus uses the goat's accidentally broken horn (horn of plenty) to fulfill his wishes [15 pp. 65]. This motif is also present in the Kharberd tale "The Golden-Haired Twins."

In both tales, due to circumstances, the children's envious aunts understand that they are alive and undertake to give impossible tasks to destroy them. Noteworthy is the hero's transformation to stone through the magical influence of speech, which is present in both Kurdish and Turkish tales, as well as in one of the Shirak tales ("The Tale of Bildiliki Marjan"). These words are "chor"¹¹ and "jan"¹². In the Turkish tale, the importance of these words is expressed even in the tale's title - "Jan-Ghushu, Chor-Ghushu" [16, p. 77]. Incidentally, the ghush (bird) is one of the sought objects in this type of tales of magic (Hazaran Blbul [9, p. 22], Tuti Ghush [9, p. 46-47], Green Bird [14, p. 140], etc.). In all three tales, the hero turns to stone with the word "chor" and is revived with the word "jan."

⁹ Recorded in 1976 from storyteller Osee Shabab in Nor Geghi village, Nairi district.

¹⁰ Recorded by Turkish folklorist P. Boratav from his mother, who in her youth heard the tale in the Armenian-inhabited town of Kilis in Gaziantep (Ayntap) vilayet. According to Boratav's notes, the tale was widespread in Erzurum, Sivas, Sarikamish, Kars, and other settlements.

¹¹ An expression of fierce reproach - a response to some inquiry or action.

¹² A dialectal word meaning "my dear, my soul."

Hans-Jörg Uther has provided about a hundred variants of the ATU 707 type. Within the framework of our article, we have selected several interesting manifestations of this type from both Armenian and other peoples.

CONCLUSION: The study of five folktales from the Kars-Shirak region has shown that in the context of Hans-Jörg Uther's international classification ATU 707 type titled "Three Golden Children," most of the motifs of the examined folktales correspond to their framework. Nevertheless, they have certain distinctive differences in motifs, heroes, anti-heroes, advisors, sought magical objects, and plot developments, which are conditioned by the geographical position of the regions, climatic and socio-economic conditions, and other factors.

The detailed study of the tales of magic of the Kars-Shirak region has shown that they have more connections with the folktales of other regions of Armenia and neighboring peoples - Kurdish, Turkish tales, which are consequences of regional material interpenetrations.

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