

Philology

Arabic Folk Fairy Tales: some Markers of Differentiation

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ABSTRACT. The paper deals with Arabic (Egyptian) folkloric fairy tales. The observation is focused on the material collected in Egypt at different times by various researchers (including the author). First of all, the following should be demarcated from one another: a) tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*, which underwent standardization already in the Middle Ages and, thus, should not be considered as texts of the folkloric type proper, and b) folkloric texts which did not undergo standardization. Naturally, in Arabic folklore fairy tales are attested which are originated in the Arabic world proper, and there are also fairy tales, the plot and subject of which found its way from the other traditions (migratory stories should also be taken into account). Fairy tales of the foreign origin are adapted in Arabic orally transmitted literature: names of characters, terms expressing social gradation, etc., are Arabized. Nevertheless, certain formal markers are identifiable and allow differentiating Arabic fairy tales proper and those of the non-Arabic origin, including without the analysis of the plot and subject of these fairy tales. In the paper some of these formal markers are brought to light. Attention is focused on issues such as: the beginning and ending of a fairy tale, which differentiate, on the one hand, non-standardized texts, and, on the other hand, fairy tales of foreign origin and literary (literarized) fairy tales. The latter bear certain resemblance with one another according to the given markers. In addition, Arabic (Egyptian) folkloric fairy tales are marked by special verbal involvement of listeners in the act of narration. It is also noteworthy that “3” as the magic number is not characteristic of Arabic folklore. © 2017 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: Arabic, folklore, fairy-tales

The purpose of the present paper is to single out several formal markers, based on which without analysis of the fable and plot, it is possible to differentiate the fairy tales of properly Arabic origin and those of non-Arabic origin. The analysis relies on the texts, recorded directly from the informants in Egypt in different times by the author or other researchers [1; 2:87-97; 3:83-86; 4: 119-121].

First of all, the following should be distinguished: a) the most popular Arabic fairy tales – “1001 Nights” (and some others) and b) properly folkloric, non-standardized Arabic fairy tales. The fairy tales of the “1001 Nights” only conventionally can be considered as folkloric, as they first conceived in the oral literature in the 9th-14th, 15th cc have already in the Middle Ages undergone standardization, “literaturification”. There

is also the so-called dialect version of the “1001 Nights” published by Muḥsin Maḥd [5], which also might not be implied as purely dialectal.

The object of the analysis of the paper is the product of the folk oral literature, which has not been an object of any standardization. Cultural interference, being reflected in different fields of the language and life, is seen in folklore too. In consequence, in Arabic non-standardized fairy tales two layers can be distinguished: of properly Arabic origin and of foreign origin (migratory stories should also be taken into account).

The fairy tales of foreign origin are adapted in Egyptian oral literature. In particular, the characters’ personal names are replaced with Arabic ones: *sitt el-usn* (Lady of Beauty), *š ir mu ammad* (Clever Muhammad), and similar names, characteristic for Arabic folklore; we can meet the terms, showing social gradation, which exist only in the Arabic reality: *’omda* – village chief, etc.

In this context, the issue of denoting the monarch is noteworthy. As it is known, caliph in Arabic community had quite a specific status. He was a supreme vicar (*al f* – Arab. “successor, deputy”, *al fa* – “supreme deputy”), “Allah’s shadow” on the earth, secular and religious authority at the same time. Accordingly, in Arabic tradition they do not award the status of a caliph to any invented character. Caliphs are characters of a fairy tale, only if this character is a “real”, historically known caliph (e.g. *H r n ar-Raš d*). In the contemporary folkloric fairy tales, a caliph does not appear with the status of a monarch. We can meet sultan or comparatively amorphous for folkloric tradition term *malik* “king”.

As for the topic of the paper directly.

1. The Arabic folkloric fairy tales differ from the standardized ones in the exordium. Particularly, the standardized fairy tales’ exordium, is represented in the following manner (see the “1001 Nights” [e.g. 6:13]):

ukiya wa-l-l hu ’a’lamu ’annahu f m ma min qad mi z-zam ni wa-s lifi l-’a ri wa-l-’aw ni

k na... etc.

“They say, and Allah is the Best Knower, that a long time ago, in the epoch gone by, there was...” (it is worthy to note the abundance of practically synonymous words meaning “time, epoch”, by which is achieved a certain artistic effect). Some small variations are possible in different editions of the text [see, e.g. 7:2].

Or in the following manner:

bala an ... ’annahu...

“It has reached to me (here can be included appeal to a reader) that...”, etc.

The folkloric (non-standardized) fairy tales have different exordia. Such exordia are templates, sometimes they can vary a little:

Exordium I, the most common exordium

Short version:

k n (y) m k n

“Whatever happened happened”.

Long variation (is confirmed with some transformations):

k n y m k n y sa’ad y akr m wl yiṭ b l-ḥad s illa bi-zikr n-nab ’al ṣ-ṣal t w-(w-afḍal) s-sal m . .

“Whatever happened, happened, you the happy nobles, and the story would not be good without mentioning of the Prophet, prayers on him and the peace” [More details about the formal structure of the Arabic (Egyptian) folkloric fairy tales see: 8:39-49].

The expected replica to this phrase is repetition of the last words:

’al ṣ-ṣal t w-(w-afḍal) s-sal m!

“(Let it be) prayers on him and the (best) peace!”

It is natural that the short variation of the exordium does not require any replica, as it does not contain the reference to the Prophet.

The abovementioned exordium sometimes has also a continuation in a form of a dialogue. Namely, to the text is added the following:

- *kam n ṣallu ’a-n-nab !* (“Pray more for the Prophet!”)

- *ṣalla ‘a-n-nab !* (“Prayer for the Prophet!”)
 - *kam n waḥḥadu l-l (h)!* (“Profess ones more Allah”!)

- *waḥid al-l (h)!* “Allah is one!” [1: 230.]

Exordium II, word-combination of dialogue type:

- *ṣalla ‘a-n-nab !* “Pray for the Prophet!”

- *‘al s-sal m w-afḍal ṣ-ṣal t!* “Peace on him and the best prayers!”

Exordium III:

- *nagg k all (h)* “Let Allah save you!”

- *nagg k all (h)!* [2:87]

Exordium IV, rhymed [See: 1: 229]:

daḥalt min ‘ ffa li-‘ ffa “I went from a district to a district,

la’ t m anni b-ziffa I saw a singer in the wedding,

la’ t ḥab bi mittak I saw my sweetheart, resting her elbow

‘ala maḥadda fustu’ On a salad pillow,

‘ l-li ḥudi l-mafat ḥ wa-sbi’ He told me, take the keys and lead me

aḥadt l-mafat ḥ w-sibi’t I took the keys and I leaded him,

la’ t ṣabb ya labb ya I saw a pretty girl

zayy ṣ-ṣams mḍaww ya With a face, light like the sun

mittak ya ‘ala miḥaddit ḥr r ṭarr ya She was resting her elbow on a soft silk pillow,

w-law k n b tna ‘urayyib If our house were closer

kunt gibtilku ṣoḥm zubayib I would bring you one plate of raisins,

taklu lamma tṣallu ‘a-l-ḥab b You would eat them while dreaming about your sweetheart”.

The replica of the listener of this text is:

alf ṣal t ‘al y! “Thousand prayers on him!”

Exordium V: This exordium does not belong to “common” ones, as it starts a specific fairy tale. These are the fairy tales of a type, which do not have a real fable, but they are represented as a certain chain of events (often – rhymed), and they make a certain riddle. Only one exordium of this type is known to me [for the fairy tale proper see 1:229]:

aḥattak ḥadd ta “I told you a fairy tale
bi-z-z t malt ta, Mixed with oil (Here we have wordplay: on one hand, “bi-z-z t malt ta” means “mixed with, made with oil”, and on the other hand, means “chatted”, “senseless hubble-bubble”),

ḥalaft m kilha I swore not to eat

ḥatta y gi t girha Till its merchant comes”.

As for the fairy tales of foreign origin, they

a) Either start immediately with the main text, without exordium: “The sultan died and left a son”, “Silsila resembled to her mother”, etc.,

b) Or start with the standardized version of the exordium (See the fairy tales of the “1001 Nights”) “In ancient time, in the epoch gone by...” etc. We may deem that the first word (*ḥukiya* ...) is removed from the text, as the verb is in the passive form (the internal passive in the verbs in the dialects is cancelled).

In other words, the fairy tales of foreign origin does not have added the exordium like the folkloric ones.

Thus, the first formal marker for differentiating of the fairy tales of Arabic and non-Arabic origin is exordium.

2. “Three” (“3”) in many traditions is a magic number, but the Arabic tradition does not recognize it as a magic one. If in a tale there is “three brothers,” “The sultan had three children”, if something important happened during the third attempt, there are three magic things, – the fairy tale is of foreign origin. At such place in an Arabic fairy tale we meet, e.g., two children, something important happens during the fourth attempt, etc.

3. The following indicator is the end of the fairy tale.

In Egyptian tradition we meet different versions of the fairy tale ending:

Ending I, short version:

‘ ṣfi-t-tab t wa-n-nab t

“He lived without trouble and in wealth”

Long version (we meet it where the main heroes are a couple):

‘ šu fi-t-tab t wa-n-nab t w-ḥallafu wl d/ ṣuby n wa-ban t

“They lived without trouble and in wealth and got sons and daughters”.

Ending II, short version:

t ta t ta fir it l-ḥadd ta

“Tuta, tuta, the story is finished”

Long version [see: 1: 229]:

t ta t ta fir it l-ḥadd ta “Tuta, tuta, the story is finished”

ḥelwa walla malt ta Is the chatted good or idle?

w-in k nit ḥelwa If it was good

‘al k enwa Then sing for us (now you owe us a song)

w-in k nit malt ta And if chatted (idle)

iḥka l-n ḥadd ta Tell us a fairy tale.”

Ending III, combined, the synthetic version of the endings I and II:

šu fi-t-tab t wa-n-nab t “They lived without trouble and in wealth

w-ḥallafu ṣuby n/wl d wa-ban t And got sons and daughters,

wa t ta t ta fir it l-ḥadd ta And Tuta, Tuta, the story is finished”.

As for the fairy tales of foreign origin, based on my observations, they

a) Either end directly with the text: e.g., ...*itwakkal ‘-al-l* (“He relied on Allah”, i.e. went his way);

b) Or to them the short ending versions are added: *wa t ta t ta fir it l-ḥadd ta*, or *šu fi-t-tab t wa-n-nab t w-ḥallafu ṣuby n/wl d wa-ban t*.

The Arabic folklore proper is marked with more long versions of ending.

4. From the above-evidenced material it is seen, that the Arabic (Egyptian) folkloric fairy tales at the exordium and the ending have such word combinations, which imply:

a) Verbal participation of a listener too (by mentioning Allah or the Prophet). and/or

b) Circularity, co-participation in narration (when somebody else has to start the narration now).

In the fairy tales of foreign origin such contact with the listener is not provided. Accordingly, if at the beginning or the ending of a fairy tale verbal participation of a listener is implied, the fairy tale can be deemed of Arabic origin. Though this condition can be considered only as auxiliary, the main markers here are the set expressions and passages, which in Arabic (Egyptian) folklore represent the fairy tale exordia and endings.

ფილოლოგია

არაბული ფოლკლორული ზღაპრები: დიფერენცირების ზოგიერთი საკითხი

ნ. ეჯიბაძე

ივანე ჯავახიშვილის სახელობის თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, აღმოსავლეთმცოდნეობის სასწავლო-სამეცნიერო ინსტიტუტი, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ე. ჯაველიძის მიერ)

სტატიამი დადგენილია ზოგიერთი ფორმალური მარკერი, რომელთა საფუძველზეც შესაძლებელია საკუთრივ არაბული (ეგვიპტური) და არაარაბული წარმოშობის ზღაპრების ერთმანეთისგან დიფერენცირება, მათ შორის — ფაბულისა და სიუჟეტის ანალიზის გარეშე. დაკვირვება ეფუძნება ეგვიპტეში სხვადასხვა დროსა და სხვადასხვა მკვლევრის (მათ შორის, სტატიის ავტორის) მიერ შეგროვებულ მასალას.

ზღაპრის კონტექსტში ყურადღებას იქცევს მონარქის აღნიშვნის საკითხი. როგორც ცნობილია, ხალიფას არაბულ სოციუმში ფრიად სპეციფიკური სტატუსი ჰქონდა, ის იყო “ალაჰის ჩრდილი” დედამიწაზე, საერო და სასულიერო ხელისუფალი ერთდროულად. ამიტომაც ხალიფა შეიძლება იყოს ზღაპრის პერსონაჟი, მხოლოდ თუკი პერსონაჟად ისტორიულად ცნობილი, “ნამდვილი” ხალიფა გამოდის (მაგ., *H r n ar-Raš d*). თანამედროვე ფოლკლორულ ზღაპრებში მონარქის სტატუსით გვხვდება “სულტანი”, ან — ფოლკლორული ტრადიციისთვის შედარებით ამორფული ტერმინი *malik* “მეფე”.

საკუთრივ არაბული ფოლკლორული ზღაპრების დიფერენცირება უცხო ფაბულის ზღაპრებისგან შესაძლებელია რამდენიმე მარკერის მიხედვით: ფოლკლორული, არასტანდარტიზებული, ზღაპრისთავი და ზღაპრის დასასრული ყოველთვის გარითმულია. მათთვის ცნობილია რამდენიმე მოდელი, რომლებიც მცირედ შეიძლება ვარირებდეს. თუ ზღაპარი დაირთავს ზღაპრისთავის არასტანდარტიზებულ ვერსიას, ის არაბული ფოლკლორის ნიმუშია. უცხო ფაბულის ზღაპარი დაირთავს ან მხოლოდ სტანდარტიზებულ ზღაპრისთავს, ან სრულიად მის გარეშეა წარმოდგენილი. რაც შეეხება ზღაპრის დასასრულს, უცხო წარმოშობის ზღაპარი ან მთავრდება უშუალოდ ამბით (დასასრულის გარეშე), ან დაირთავს დასასრულის მოკლე ვარიანტს. დასასრულის გრძელი ვარიანტებით მარკირებულია საკუთრივ არაბული ფოლკლორი. თუ ზღაპარში იკვეთება “3” როგორც მაგიური რიცხვი, ზღაპარი უცხო წარმოშობისაა. ამავედროულად, თუკი ზღაპრისთავი ან ზღაპრის დასასრული გულისხმობს მსმენელის სპეციფიკურ ვერბალურ ჩართულობას თხრობის აქტში, საქმე გვაქვს საკუთრივ არაბულ ფოლკლორთან. უცხო წარმოშობის ზღაპრებში ასეთი კონტაქტი მსმენელთან არაა გათვალისწინებული.

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