

- 57 Cf. R. Frye, The Heritage of Persia, London 1962, p. 161.
- 58 Cf. above no 52: IV, p. 270.
- 59 Ibid., III, p. 134.
- 60 Old Persian huvāra 'zmī (cf. Ch. Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, Strassburg 1904, p. 1855-1856; cf. also E. Herzfeld, The Persian Empire, p. 325). NB., F. Wolff in his Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname, Berlin 1935, notes a double use by Ferdousi of the expression Xāvar zamin (p. 314) and his using nine times the expression ze Xāvar tā Bāxtar (p. 101), never ze Bāxtar tā Xāvar. - The Cyrus' army marched for Bactria after conquering Chorasm, and not the other way round.
- 61 Cf. F. Wolff, op. cit., p. 314.
- 62 Zoroaster and his World, II, p. 705.
- 63 Ibid., p. 707.
- 64 Cf. R. Frye, op. cit., p. 161.
- 65 Ghurur axbār mulūk al furs (H. Zotenberg, Paris 1900), p. 47.
- 66 Cf. E. Herzfeld, Zoroaster and his World, II, p. 708.
- 67 Ibid., I, p. 172.
- 68 Cf. above, note 55.
- 69 Ġang-e bozorg-e Key Xosrau bā Afrāsiyāb, b. 2960.
- 70 Feridun, b. 474.
- 71 Ibid., b. 478.
- 72 Tabari, Mohammad ibn Ġarir, Tā'rix ar-rāsul wa 'Imulūk, tar-
ğome-je Abu'l-Qāsem Pājende, I-XVI, Teheran, 1352-1354 (1974-1976), II,
p. 422.

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THE HEROES OF THE IRANIAN EPIC TALE

In the researches on the epic literature efforts have been made in order to reveal regularities of the epic plot and to formulate some, more or less universal, scheme of its development.

A concise design of epic action has been established by A. B. Lord¹ and afterwards - by P. A. Grintser² in whose comparative table the successive items of epic plot are juxtaposed with the parallel ones of the nature myth. For, according to the scholars involved, the source of the structural model of the epic tale is always a calendary myth, having a periodically dying and resurrecting god of fertility for its hero. The third genre of folklore, following the analogical compositional scheme is the fairy-tale, as described by Propp³. Thus, myth, epic and fairy-tale represent the three different applications and ways of evolution of the same plot pattern. Their common subject is, in the most general terms, the paradox of an indissoluble bond between life and death, and the search for immortality.

In all the three cases this search assumes the form of the hero's journey to a place which may be identified with the other world. The purpose of such a journey is a quest of some person disappeared, having been abducted or killed by an enemy. In the myth the hero's death is temporary; in the epics it may be somehow apparent or replaced by the death of the

main character's substitute (i. e. somebody, who is his sacrificial equivalent). The indispensable element of the journey is the fight with an enemy, often taking the shape of a monster or dragon and being the persecutor or guardian of the missing person. In the classical version of the myth underlying the epics, the oppressor is a god of death and drought, who tries to destroy life on earth. The oppressed hero is, respectively, a god or goddess of nature, and the person who sets out on the journey in order to rescue him (or her) is his (or her) divine spouse. The journey itself usually has a ritual character; it consists of a number of stages, marked by different obstacles, duels with minor monsters, meetings with personages which may be hostile or helpful to the traveling hero. In the general outline of the scenario common to the epics, myth and fairy-tale, the journey occupies the central place⁴. The stages preceding and following this culminating point of action also develop in a parallel way in all the three genres.

The authors dealing with the problem fix the beginning of the action at different points, depending on the kind of materials they base on⁵. Sometimes the epic story starts already with the miraculous birth and childhood of the hero. Its real opening is, however, the genesis of the conflict leading to the death or disappearance of a hero (or heroine). The conflict - in myth as well as in epics - may be caused by the hero drawing on himself the wrath of a god or postponing the love of a goddess; in epic its reason may be also a family quarrel, hatred of jealous rivals etc. In the beginning of the fairy-tale, too, a deprivation situation must occur, so that it could be removed by the hero in the later course of events. This lack comes into being in the effect of some evil character's attempts, often with the unintentional cooperation of a positive hero, who breaks an interdiction or neglects a duty.

The ending of the scenario in all the three genres above considered comprises the hero's victory over the oppressor, finding the missing person (in the fairy-tale usually also - the wedding) and coming back home. The hero's return is often followed by his being recognized and a series of events closely connected with it - including the hero's disguise or transformation, some final tests he has to undergo and possibly - the death of some of his relatives. It occurs also that - at the point where the epic tale should

be brought to an end - it reopens again i. e. after the hero's happy return and the achievement of his aims, a new deprivation and disturbance of the newly achieved equilibrium occurs, so he sets out for another journey of the same character⁶.

In his morphology of the fairy-tale Propp introduces a differentiation which is also very useful for the correct interpretation of the epic tale construction: he distinguishes the passive and active variants of the plot, taking into account the person on which the interest of the narrative is focussed. For the narrative may follow the adventures either of the injured person who makes the journey and overcomes the obstacles himself, or of the searching one. Accordingly, the central hero is the very character who makes the journey, and all the remaining roles in the fairy-tale are dependant on the other characters' attitudes towards him⁷.

In Grintser's opinion, the transfer of attention from the person being searched to the searching one constitutes the basic difference between the mythical and epic plot construction. One of the aspects of this phenomenon is a certain "masculinisation" of the epic story as compared to the myth. The motive of an offended goddess, as well as that of a kidnapped wife of the hero - being the main subject of the myth - are reduced to the marginal episodes of the plot in the epic; in its focus remains the male hero's struggle with his foes⁸.

And, while in the calendary myths the active heroes (i. e. the searchers) may be of both sexes, they seem to be exclusively male in the epics. Although it doesn't follow that the missing personages should be necessarily female - a number of epic monuments may be quoted in which both the active and passive heroes are males.

Not only this central couple of characters, however, is a constant element of the common myth-epic-and-fairy-tale scenario. Propp shows in his analysis that all the heroes appearing in the fairy-tale act within certain standard rôles to which the functions and attributes required by the scenario are ascribed in some definite way. These spheres of activity he calls the circles of action. The pattern of action in all the three genres here considered running in a parallel way, the system of rôles accomplished by the heroes and the distribution of functions among them will be also comparable.

Besides the searcher and the missing person, whom he generally labels "the princess", Propp enumerates a group of characters present in each realisation of the fairy-tale pattern. These are: the antagonist, the father of the princess (who shares with the princess a number of her functions, so that they both belong to the same circle of action), a person sending the searcher on his journey (often - his father), the donors and the magic helpers⁹. The personages of the last two types are characteristic for the fairy-tale and they determine its magic properties; therefore they do not occur in the epics. But - as Grintser observes - the epic heroes also have their helpers, though not the magic ones. A type of helper most specific for the epic tale is the hero's substitute, i. e. his close friend or somebody strikingly resembling him who dies instead of him¹⁰.

In spite of the parallelism between the plot patterns of myth, epic and fairy-tale, as well as of those within the genres themselves, it is obvious that each of these genres as well as each nation or cultural area possessing its own oral literature, creates the variants of plots proper to itself only. Respectively, the systems of rôles will take on local forms within different cultural areas.

The aim of the present paper will be a brief analysis of the distribution of the heroes' functions in the Iranian epic tale. The source of the examined stories will be Ferdousi's Šāh-nāme, or - precisely speaking - its first, purely heroic part¹¹. Till now, this great monument of the Iranian epic has not been included in serious analyses in any comparative studies of world's epic literature. As it seems, the fault is with the specialists of the Iranian literature who usually ignore the features of the oral epic style in the language and composition of Ferdousi's poem, and consequently do not realise clearly enough the authenticity and high antiquity of all its motives.

Anybody who reads the Šāh-nāme attentively, will notice that the whole first half of the poem consists of a number of stories which follow one another and are all built on the same pattern. The succeeding stories may be designated by the following sets of characters:

Kayumars	- Siyāmak	- Hušang	Bače-ye Ahriman ¹²
Jamšid	- Ābtin	- Feridun	Zahhāk ¹³
Feridun	- Iraj	- Manučehr	Tur and Salm ¹⁴
Pašang	- Agriras	- []	Afrāsiyāb ¹⁵
Key Kāvus	- Siyāvaš	- Key Xosrou	Afrāsiyāb ¹⁶
Goštāsp	- Esfandiyār	- Bahman	Rostam ¹⁷

Each of these groups includes representatives of three successive generations i. e. a father, a son who is, in general, the central character of the tale, and a grandson (the son's son)¹⁸; the fourth personage of each set is the son's murderer.

The general scheme of the plot runs as follows: The king sends his son to a war or causes his departure to an enemy country. The young heir to the throne sets out, often against his will, and in consequence gets murdered by an enemy. His father is still alive at the time of his death. During the period of mourning which follows the country remains without a defender and the continuity of the dynasty is threatened. And it is so until it is discovered that the murdered prince had left a son. When a new heir is born or is found in some remote place, the period of mourning ends. The young prince becomes a great warrior. He begins a vendetta against his father's murderer and gains a total victory over him. The grandfather dies after having seen the death of his son avenged and his grandson succeeds to the throne. He restores the ideal kingdom which existed before the beginning of the conflict and rules in peace.

Each of the main rôles of this scenario consists of a complex set of features and actions, at least some of which appear in every realisation of the pattern.

The father is usually a person who has been a famous knight or a cultural hero in his youth, sometimes he is also endowed with magic powers. At the same time the tradition burdens all the heroes of this group with some kind of crime or guilt. In order to find traces of this sin we sometimes have to refer to some earlier sources concerning the same heroes; however, the information would always be present somewhere. The most famous sinners among the Iranian mythical kings are Jamšid and Key Kāvus,

both playing the part of father in the epic plot. In the Šāh-nāme their fault consists of a revolt against God expressed in acts of pride and blasphemy, but some other, more concrete forms of it are attested in the old sources. For instance Jamšid teaches mankind to kill animals and to eat their meat, and for this very guilt he is deprived of his immortality¹⁹. In the branch of tradition we deal with in the Šāh-nāme, the guilt of flesh-eating pushed as far as to cannibalism, falls on Zakhāk, the opponent of Jamšid. Such a kind of original sin, being moreover a common feature of the father-hero and his son's murderer²⁰ reaches back to the primitive mythical roots of the conflict which occupies the central place of the Iranian epic tale. As to Kayumars who is the father in the first of the analysed stories, there exists a tradition about his guilt involving violation of a treaty between God and the Evil Spirit²¹. In some cases - as that of Goštāsp - the guilt of the father is not confirmed by any older sources, although it is undeniable in the Šāh-nāme itself. In the story of Goštāsp as well as in that of Key Kāvus the father's complicity in the son's murder is evident. The father's negative attitude towards his own son is caused by jealousy or rivalry between them (for a woman or power). Through his deeds the father puts his son into some conflict situation in which he must perish: the young prince is exiled (like Siyāvaš) or sent to a war (like Esfandiyār). In the remaining stories the preceding father-son rivalry is not mentioned; nevertheless the father - by sending his son to the war - (Kayumars sending Siyāmak, Pašang sending Agrīras) or instigating his conflict with somebody and his departure to the enemy's country (Feridun, by the unequal division of his kingdom) becomes the indirect casual factor of his son's death.

After the death of his son the father remains passive. Sometimes he brings up his grandson (as Kayumars and Feridun do); in other cases the same duty towards the grandson is accomplished by an enemy (Pirān, a member of the hostile party is the tutor of Key Xosrou and Rostam, Esfandiyār's killer, adopts his son Bahman). The grandfather sends his grandson to war against the central hero's killer, but he personally doesn't take part in this war. He is, however the witness of the revenge and dies only after its fulfilment.

The son when assassinated is usually very young. Such a hero is rather an astonishing phenomenon in the heroic milieu of the epics: although he possesses all the knightly virtues, he is a youth of an entirely peaceful character who refuses to fight even if his own security demands it. He believes that the conflict between the two warring parties should be solved without bloodshed and peace between them should be restored. According to this attitude the son-hero remains loyal to his foe and this puts him in conflict with his own surrounding (Agrīras and Siyāvaš). Paradoxically, the effect of the young hero's efforts is just the opposite of his aims: in consequence of his death a new vendetta breaks out and a fresh bloodshed takes place.

Heroes of this kind perish without resistance - not like warriors but like helpless victims (Ābtin, Iraj, Agrīras, Siyāvaš) or, if they are killed in a duel (like Siyāmak and Esfandiyār) their opponents have at their disposal supernatural powers, which cannot be overcome by conventional means. The circumstances of the son-hero's death point to the mythical origin of this type of hero: he is a transformation of a former god of nature, who, in Iranian mythology, often assumes the shape of an animal. There are many examples of the connection between the murdered hero and the sacrificial beast. First of all it is manifested in the case of Siyāvaš; not only is it repeated several times in the Šāh-nāme that Siyāvaš has been killed like a sheep, but furthermore, the strange procedure of the slain reminds one of the ritual slaying of a sacrificial animal. Agrīras is, no doubt, a personage of the same kind. In the Zoroastrian scriptures he is identified with Gōpat-šāh, lord of Patašxvārgar, depicted as half-man and half-bull, constantly making oblations at the shore of the cosmical lake Vouru Kaša²². A close connection occurs also between the two victims of the monster Zakhāk - Feridun's father Ābtin and the magic cow Barmāye, who are systematically substituted for each other in the Šāh-nāme.

As to the first and shortest realisation of the three generation pattern, i. e. that of Siyāmak, its links with the nature myth are apparently not so obvious, but may be easily brought into evidence in the process of structural analysis. And it is precisely here that we have to look for the mythical archetype of the epic plot.

It seems that the story of Siyāmak's death was not found in the earliest layer of tradition. Instead of it Avesta and its Pahlavi complements present the myth of the Primeval Ox²³: just like Siyāmak, the Ox is the sole companion of the First Man Gayōmart (n. p. Kayumars) and he perishes like him in an assault by the Evil Spirit on the created world; Kayumars himself survives and lives in peace for another 30 years (in the *Šāh-nāme* the duration of the whole of his reign is thirty years). Until now the parallel is clear. It becomes perhaps less readable after the death of both heroes, but still it can be followed: in the *Šāh-nāme* after the death of Siyāmak a period of mourning begins in which the whole world of nature takes part. Towards the end of this period Hušang, the son of Siyāmak, appears so that the continuity of the dynasty is saved. His victory over the son of the Evil Spirit restores the moral balance of the world, disturbed by the previous conflict. Analogically, the Ox's death in the nature myth is followed by a period of stagnation in the nature and the Universe. During this time the soul of the murdered beast makes a cosmic journey through the three successive celestial spheres, towards the highest one, where Ahura Mazda resides. The inertness of nature is, therefore, caused by the temporal absence of the animal soul in the material world. As a result of its return the assassinated Ox is reborn, assuming shapes of many kinds of animal and plant species. In this way the immobile elements of the nature undertake their circular movement again and the harmony of the Universe is restored.

This general pattern of action, with initial defeat and final victory of the hero and his three stage peregrination as the central motive of the story, is repeated in several other Iranian nature myths²⁴.

In the epic versions, therefore, the appearance and victory of the assassinated hero's son is equivalent to the rebirth (return, victory) of the mythical animal. The hero of the myth has undergone a process of anthropomorphisation, though his animal features are still detectable in the epic tales. The species relation human: beast of Gayōmart and the Primeval Ox has been replaced by a family relation father: son of Kayumars and Siyāmak. A similar relationship has been also been established in the epic between the murdered hero and the structural counterpart of his second incarnation: in this way Hušang becomes the son of Siyānak. Thus the cosmic drama of

death and resurrection, which is the subject of the myth, has been transformed in epics into a three-generation family drama of death and vengeance.

The grandson i. e. the son of the murdered hero is, therefore, his new incarnation. His similarity to the dead father is usually striking. His grandfather brings him up instead of his own son and prepares him for his final victory. The whole life of this hero is a prolongation of his father's suddenly interrupted life. The appearance of the avenger puts an end to the period of mourning, interregnum and various - both political and natural - calamities. Sometimes (as in the case of Feridun and Manučešr) it lasts for several generations until the heir is born. In some other tales he is already alive at the moment of his father's death (Hušang?, Bahman), but then he must undergo a preparation for his mission²⁵.

The various nature and fertility symbols are connected with the heroes of the third generation: the angel revealing Key Xosrou's existence to Gardar is sitting on a cloud from which rain falls after a long period of drought; very often the young hero is spoken of as "a plant of vengeance" or "a fruit of the tree of blood" or "a new branch of the broken tree" and the like²⁶ - and these are the relics of the hero's vegetable incarnations of the myth. From the blood of Siyāvaš, poured on the desert soil, grows a medical plant - just as from the body of the Primeval Ox. It is transparent that rising of a flower from the hero's blood is nothing else, but a metaphorical counterpart of his rebirth in the person of his son. That is, events described as real in the myth, have been preserved as metaphors in the epics²⁷.

The birth and childhood of this kind of hero are often marked by elements of the "myth of prestige" (in fact - those which are enclosed in the first point of Grintser's table). The birth of the hero is preceded by oracles; from the very beginning he shows some unusual qualities; because of persecution he spends his youth in a pastoral setting in the desert, without knowing who he is (Feridun, Key Xosrou) and he must be discovered and brought back by somebody who performs a journey in search of him.

The only aim of this hero's life is to avenge his father's death and all his actions concentrate on this very purpose. When revenge is accomplished and the enemy punished, the mission of his life is fulfilled. After the final

victorious battle the grandson succeeds to his grandfather's throne and becomes a just and successful, though rather a passive, ruler. The narrative usually does not attach importance to his marriage and posterity; by the third generation the dramatic cycle of events is completed - the initial state of affairs is restored and no continuity is needed. The most prominent of the victorious grandsons, Key Xosrou, having accomplished his task, renounces his royal authority and disappears mysteriously into the mountains.

The son's murderer: the enemy of the principal hero appears in the legendary myth as a god of drought who has the power of stopping the flow of water, the circulation of celestial bodies and the movement of the whole of the natural order. In the Iranian mythology demons of such kind often appear in the shape of snakes and dragons. Their functions have been later absorbed by the Evil Spirit of the Zoroastrian religion - just like in the above quoted version of the Primeval Ox's death.

As we have seen, in the epic plot, the characters in the drama are rendered in terms of kinship, and the part of the murderer is no exception: he is often a relative of his victim, or at least his friend (Iraj and Agriras were killed by their older brothers, Siyāvaš - by his father-in-law, Esfandiyār by the closest ally of his family). But, usually, the fault of the murderer is not total - he was pushed towards the crime by a fatalistic coincidence, most frequently caused by a number of mischief-makers, including the father-hero.

In spite of their transformation, the most classical dark characters of the Iranian epics, i. e. Zakhāk and Afrāsiyāb have preserved some of their mythical characteristics. Ferdousi's Zakhāk has gone half-way towards anthropomorphisation: the three-headed dragon of the myth becomes a human being with two additional snake heads, in the epics. His rule over the world is a double disaster - both political and natural. The reign of Afrāsiyāb is described exactly in the same terms. The latter, in the Avesta is, already, a fully human being, although many allusions to his ability to stop rain and turn flow of rivers are evidence of his mythical connections²⁸. During his flight from Key Xosrou, Afrāsiyāb takes refuge in the places which point to his chthonic and aquatic references: first he hides in his underground dwelling (hang), then in the waters of the holy lake Čēčist. The final fight

of Key Xosrou with Afrāsiyāb recalls duels with water-monsters, included in many epic tales of the world as a standard part of the hero's journey to the underground kingdom.

The basic current of events in the Iranian epic pattern is thus confined to the actions of these four main characters. But there is still a number of secondary threads and characters, who, though not indispensable to the development of the plot, nevertheless, constitute a part of it and should be also taken into consideration in all kinds of comparative research.

The hero's spouse: While the epic text does not pay attention to the marriage of the grandson-hero, it usually supplies information about the wives of the heroes of the first two generations and about the ways of winning them. A number of rules in this matter may be pointed out. In most cases we have some kind of double or even group marriage. Usually the hero takes two wives (Feridun marries the two daughters of Jamšid, Esfandiyār was given one of his sisters as wife, but he rescues them both from the Turanian captivity, Key Kāvus marries both Sudābe and the mother of Siyāvaš, Siyāvaš, in Turan, also marries twice). There is still another pattern - of three heroes (brothers) marrying three sisters. Such is the case of the sons of Feridun marrying the princesses of Yemen, and that of Goštāsp marrying the Byzantine princess and winning her two sisters for the two local nobles.

The way of getting wives is also somehow ritualised: they are either rescued from a monster (as the daughters of Jamšid), won as the result of a war (Sudābe) or in some kind of competition (as the Yemeni and Byzantine princesses, and probably also the wives of Siyāvaš²⁹).

Most of the women married by the heroes are the princesses of foreign countries. Often a long and perilous journey must be undertaken in their quest. Some of them belong to the Turanian tribe - the main adversary of Iran (mother and both wives of Siyāvaš), or they are captives of the murderer of the hero (the daughters of Jamšid). In such cases their guardian is identical with the main antagonist. In the remaining instances the father or guardian of the girl (or girls) also plays a hostile part towards the suitor, creating all kinds of obstacles in order not to lose the girl.

The journey performed by the hero in search of a woman (or women) is sometimes described in the convention of the ritual journey to the other

world (cf Esfandiyār's expedition). In this way the motive of gaining women may be understood as a minor repetition of the central conflict: the father or abductor of the princess is playing the part of a secondary enemy and the princess herself is a secondary passive hero, i. e. a counterpart of the murdered prince of the main plot, while the hero of the first or second generation assumes the active part of the searcher.

The searcher. A purpose of the journey in the Iranian epic tale is not exclusively the search for women. It may be also undertaken in order to find a successor to the murdered prince (as Giv's expedition to Turan) or in order to save some other main hero (Rostam's expeditions to Māzandarān and Hāmāvarān - both for releasing the imprisoned Key Kāvus). In such cases the role of searcher is carried out by somebody from outside the main caste of characters.

The exploits of the lost hero's searcher may be almost identical with those of a women's rescuer (compare haft xān-e Rostam and haft xān-e Esfandiyār). In the case of finding a hidden prince, however, the important moment is that of recognition. The searcher meets the object of his search in some unexpected place and identifies him by some special signs. Best example of such a meeting is the scene of finding Key Xosrow by Giv³⁰. Sometimes the scene of meeting is more important than the journey itself.

In the classical mythico-epic pattern as well as in the fairy-tale the motive of the journey is placed in the heart of the action and attributed to the main hero. In the Iranian epics, however, the importance of this motive is weakened by its being distributed among several types of heroes and different places of the plot. The journey is indispensable for the further development of events only if performed in the quest for the heir, but then its active hero is some secondary character.

Another group of characters, apparently not accidental but belonging to the system, consists of the persons met by the searcher on his way. Most noteworthy of them are of two kinds: the guide and the boatman (or guardian of a ford across the water).

The guide belongs to the enemy tribe and is the searcher's captive. He is essentially hostile and supposed to play tricks on the searcher, but he may be helpful if dealt with in a proper way. The guide possesses know-

ledge of the hero's itinerary and its subsequent stages, he knows how to overcome or avoid its dangers. He may share this function with a person who sends the searcher on his journey, i. e. usually his father: Zāl, sending Rostam in search of Key Kāvus, informs him approximately about his way and the difficulties he must overcome, so does Gudarz sending Giv in search of Key Xosrou. The motive of the guide is particularly developed in the two parallel episodes of Rostam and Esfandiyār's seven adventures (haft xān). In each case the intrigue, though composed of very similar elements, is played out in a different way.

The boatman is a person on whom crossing the water depends. A big river or sea appears nearly in every realisation of the epic pattern and crossing it is an act of high symbolical importance. Not only is water one of the stages of the hero's journey, but it also marks a boundary between the two different spheres or kingdoms. The boatman's function is to hinder the searcher from getting to the other shore, by refusing to carry him on his boat. Sometimes he demands a reward for his service: in money (as in the case of Goštāsp going to Rum) or even in magical objects (as in the case of Key Xosrou crossing Jeyhun). The hero's reaction to the boatman's demand is different from what may be expected on the basis of comparison with the mythical and fairy-tale solutions: most frequently, instead of fulfilling the request, the hero overcomes the obstacle without the boatman's help: he crosses the water on horseback like Key Xosrou and Feridun or fills the river-bed with bunches of twigs, like Esfandiyār. (In the latter case the guardian of the water is identical with the guide).

The substitute. In the Iranian epic tale the substitution is a general rule of relations between the heroes within their three-generation succession: the young prince perishes instead of his old and sinful father; the birth of the murdered prince's son replaces his own rebirth. But, apart from it, the substitute-hero of the classical type, perishing instead of the main character as a kind of scapegoat, also is known to the Šāh-nāme tales. In all the stories considered, the hero's death actually occurs and constitutes the center of the drama. But it may be additionally doubled by the death of some other person. The death of the substitute constitutes an anticipation of the son-hero's death - it is an omen and a preparation for the main tra-

gedy itself. Sometimes, however, we have to do with the reverse order of events and the death of the substitute follows that of the central character. Esfandiyār's death is preceded by that of his brother Faršidvard and his grandfather Lohrāsp. (Lohrāsp, when fighting with the Turanians, resembles his heroic grandson so much, that he is taken for him by the foes and killed instead of him). Sorxe, who is Siyāvaš' peer and his equivalent in the Turanian camp dies after him, but his murder is a faithful projection of Siyāvaš' murder with observance of all its ritualistic details; therefore, it should be interpreted as a kind of substitutional sacrifice. Analogically, the magic cow Barmāye is killed after the death of Ābtin, of whom she is an animal alter ego and who fosters his orphaned son. They both perish in the very same way - devoured by the monster.

These are the most important types of heroes in the Iranian epic tale. There are still some more, who also constitute a part of the system, but their classification requires further investigation.

Summing up, we conclude that the plot of the Iranian epic tale develops according to the passive and masculine pattern: the focus of the narrative is not on the searcher, but on the perishing hero, who is always male. But, classifying the adventures of the Iranian heroes according to the criterion of Propp's scheme, we shall notice that the "main hero" of the Šāh-nāme tales is composed of two or maybe even three persons, being representatives of three subsequent generations. The functions are distributed among them in the following way:

- father: (getting wives, wedding) - breaking a prohibition - persecuting the son - banishing or sending him to a war;
- son: departure to a hostile country - (getting wives, wedding) - death without guilt or without resistance or being killed in a duel (i. e. the way to the kingdom of death);
- grandson: birth, the appearance, being brought from a distant place (i. e. the way from the kingdom of death) - fight with the enemy - final victory.

In the Iranian model of the epic tale the son-hero leaves for a hostile country or a battle, but he never comes back; the return belongs already

to his son's circle of action. As to the father-hero, his original guilt probably is the first element of the same sequence of events: his transgression provokes a misfortune, which is a punishment falling on his son instead of himself.

So the personages whose adventures constitute the counterpart of the journey to the other world are the heroes of the second and third generations. But in the descriptions of their peripeties the details of the travel itself aren't strongly marked, if at all. Thus, the real ritual journey is not the central motive of the tale and it cannot be the criterion indicating the hierarchy of importance of the story's characters. Similarly to the motive of abducted women, the motive of the journey has also been pushed aside to the marginal sphere of action and exists there as a doublement of the main theme (i. e. the murder - vengeance sequence). The function of the searcher who performs the journey is attributed to the characters of different types (but always of the masculine sex). The purpose of the searcher's expedition is either the quest of women, or of an imprisoned king or, finally, of the heir to the throne. Both the princesses and the king in captivity are the counterparts of the main passive hero (i. e. the murdered prince - and his son).

The functions of the father-hero (who is responsible for the young prince's death and those of the father of the princess (lord of a foreign country, hostile to the suitor) complement or double the main antagonist's functions.

The father-hero, as well as the father of the searcher perform the common function of sending their sons away from home. Some aspects of this function (instructing the searcher about his way) belong also to the guide's circle of action.

Not only the substitutes of the main hero are the counterparts of the fairy-tale magic helpers. The persons met by the traveling hero on his way (the guide, the boatman) belong to the same category and their way of acting is similar to that of the magic heroes of the fairy-tale.

- ¹ A. B. Lord, The Singer of Tales, Cambridge Mass. 1960, for the scheme of the epic plot see p. 177.
- ² P. A. Grintser, Epos drevnego mira [in:] Tipologija i vzaimosvazi literatur drevnego mira, Moskva 1971, pp. 134-205, esp. the table pp. 178-179; Drevneindijskij epos, Moskva 1974, the table pp. 287-288.
- ³ W. Propp, Morfologia bajki, Warszawa 1976.
- ⁴ On the cosmical journey in the fairy-tale c. f. W. Toporow, Wokół rekonstrukcji mitu o jaju kosmicznym (na podstawie baśni rosyjskich) [in:] Semiotyka kultury, Warszawa 1975, pp. 162-176.
- ⁵ Lord gives a detailed analysis of the final sequences of the epic plot, because his basic text of reference is the Odyssey, which, itself, constitutes an enlarged ending of the epic story (hence Lord's term "song of return" applied by him to the heroic tales in general). In Grintser's scheme, however, the description of the initial stages of action is more developed.
- ⁶ See Lord, op. cit., pp. 175-185, also: C. M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry, London 1952, pp. 326-327.
- ⁷ Propp, op. cit., pp. 82-86.
- ⁸ Grintser, Motiv oskorblenija Draupadi v kompozicii Mahabharaty [in:] Księga pamiątkowa ku czci E. Śluszkiewiczza, Warszawa 1974, pp. 89-95; Drevneindijskij epos, p. 292.
- ⁹ Propp, op. cit., chap. VI, pp. 144-151.
- ¹⁰ Drevneindijskij epos, pp. 292-293; Lord, op. cit., pp. 186-187.
- ¹¹ Firdousi, Šāh-nāme, kritičeskij tekst, vol. I-VI, Moskva 1960-1967.
- ¹² Šāh-nāme, vol. I, pp. 28-32.
- ¹³ Vol. I, pp. 51-78.
- ¹⁴ Vol. I, pp. 79-134.
- ¹⁵ Vol. II, pp. 12-42.
- ¹⁶ Vol. II, pp. 76-168, vol. III, vol. IV, vol. V, pp. 86-418.
- ¹⁷ Vol. VI, pp. 25-216.
- ¹⁸ In the fourth of the groups above there is no grandson. The story is defective, but should be taken into account in the analysis of the plot pattern, mostly because of Ayriras who is a very typical representative of the son-hero type.
- ¹⁹ Yasna 32, 8, c. f. H. Razi, Farhang-e nāmā-ye Avestā, vol. III, Tehrān 1346, p. 1490 ff.
- ²⁰ In fact, Ābtin is not Jamšid's son, but being his linear descendant he acts in the story as a son.

- ²¹ e. g. Mēnōg-i xrad 27, 14-15, c. f. A. Christensen, Le premier homme et le premier roi dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens, Upsala 1918, pp. 27, 76, 84.
- ²² Bundahišn 29, 5 [The Sacred Books of the East vol. V, Oxford 1901, p. 117], Mēnōg-i xrad 62.31-36 [SBE vol. XXIV, Oxford 1885. p. 105].
- ²³ C. f. Christensen, op. cit., pp. 11-31.
- ²⁴ C. f. A. Krasnowolska, Le fargard 21 du Vīdēvdāt à la lumière du mythe du fleuve arrêté, "Folia Orientalia" XVI, pp. 215-236.
- ²⁵ Esfandiyār's son Bahman is quite an experienced warrior at the moment of his father's death but the system requires that he should be entrusted to Rostam and instructed in military arts from the very beginning like a young child.
- ²⁶ See e. g. Feridun vv. 463, 587, 879: Šāh-nāme vol. I, pp. 106, 115, 132.
- ²⁷ On Siyāvaš' connections with the myth of death and resurrection see S. Meskub, Sug-e Siyāvaš, Tehrān 1350.
- ²⁸ Yāšt 19.56-64, Le Zend-Avesta, trad. J. Darmesteter, vol. II, Paris 1892, pp. 631-633.
- ²⁹ We may suppose that the two knightly tournaments won by Siyāvaš in Turān should be connected with his two weddings.
- ³⁰ Other good examples are supplied by a number of incomplete stories (finding of Key Qobād, Forud, Dārāb) which do not reproduce the full pattern of the three-generation story, but only a part of it.