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ՆՎԻՐԱՏՈՒՆ ԵՎ ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՏՈՒՆ ՀԱՅ ԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԱԿԱՆ ՀԵՔԻԱԹՆԵՐՈՒՄ. ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԵՎ ՆՇԱՑԱՆԿ

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MARINE KHEMCHYAN
DONOR AND ADVISER IN ARMENIAN FOLK FAIRY TALES
RESEARCH AND INDEX
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Main genre features of the Armenian folk fairy tales are conditioned by the nature of the epic world presented there. Especially in the magic tales the world is formed with a unique environment, with various items present in that envoironment and with main and secondary characters who are defined by their specific functions. The two-parts (A and B) monograph "Donor and Adviser in Armenian Folk Fairy Tales" by Marine Khemchyan, PhD, senior researcher in the RA NAS Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, is dedicated to the functions of advising and donating, common in the Armenian folk fairy tales, as well as the characters, items, means and ways of performing them.

Although this issue in some way has been touched upon previously in the monographs and articles about fairy tales, it is the first time that the question is exclusively the main topic of a complete, systemized study that includes a wide range of materials. Studying almost all published Armenian folk fairy tales, the author carries out a study according to a fairy tale character and item classification defined by herself, taking into account the Armenian and international expertise, using traditional and modern folklore research methods.

In the introduction a general overview of the genre features and types of a fairy tale is given. The main editions of the Armenian fairy tales are singled out and noted, the modern history of the research is studied. The subject of the study, the main goals and the scientific novelty are defined. It is worth

mentioning that a reference is also made to those international fairy tale studies that are important for the methodological basis of the monograph. Especially the functional classification principle of fairy tale characters by Vladimir Propp is singled out, on the basis of which they are noted and classified.

In the first chapter, entitled "Donors and Advisers as the Characters Contributing to the Actions of the Fairy Tale Main Character", the mentioned characters are explored in the context of relevant situations and actions. Mostly based on the research of the Armenian folk magic fairy tales, in the first subsection of the first chapter Khemchyan introduces a two-step classification of fairy tale donors and assistants, and presents the issue in accordance with that in the subsequent parts and chapters. Particularly, human and human-like donors and advisers, animals, birds, wildlife, supernatural beings and objects are presented.

With a comparative, independent and thorough examination of a large material collected from different ethnographic regions the study clearly distinguishes and describes the donor and adviser characters: God, angels, various old men and women, kings and viziers, animals, birds, characters from flora and fauna.

Thanks to the donors and the reward-assistants given by them to the main characters, the latter are able to solve their tasks, to fill the initial gap, which is the main impetus and goal of the fairy tale plot development.

Worth mentioning is the author's aspiration to put the large and heterogeneous material in pre-defined methodological-analytical templates, but, as is often the case, this tendency inevitably leads to a certain schematism. The latter is mainly conditioned by the structural-functional method chosen for the fairy tale studies. In the case of each fairy tale these characters have the peculiarities of a fairy tale plot, separate motives, which in the case of a functional approach are not entirely viewable. The adviser and donor characters and their functions are distinguished and described, however in some cases their origins are disregarded or their ancient origins or their mythological prototypes are just mentioned, which is not always true and it is necessary to at least give some additional details.

However, within the chosen approach and in the context of the research issues, the character classifications are clear and logical, the examples given are appropriate.

In the second chapter, entitled "The Supernatural Assistants of the Fairy Tale Main Character", a separate reference is made to the assistant characters and items with magical qualities. Characters with physical power and various features and magical items help the fairy tale characters where the advisors and donors are not able to help. As in the previous chapter, here they are clearly classified and described.

In the two subsections of the third chapter, "Partial Manifestation of the Donor and Adviser Character's Functions", a special reference is made to the tales recorded by Garegin Srvandztyants and to the manifestations of advising and donations in dreams. The connections between fairy tales and dreams, as well as fairy tales and ancient beliefs are examined. Examples of help given to the fairy tale characters through a dream are shown.

The second part of the work, entitled "Index of the Functions of the Donors and Advisers of the Armenian Fairy Tales" is extremely useful for further fairy tale studies, where the types, kinds and functions of the advisers and donors, supernatural assistants, as well as the results of quantitative analysis of the fairy tale character assistants are given in three separate subsections. With a quantitative analysis of 605 donors, advisers, other supernatural characters and magical objects of 234 fairy tales, it is shown that in Armenian fairy tales from 1 to 16 assistants can be introduced. And a remarkable fact too: advising characters are predominant in the studied fairy tales, as it is not in all cases when advice ends with a donation.

The monograph has indisputable merits and small shortcomings that do not overshadow the large research. In particular, in our opinion, little attention is paid to the realistic tales, of course this is dictated by the demand of the issue, but it would be interesting to study the nature of advice in this type of tales.

We are sure that the monograph would have benefited if a bigger reference had been made to the advisers and donors found in the fairy tales of other peoples. There are some few references and it is noteworthy that in almost all cases the numbers of this or that function or motif are given in accordance with the international indexes of fairy tales. It would be remarkable to compare other genres of the Armenian epic legend, in particular the "Daredevils of Sasun" epic, motifs corresponding to various legends. In some cases, there are such links in the footnote.

Such problems, however, do not overshadow the high-quality and thorough scientific work done. On the whole, Marine Khemchyan has created a serious scientific study that can be useful and interesting to both philologists and folklorists, as well as to a wider range of readers interested in the Armenian folk tales and folklore.

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