



COMPOSITIONAL STRUCTURE AND PLOT SYSTEM OF THE EPIC "QIRONXON"

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Abstract:

This article (or study) analyzes the compositional structure and plot system of the epic "Qironxon," considered one of the prominent examples of Uzbek folk heroic epics. The ideological and artistic characteristics of the epic are examined through the prism of traditional epic frameworks and the mastery of the bakhshi (folk bard). During the research, compositional elements such as the exposition, conflict (knot), development of events, climax, and resolution are identified, and the logical consistency within the plot lines is elucidated.

Keywords: Qironxon, epic (doston), composition, plot system, epic tradition, art of bakhshi, exposition, conflict, development of events, climax, resolution, heroic motives, patriotism, traditional images, folklore, poetic structure, genre characteristics, epic interpretation.

Introduction

The compositional structure and plot system of the epic constitute a complex epic whole, serving as the primary factor that determines the ideological and artistic weight of the work. The composition of the epic is traditionally formed from several structural components: the work typically begins with a special introduction (peshguftor), providing information about the performer's intent or the backstory of events, and then develops through plot stages such as the conflict, development of events, climax, and resolution. The uniqueness of the epic's plot lies in the skillful grafting of the hero's inner experiences and psychological struggles onto the layer of external adventures.

In Uzbek folk epic storytelling, the compositional structure is often built upon the alternation of prose and poetic fragments; the narration of events and

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descriptions of time and space are given in prose, while the characters' speech and emotional states are expressed in poetic form. Hyperbole (exaggeration) and mythological elements play a leading role in the plot system, expanding the epic scope of the work and serving to idealize the image of the hero. The chain of events often begins with a conflict related to the hero's birth, a call to love for a hidden beloved, or the defense of the homeland, and is directed through the overcoming of numerous obstacles toward a single ideological center—the victory of goodness. In this manner, the compositional integrity of the epic logically connects all episodes, creating a perfect artistic system that generalizes the ancient values and aesthetic views of the people.

The distribution area of the variants and versions of the "Qironxon" epic is remarkably wide, appearing frequently in the folklore of the world, particularly among Eastern peoples. It holds a special place, especially in the oral traditions of the Uzbek, Kazakh, and Karakalpak peoples. If we conduct a comparative analysis of the variants of the "Qironxon" epic, one can observe more than ten unique examples in Uzbek folklore. Among them, the variants recorded from bakhshis such as Muhammadqul Jonmurod o'g'li Po'lkan, Jolghosh Jossok o'g'li, Islom Nazar o'g'li, Rahmatulla Yusuf o'g'li, Saidmurod Panoh o'g'li, Yorlakab Beknazar o'g'li, Umr shoir Safarov, Zoir Qo'chqor o'g'li, and Bo'ri bakhshi Ahmedov deserve special mention. Studying these variants in a comparative aspect undoubtedly provides important scientific conclusions for folklore studies. It is known that in all variants of the "Qironxon" epic, motifs such as the replacement of twin royal children with two puppies, the motif of separation (distancing), and the children reaching maturity far from their parents are also found in other epics regarded as independent. Specifically, certain elements of these motifs can also be observed in the epic "Rustamxon".

According to folklore scholars, the "Qironxon" epic was also part of the epic repertoire of the eminent bakhshi Fozil Yo'ldosh o'g'li, although it was never recorded. The "Qironxon" epic is characterized by such epic harmony, providing extensive coverage of the hero's courage and adventures. This is further evidenced by the existence of specific similarities between the plot of "Qironxon" and the "Rustamxon" epic found in the bakhshi's repertoire. In the introductory part of the epic, Sultonxon's suffering from childlessness and his

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vizier's advice to attend Friday prayers to receive the people's blessings, Huroyim falling victim to the slander of her co-wives and being declared guilty through the deception of a witch (maston), and Rustam's slaying of a dragon and his various adventures, bear a partial resemblance to the "Qironxon" epic as performed by Po'ikan Shoir. However, the motif of replacing an infant with a puppy does not appear in the "Rustamxon" epic. Nevertheless, as seen in the variants of "Qironxon," there is a motif of arriving at the place where the king's child lives in the guise of a qalandar (wandering dervish).

In the epic "Oyparcha," recorded from Ochildan bakhshi Chorshanbiyev of Guzar, the descriptions of the hero meeting his father, Oyparcha's reunion with her husband Shoniyoz, and the revelation of the truth serve as clear examples of this. The aforementioned similarities in the plots of the "Qironxon" and "Rustamxon" epics become even more apparent through certain passages. For instance, in an episode describing the king's attempt to achieve his goal through the people's blessings, the bakhshi expresses his attitude toward the event. Through the short phrase, "The rascal, he doesn't want to give up hope on his kingship," the hero's inner feelings and psychological struggles are expressed in a folk style. Such interpretations further enhance the poetic charm of the epic.

In the "Qironxon" epic, the episode where King Odilxon receives the people's blessings is also skillfully narrated using the device of prose rhyme (saj'). In general, from the beginning of the epic to the first poetic passage, the fact that sentences end with almost identical rhyming words bestows a sense of musicality and melody upon the work. Regarding the artistry and the vast epic scope of the "Qironxon" epic, the master scholar Mamatqul Jo'rayev wrote: "The largest recorded version of this epic in the work of Uzbek bakhshis was documented from the performances of Muhammadqul Jonmurod o'g'li Po'ikan and Jolghosh Jossok o'g'li; the fact that its poetic part consists of 15,258 lines signifies the immense scope and value of this work."

The plot of the "Qironxon" epic not only served the emergence of independent epics such as "Rustamxon" and "Erali and Sherali" but also exerted a certain degree of influence on written literature. Plot lines such as Qironxon obtaining the "mirror of the world" (oynai jahon), defeating demons and dragons, and solving various enchantments are close to the adventures of characters created

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by representatives of classical literature. In Alisher Navoiy's epic "Farhod and Shirin," there are also such traditional motifs characteristic of oral folk art, the study of which in a comparative-analogical aspect requires separate research [2]. The primary reason for the widespread nature of the plot system and certain motifs in the "Qironxon" epic is that the work evolved from the development of fairy-tale plots and folk fantasy. The active presence of this plot in the fairy tales of world peoples confirms this view. The appearance of "Qironxon" variants and versions in the folklore of many nations indicates that its plot is extremely ancient. We believe that studying the epic in comparison with its various variants and the independent epics formed under its influence will serve to clarify several issues related to the theory of epic storytelling.

The epic "Qironxon" is based on a traditional epic composition, in which sequence, cause-and-effect relationships, and dramatic tension characteristic of folk epics are consistently developed. The plot of the epic begins with events preceding the hero's birth and continues with his supernatural birth, his attainment of maturity through trials, and his entry into the social arena. In the introductory part of the plot, the childlessness of Alixon, the king of the Durmon country, is presented as the primary dramatic foundation. This situation serves as a catalyst for the development of epic events. The king's appeal to saints and his receipt of a prophecy in a dream via Khizr regarding the birth of a child strengthen the elements of supernaturalism in the plot and predetermine the hero's unique destiny. In the next stage of the plot, Botako'z's pregnancy and the planning of the children's destruction due to envy and conspiracy increase the intensity of events. The abandonment of Qironxon and Oqbilak in the desert and their rescue by divine forces is a quintessential expression of the motifs of trial and salvation in the plot. These episodes are important compositional links that shape the hero's future qualities of bravery and patience [3].

In the developmental part of the plot, Qironxon reaching maturity, manifesting his strength through hunting and adventures, and his accidental meeting with King Alixon appear as a dramatic turning point. This situation expresses the process of the unrecognized child gradually entering the social space within the epic's composition. The conflict is intensified through the negative characters—Fotigul the witch (maston) and her accomplices. Their attempts to destroy



Qironxon create a new chain of adventures in the plot. Obtaining the Golden Muyassak, traveling to other lands, and events related to the world of fairies further expand the plot system of the epic and enrich its epic scope. Overall, the "Qironxon" epic is built on a holistic plot that compositionally includes the stages of introduction, development, climax, and resolution. Within it, traditional motifs such as obtaining a child, envy, trials, non-recognition, and heroism are inextricably linked, creating a perfect plot system characteristic of folk epos.

A crucial link in the epic plot is related to the supernatural birth of the epic hero, which was formed on the basis of the people's ancient religious-mythological concepts. In the oral speech of our people, the use of the wish "may it be blessed" (qutlug' bo'lsin) when congratulating a family on a new child, as well as the expression "the qut has flown" (quti uchdi) signifying the danger of losing one's life, indicates that the concept of "qut" has been perceived since ancient times as "soul" or "source of life." This concept is widespread not only in the Uzbek language but also in many Turkic languages such as Kyrgyz, Bashkir, Tatar, Teleut, Khakas, Tuva, and Altai.

According to ethnographic and mythological views, among ancient Turkic peoples, the state of childlessness was explained by the fact that "qut" was not given to the fetus. Therefore, special ceremonies and rituals were performed by women seeking children. In particular, among the Mountain Altaians, shamans were imagined as intermediaries communicating with the "owner of qut." They offered sacrifices to mythological beings like Jer-Su, asking for offspring to be bestowed. According to these beliefs, "qut" was sent to the future fetus through benevolent spirits. In the beliefs of the Bashkir people, too, "qut" was considered an essential element of human life. There was a view that if the soul left the body, the person would fall seriously ill or face destruction; this state was called "qut osto." In such situations, "returning the qut" ceremonies were held with the participation of a shaman. Furthermore, according to animistic concepts, a person who incurred the wrath of benevolent forces due to a certain sin or improper action would remain childless; conceiving a child was achieved only through special sacrifices and supplications. These ancient rituals and beliefs were artistically reprocessed during the process of epic thinking and manifested

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as the motif of supernatural birth in folk epics. In the "Qironxon" epic, the ruler of the Durmon country, Alixon, suffering from childlessness, visiting the shrines of saints, and receiving a prophecy in a dream about his future children is precisely the artistic expression of these ethno-folkloric traditions. Thus, the initial part of the epic plot is inextricably linked with ancient mythological views, and the hero's birth is depicted not as an ordinary event, but as a significant occurrence determined by divine will and benevolent forces. This serves as the primary plot pillar ensuring supernaturalism, sacredness, and epic grandeur in the compositional structure of the "Qironxon" doston.

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