

## A UNIQUE LITERARY WORK OF THE EAST

**Astanova Gulnora Aminovna**

*professor of the department Uzbek linguistics and  
Journalism Bukhara State University, Doctor of Philology*

*tel. (+998)98 2744803, e-mail: [guli4803@mail.ru](mailto:guli4803@mail.ru)*

**Yarullina-Yildirim Ramilya Askhadullova**

*Professor of the Department of Turkish Language and Literature*

*Faculty of Natural Sciences and Humanities*

*Inonu University (Türkiye), Doctor of Philology*

*tel. (+9)05066052760, e-mail: [ramilya.yildirim@inonu.edu.tr](mailto:ramilya.yildirim@inonu.edu.tr)*

**Annotation:**Years, decades, centuries pass, but the interest of readers, philologists, and orientalist historians in the outstanding literary work called “A Thousand and One Nights” does not fade. These tales express with amazing perfection the harmony and extraordinary power of the colorful, “patterned” fantasy of the peoples of the East: Arabs, Persians, Hindus, and other peoples.

The article examines scientific ideas about the creation of “A Thousand and One Nights” — a unique work of oriental literature. Scientific hypotheses of Russian, European, and Uzbek orientalist about the origin of this masterpiece are presented as a subject of discussion. At the same time, information about the composition of the work is provided.

**Key words:**“A Thousand and One Nights”, historical poetics, sources, craftsmanship, artistic and visual means.

**Аннотация:**Проходят годы, десятилетия, века, но не угасает интерес читателей, специалистов-филологов, историков-востоковедов к выдающемуся литературному творению под названием «Тысяча и одна ночь». Эти сказки с изумительным совершенствованием выражают гармонию и необычайную силу цветистой, «узорчатой» фантазии народов Востока: арабов, персов, индусов и других народов.

В статье рассматриваются научные представления о создании «Тысячи и одной ночи» — уникального произведения восточной литературы. Научные гипотезы российских, европейских и узбекских востоковедов о происхождении этого шедевра представлены как предмет дискуссий. В то же время приводится информация о композиции произведения.

**Ключевые слова:**«Тысяча и одна ночь», историческая поэтика, источники, мастерство, художественно-изобразительные средства.

A medieval Arabic philologist would probably have been extremely surprised if he had learned that Arabic literature would enter world culture primarily through folk tales and short stories, which on holidays were told in markets and coffee shops to amuse the crowd and, unlike court poetry and learned prose, were treated by purist philologists as “low genre”.

Meanwhile, humanity has now recognized that the famous collection of Arabic fairy tales is one of the most famous monuments of world culture. Shahrezada's story is striking in its strangeness: by telling her fairy tales and interrupting the story at dawn in the most interesting place, the resourceful Shahrezada saves her life, forcing her husband to forget about the execution, because King Shahriyar promised to execute every new wife at the end of the wedding night.

The book “A Thousand and One Nights” is mentioned in numerous historical chronicles of the early and late Middle Ages. It was not the creation of any one author. Parts of this amazing collection of fairy tales were formed and polished over the course of many centuries, and only by the XVI-XVII centuries did it take shape in the form in which it is known to the modern reader.

The basis of the literary monument, apparently, was the Arabic translation of Indian and Iranian fairy tales, which were included in the Iranian collection “Hezar Efsane” (“A Thousand Legends”), the existence of which was reported by Arab sources back in the tenth century. For almost ten centuries, professional Arab storytellers and scribes have included more and more stories of local and foreign origin in the capacious framework of the “A Thousand Legends”, redoing them and arranging them at their discretion, which led to differences in the composition and composition of the extant manuscripts of this collection.

If we make a brief historical digression, then, apparently, we can make the following summaries:

- 1) the primary element and the main core of the "A Thousand and One Nights" is the Arabic translation of the Persian collection "Hezar Efsane" made in the 9th or 10th century;
- 2) the book "A Thousand and One Nights" does not have a separate author or compiler; it is an evolutionary creation of many generations of a long chain of specialists-narrators and scribes.

I think this explains the “disparity” of the language of presentation: in some places it is almost highly classical, while in others it is almost vernacular.

It should be noted that Western scientists have shown great interest in studying the collection of fairy tales. The works performed by such researchers as Zotenberg, MacDonald, Litman, and Chauvin are of great interest. Considering Egypt to be the birthplace of the “A Thousand and One Nights”, Chauvin argued, for example, that the book of fairy tales had at least two authors: one of them was an Egyptian, and the other a Jew who converted to Islam. Hence, in his opinion, the large number of Jews in the collection and the abundance of narratives about “infidels” who subsequently embarked on the path of true faith. Chauvin even mentions the name of this Jew, a certain Ibrahim Maimun, who lived around 1518.

However, this theory was sharply criticized by one of the prominent researchers of “A Thousand and One Nights”, Estrup, who wrote that Chauvin's conclusion about Ibrahim Maimun was not worth a damn. [1,204]

In Russia, the study of the collection of fairy tales begins at the beginning of the 20th century, when such remarkable researchers as I.Y.Krachkovsky, A.E.Krymsky, and later B.Ya.Shidfar, I.M.Filshtinsky entered the Oriental studies arena. In Uzbekistan, the study of the book “A Thousand and One Nights” began a long time ago. In 1930, an original translation of fairy tales into Russian appeared in Tashkent, masterfully executed by M.A.Salye. [2.8t]. The book was translated into Uzbek more recently in 1912-1913. It was translated by Ahror Makhdum [3, Vol.1.] and Sidqiya Khandailikiya. [4, in 2t.]

The famous Uzbek scholar of Arabic studies, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan N. I. Ibragimov in his book “The Arab folk Novel” pays much attention to the genesis of the “A Thousand and One Nights”, dwells on the question of the connection of the collection with the folk tradition (novel). [5.256.]

“For a number of reasons,” writes N.I. Ibragimov, it so happened that the book “1001 nights” was widely distributed and still enjoys the greatest popularity among a wide variety of readership. The reason for this popularity is, first of all, the high skill and artistic flair of medieval professional storytellers, who, obviously, based on a certain “fabulous” core of the collection, managed to process and attach to it the most interesting short episodes from a wide variety of sources – from the Bible and medieval literary Arabic anthologies to individual folk novels of various kinds. character: heroic epics (“The Story of Umar al-Numan”), fantasy novels (“The Story of the Queen of Snakes”) and a roguish novel (“Delilah the Cunning and Zainab the Deceiver”). The establishment of a direct connection between the book “1001 Nights” and the folk novel should be considered an undoubted merit of modern Arab scholars.”

Not only for a specialist historian, but also for any curious reader, the book “A Thousand and One Nights” is an inexhaustible source of a wide variety of information about the life of Arab cities during the heyday of the Baghdad caliphate, during the reign of the Mamluk sultans and Turks in Egypt. The material of the “A Thousand and One Nights” is very diverse in terms of genre. If a fairy tale and a didactic parable (often a parable about animals) came to the book from India and Iran, then a household novel, a short anecdote and epic tales are the creation of an Arab fantasy.

In fairy tales, the world of everyday reality, described carefully, down to the smallest detail, and the world of fiction are intertwined, coexist, replacing each other. This idea is well illustrated by the stories about the voyage of Sinbad the sailor, about the journey to the copper city, while a description of the country of Kaf is given.

In everyday novels and short anecdotes, a whole gallery of types belonging to various strata of urban society is displayed. Rich merchants and poor artisans, rulers, their ministers: advisers, officials, judges, pimps and sorcerers, teachers, clever rascals-this is not a complete list of characters in Shahrezada's fairy tales. Khalipha Harun ar-Rashid (reigned 786-809), his wife Zubayda and vizir Jafar are vividly and comprehensively depicted.

Jinns, ifrits and other fantastic creatures are an important element of the plot in many fairy tales. At the same time, the will and actions of the “earthly” characters and their fantastic “helpers” merge so naturally that the magical and real worlds form a kind of organic unity in which the picture of the life of a medieval Muslim city emerges through a fantastic shell, giving the narrative a special fascination and poetry.

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