Robert P. Blake, Georgian Secular Literature: Epic, Romance, and Lyric (1100-1800)

ROBERT BLAKE
GEORGIAN SECULAR LITERATURE, EPIC, ROMANTIC,
AND LYRIC (1100-1800)

BY ROBERT P. BLAKE

GEORGIAN secular literature is almost as untrodden a field as Georgian theological production during the Middle Ages. While rather more secular texts have been published, only one of these has come out in a critical edition and a number of the most important documents have been handled in a manner that is lamentably inadequate. What has been written on the subject is widely scattered, veiled in recondite tongues, and most of the studies have been distorted by being seen through nationalist spectacles.

The only proper approach to a more or less unknown literature of this type lies naturally through the manuscripts. Such an approach was made some years back by Professor Kornéli S. Kekelidze, professor of Georgian literature at the State University of Georgia, Tiflis. His two-volume History of Georgian Literature covers the field from its inception down to the end of the eighteenth century. The first volume, which deals with the ecclesiastical authors, has been discussed by the present writer elsewhere. The second volume, which treats the secular literature, is the main concern of the present article. Kekelidze’s work is based upon a study of the original documents, which was especially easy in the case of this topic, as the great majority of the surviving codices are massed in Tiflis. The only other important collection of Georgian secular manuscripts is in the Public Library at Leningrad. The fact that the book is written in Georgian has prevented scholars in other fields from utilizing the valuable material which it affords.

The rise of Georgian secular literature is subsequent to that of the ecclesiastical. Translations of the Scriptures, of lives of saints, and of liturgical books began when Christianity was introduced, and during the earlier centuries of Georgia’s literary life literary production remained almost wholly ecclesiastical, so that long before the appearance of mundane works the Georgians had developed and brought to a high pitch of perfection a literary style thoroughly adequate to express the

1 The fragments of the Šah-Nameh of Firdausi; see below, pp. 36-37.

2 K’art’uli literaturis istoria, Vol. I (Tiflis, 1923); Vol. II (ibid., 1924).

3 “Georgian Theological Literature,” Journal of Theological Studies, XXVI (October, 1924), 50-64.
finer shades of meaning in a translated text and to write elevated and
gorgeous prose in original compositions, which, though few in number,
stand high in literary merit. Poetical inspiration found an outlet in
liturgical poetry, which took over Greek models and then adorned the
service with not a few entertainingly successful chants of its own.  

All this literature was transmuted by the influence of the Bible and
the liturgy. This, however, was only the medium of communication of
a small part of the Georgian population: a different type of speech un-
questionably prevailed in the castles of the feudal nobles and in the
huts of the peasantry. The earliest trace, perhaps, which we have of
what might be called the feudal language comes in the oldest charters,
notably that of King Bagrat IV before 1072. These show marked dif-
ferences in morphology and phraseology as against the contemporary
religious documents of the period.

Secular literature as such seems to have arisen in the eleventh
century and developed uninterruptedly from then on until the irruption
of the Mongols in the thirteenth century. It appears at the moment that
the grecophile movement among ecclesiastical writers was declining.
This had developed into a hyper-hellenized scholasticism which was
capable of reproducing with great accuracy the most complicated ratio-
cination of the neo-Platonists, but in so doing distorted and stilted the
naturally easy flow and clear exposition characteristic of older Georgian
writings. The roots were cut away from under the grecophile move-
ment by political developments in Byzantium, by the development of
a particularistic and nationalistic spirit among the Greek intelli-
gentsia. While the movement lived on in Georgia during the twelfth
century and produced writers such as Ioanê Petrici and Ivanê Čim-
čmeli, it could no longer turn the current of Georgian literature aside
as it once threatened to do.

It was at this very time that Georgia, east and west, was united
under the strong and capable hand of King David the Restorer (1089-
1125). For the first time an effective government was established
which could dominate the turbulent nobility and enforce the royal
authority throughout all corners of the king’s realm. This political
success, the united national consciousness which it engendered, the
sense of progress and of creative work, all tended to divert the mental
gaze of the Georgian people from the consolations and repose of the
other world to the facts and joys of life in this temporary sphere. This

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1 Excellently edited by Pavlê Ingorqova, Dvnel-k’art’uli sasuriero poesia (Tiflis, 1913).
2 Autotype facsimile by E. T’aqaišvili in K’art’uli albomi (Tiflis, 1909), Pt. I.
3 See the author in Journal of Theological Studies, loc. cit., p. 59.

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new attitude found at once rich nourishment and strong support in a
new wave of literary influence which was reaching out from Persia.

Persian literature, repressed and oppressed by Mohammedan con-
querors, was driven underground and artificially restricted to the out-
worn, clumsy, and inadequate orthography of the Pehlevi script,
strewn with ideograms like calthrops 1 and revolving in the main about
a religion proscribed by the conquerors. The more important literary
documents of a non-religious character were translated into Arabic. 2
The spoken tongue of Persia became purified in this fiery ordeal, was
changed, simplified, and enriched by a mass of new cultural words, for
the most part derived from the Arabic. Persia remained fundamentally
Iranian in character, though the language its writers used was an alien
tongue. Suddenly in the eleventh century Firdausi produced one of
the world’s great epics, the Šah-Nameh, in modern Persian, thereby
stamping his influence as ineffaceably on his mother tongue as Dante’s
two centuries and a half later did on the language of his native Italy.

During the tenth and eleventh centuries, Persia, politically amorph-
ous, highly cultivated and prosperous, transmitted a steady stream
of Turkish immigrants, who went to sell their sharp swords and strong
backs to the monarchs of western Asia. 3 These Turks, tethered to the
periphery of Iranian culture in their native steppes, absorbed more of
it during their transit through the country and from their kinsmen
who were settled at the courts of the Persian dynasts. With the estab-
ishment of the Seljuk sultanate in the middle of the eleventh century,
Persian influence was carried far and wide into western Asia.

The rise of this Persian influence coincided with the decline of Greek
cultural hegemony. Greek influence in Georgia, moreover, had become
fundamentally ecclesiastical in its nature except for the neo-Platonist
movement, which appears to have escaped from the strait walls of the
cloister and to have become popular in court circles. That this influ-
ence came from Mohammedan spheres, that it preached an alien
tongue, that it sang of the delights of wine, women, and song, was not
so strange to the Caucasian peoples, who for centuries had been accus-
tomed to the presence of large bodies of Mohammedans among them
in the garrison cities like Tiflis, Gandza, Berda’a. Their language, like
Armenian, was filled with Iranian words, and the masterpieces of
nascent Persian literature found a hospitable welcome and a fertile

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1 See H. S. Nyberg in Hülfsbuch des Pehlevi (Uppsala, 1928–31), passim.
2 The Kaillah wa Dimnah, the Sindbad story, etc.
3 See W. L. Langer and R. P. Blake, “The Rise of the Ottoman Turks and its
   Historical Background,” American Historical Review, XXXVII (April, 1932),
   470 ff.
soil, above all in Georgia. Feudal society seems always to have been a forcing bed for romantic movements. Both in the East and in the West during the Middle Ages, we find as one of the central elements in the chivalric system reverence for and the cult of women. This appears to have arisen in both instances from the exerted pressure by similar types of milieu; to use the fine phrase of the late Alexander Veselovsky, "such phenomena tend to arise in parallel series." Certain pederastic elements likewise penetrated Georgia from Persia.

Kekelidze divides the general history of Georgian secular literature into three main periods:


In the first section we find that the works of secular literature manifest very strongly the influence of the Georgian theological models already in existence. In the latter half of the period Persian influence increases, and at the same time popular elements in the speech tend more and more to supplant ecclesiastical phraseology, rising up, as it were, from below.

Persian literature at this period is marked by a strong predilection for the hero Titan type of Iranian epic, by the development of the cult of women, by romantic literature in general, and by a profusion of panegyric odes. All three of these literary genera are faithfully reflected in Georgian counterparts. In the period of decline, during the dominance of the Mongols, Kekelidze thinks that literary activity practically ceased. The country was broken up politically, seriously and repeatedly devastated, and obviously suffered very greatly. He is inclined to think, also, that Persian influence as such tended to weaken. Whether this is the correct interpretation of the evidence I have, as will be seen below.¹

During the period of the renaissance, conditions in the country appear to have become slightly more stable. Georgia now became a buffer state between the expanding Turkish sultanate and the growing Abbasid kingdom in Persia. While this tended to keep the country in a turmoil, it prevented elemental and catastrophic devastations such as the Mongols had inflicted, and gave a chance for literary activity to develop at the coasts of the various dynasts, most of whom showed great favor to writers and poets, and some of whom were themselves writers of exceptional ability. A recrudescence of Persian influence marks this period. Most of the older translations appear to have been lost, and the texts were translated anew from the Persian. In some cases surviving older translations were revamped or transposed from prose into verse, and a considerable number of original works were produced. Older motifs are differently treated at this period. The sad condition of the land, the misery, uncertainty, and irresponsible oppression to which all were or might be subject at any moment, induced a strain of pessimism and of subjectivity absent from the older literature. Lyrical productions are more introspective. The Christian point of view is definitely apparent in conscious or unconscious contrast to Islam. Not infrequently a didactic and moralizing strain obtrudes through the poet's imagery.

National, strictly Georgian elements come more clearly to the front at this time, and are particularly marked in the later lyric poets of the eighteenth century. Popular forms of speech, ideas, and conceptions tend to replace a somewhat hackneyed and outworn imagery inherited from Persia. Theological literature, which comes to life again in the eighteenth century, exercises some influence upon secular writers, and touches of hostility between layman and cleric are evident. The secular party won, however, and became the literary ancestors of the Georgian writers of the nineteenth century.

A word or two of explanation about the Georgian metrical system would perhaps be advisable here. The older ecclesiastical writers wrote in what they called iambics, which are based upon strict counting of syllables without any rhyme. The secular poets evolved, probably upon Iranian models, two types of verse. One of these is the Persian rubaiyat or quatrain, a 16-syllable line with four homophone rhymes, which are either disyllabic or trisyllabic. Accentually speaking, these lines may be scanned as dactyls or as trochees, since the Georgian musical accent may fall at will either on the antepenult or penult. In addition, there is used for lyrical and panegyrical productions the verse of Cakhrkhabadze; this is a 20-syllable line, which may be, and frequently is, treated as a stanza of four pentasyllabic lines with a rhyming scheme: a a b c d f e g g h c. Later variations, which were very definitely evolved from Arabic and Persian models, worked up from below in the lyrical and ballad writers of the eighteenth century.

The history of Georgian secular literature begins at the end of the seventeenth century, when King Arê'il wrote his comparison of T'el-muraz and Rust'aveli. Into this document he wove a large amount of material derived from literary tradition, and not a little from his own experience. A similar document, though somewhat less valuable, is the sermo metricus (Cqobilisitqaoba) of Antoni Kat'o'olikos (1756–60), who deals with the ecclesiastical writers of aforesome and of the present,

¹ See below, pp. 34–35.
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and touches also on some lay luminaries. These writers are really more sources for than historians of literature. Until Kekelidze’s book, the best general sketch of the whole subject was M. Brosset’s *De la Littérature romanesque géorgienne*, “Mélanges Asiatiques,” Vol. VIII, pp. 417-442. This is out of date, however, especially as far as the bibliography is concerned. A good deal of work was done by Zak'aria Cčinadzē in a series of works and publications of texts.  

The difficulty with this writer is that he apparently used his imagination to fill out gaps in our series of facts, and it is not altogether clear in some instances whether writers may have existed as figments of Cčinadzē’s brain. A sketch of the literature with rather elaborate analyses in some instances was given by Alexander Khakhánov in his *Sketches in Georgian Antiquities*, published in Moscow, 1895–1903. 

In one or two cases Khakhánov had access to manuscripts which have since disappeared or been lost sight of. For the most part, however, his historical reconstruction is wholly useless, as he endeavors to fit the literature into a Procrustean couch borrowed unhappily from the history of other tongues. Professor N. Marr has devoted a series of penetrating and picturesque studies to various aspects of this literature, and much information about the manuscripts with many long quotations is available in E. T’aqaišvili’s description of the manuscripts in the library of the Society for the Extension of Literacy among the Georgians, Tiflis, 1901–1917, 2 volumes. The majority of

1 See Kekelidze, I., 395 ff.; this poem was edited by Plato Ioseliani (Tiflis, 1897).

2 St. Pétersbourg, 1878 (1881); see Bibliographie analytique des ouvrages de M. F. Brosset (St. Pétersbourg, 1887), cols. 504–508.

3 K’art’lis meclobo me’omtse saukumeti; K’art’lis meclobo me’omte saukundan me’ek’umte saukunemde (Tiflis, 1885); K’art’lis meclobo me’omtme saukuneti; that is, Georgian Literature in the Twelfth Century; Georgian Literature from the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Century; Georgian Literature during the Seventeenth Century.

4 Ocerki po istorii gruzinskoj slovesnosti.


6 Reprinted from the *Sbornik materialov dlya oezhannyia mletnostei i plemion Kaukaza.*

the manuscripts are in this collection, in that of the Society for the History and Ethnography of Georgia, and a few in the University Museum. They have now been centred in the Georgian (formerly the Trans-caucasian) Museum. We shall now turn to a discussion of the individual monuments mentioned in our sources or preserved to us intact.

Exactly how much secular literature existed in Georgian during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which has not come down to us is rather hard to say. It is obvious, however, that a certain, perhaps a considerable, proportion has been lost. In the works of the different historians, partly known, partly anonymous, which make up the Georgian chronicle (*K’art’lis C’khoreba*) we meet certain citations of purely secular literature. Thus, for example, Leonti Mroveli refers to and cites a considerable passage of the Alexander romance.  

The Book of Kings is mentioned, but it does not follow that this is Firdausi’s production; it may easily be one of the chronicles on which Firdausi drew and which are utilized, for example, by Ţabari in that part of his history which deals with the Sassanids. The romances of Leila and Majnun and of Dilar are both referred to by the odist of Queen Tamara, but this again does not involve the existence of a complete translation at that time by any of these works. The Alexander Romance was available in an Armenian version, and the Persian documents might be consulted by the writer in the original. King Vakh-tang VI in 1712 tells us in the preface to his version of the Kallah wa Dimnah that this document had been translated in Queen Tamara’s day, but that the translation was completely lost; Kekelidze is skeptical about this. In the apocryphal quatrains at the end of the epic poem, “The Man in the Panther’s Skin,” there are references to two other romances, the Dilariani and the Abdul-Mesiani. In the latter case this probably refers to an extant ode to Queen Tamara, which we shall discuss later. The authenticity of these quatrains is in any case highly suspect. *A priori*, it would seem likely that had the translations

1 We find a reference to Alexander in the *Mok’ch’emui K’art’iso,* the Conversion of Georgia, which was probably written at the end of the ninth century. The Alexander Romance is cited in the Georgian Chronicle (*K’art’lis C’khoreba Mariam dedop’lis varioni*), ed. E. T’aqaišvili [Tiflis, 1906], pp. 13–14; we cite regularly from this text, which is much less interpolated than the codex used by Brosset in his edition). On the Alexander Romance in general in Georgian, see K. Kekelidze, “The Literary Sources of Leonti Mroveli,” *Bulletin of the University of Tiflis*, III (1931), 47–51.

2 Perhaps the Khodai-Nameh or the prose translation of it which Firdausi used.


4 See below, p. 35.
 existed, they would probably either be abbreviated or excerpts. There are, however, three major works which belong either to this period or very shortly after it. They unquestionably antedate the period of the Georgian renaissance, which Kekelidze puts, as we have seen, about 1500. Kekelidze arranges these romantic epics chronologically in the following order:

1. The Amirandarejanian, or the tale of Amiran and Darejan.
2. The Visramiani, or the love of Vis and Ramin.
3. The Vep'khis-Tqaosani, or the Man in the Panther’s Skin.

In addition to these, there is a certain amount of lyric poetry.

1. The tale of Amiran and Darejan recounts in a fairly extensive prose version, divided into 12 kari (Persian bâb, ‘door’ or fyttes) the adventures of the chief hero, Amiran. The author of this tale is reported in the epilogue to the “Man in the Panther’s Skin” to have been a certain Mosé Khonéli, about whom we know absolutely nothing save this bare statement. The tale describes the titanic adventures of a certain Amiran and a group of his friends. They range over western Asia hunting the davu (Titans, or earth spirits) who form the natural prey of the Persian hero. Not a little romantic adventure is mixed in with the story, but there is no particular plot or plan; it seems to be a rather loose aggregation of tales derived from various sources. There is a definite reference to this saga in the chronicle of Tamara’s reign, so that the story was probably translated before 1106. It seems as well to have exerted considerable influence on the earlier parts of the Georgian chronicle. The language is also distinctly archaic as compared with the other epics. It is much closer in morphology and vocabulary to the ecclesiastical tradition than are the later tales. The text, furthermore, contains a large number of highly archaic words which have disappeared from later secular writings. There is no doubt whatsoever that this document is, if not a word for word translation, at any rate an adaptation of a Persian original. As yet no precisely analogous saga has come to light in Persian, though the tales for the most part may be accurately paralleled in other forms.

2. The Visramiani is a translation of a famous story derived from a Pehlevi original which was rendered into Persian verse in the year 1048 by Fahr Ud-Din Gurgani. The author tells how after long

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troubles and great despair the lovers were united over the opposition of Vis’s husband. The Georgian text, which is in prose, follows the Persian original quite closely. In part it is a word for word translation, in part an adaptation, where certain sections are slightly expanded and others in turn condensed. The translator knew his Persian quite well on the whole, and the Georgian text is of some value in emending the original. This romance was probably translated into Georgian in the twelfth century, as there is a casual reference to it in the chronicle of Tamara. The style shows a less antique cast than that of the story of Amiran, and stands, so to speak, midway between it and the third epic.

3. The most famous of Georgian epic productions is the Vep’khis-Tqaosami, “The Man in the Panther’s Skin,” which tradition and also the quatrains at the end of the poem ascribe to a certain Şot’a Rust’a-veli, that is, Şot’a from the village of Rust’av. The poem is written in quatrains of 16-syllable verses and contains about 1760 stanzas. It centres in the adventures of two couples, Avt’andil and Nestan-Darejan, and Tarel and Titin’ in, their wanderings, separations, sufferings and woes, and ultimately their happy reunions.

About this poem there have raged innumerable controversies. It has become the household book of the Georgian people; the manuscripts are endless, but none of them apparently are certainly older than the beginning of the seventeenth century. It has passed through something like twenty-three editions, no one of which was really critical. The mise-en-scene of the story is entirely out of the Georgian area — in India, Persia, on the Persian Gulf, etc.; the heroes themselves bear names that are not specifically Georgian; the coloring, spirit, and staging are very distinctly oriental, more especially Persian. No similar tale, however, has ever come to light in Persia, and it would appear that in this case we have an original work composed by a Georgian poet of pre-eminent talent. He handles his verse well, evinces a gift for epigrammatic sententiae after the oriental manner, and delineates the psychology of his characters with very considerable skill.

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3. First edition, together with a moralizing commentary by King Vakhtang VI (Tiflis, 1712). I have used Kababadze’s edition (Tiflis, 1913). The best translation of the poem is the English prose version of Miss Marjory S. Wardrop, Shokha Rustavneli, the Man in the Panther’s Skin; a Romantic Epic. A close rendering from the Georgian attempted by Marjory Scott Wardrop, Royal Asiatic Society, Oriental Translation Fund, N. S., Vol. XI (London, 1912).
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The interpretation of this poem has run through many phases. People have sought to find a moral in it, as did King Vakhtang VI, the first commentator; historical and allegorical allusions have been discerned in various places at various times. The difficulty is that no certain historical allusions have ever been discovered, and the tradition ascribing it to Sot'a is based on the suspected quatrains at the end. We do know that the tradition of Sot'a's authorship goes back into the sixteenth century, but at that juncture all evidence stops. Kekelidze on the basis of one very unstable point endeavors to date the composition of the poem just after the close of Queen Tamara's reign, between 1212 and 1219, but this is a slight nail on which to hang a large theory.1

On the other hand, Kekelidze has shown extremely well that the author, were he Sot'a or someone else, was familiar with both of the previous epics.2 The testimony he adduces on this score is impressive, and its cumulative force is not to be denied. We need not assume, however, that this poem is in consequence to be ascribed to the early part of the thirteenth century. It is commonly supposed that the devastations during the Mongol epoch completely destroyed the prosperity, culture, and well-being of Georgia. Now we know that these devastations were serious, but they were not repeatedly destructive once the Mongols established their power, and it is also common knowledge that a very considerable section of western Asia enjoyed remarkable prosperity beneath their savage but orderly rule. The total absence of any historical background in the poem makes me feel that the hypothesis propounded some sixteen years ago by Professor N. Marr3 that this document should be assigned to the fourteenth century, possibly coming from one of those sections of Georgia which were undergoing Islamization at this period, like Meskhiia, may adequately solve the difficulty involved in fitting the poem into the historical development, if we ascribe it to the reign of Tamara. A parallel from Armenian sources is afforded by the history of Moses of Khorene, which scholars are now inclined to put at the end of the seventh century, just in the period of the Arab invasions. Whether or not the author was a Muslim himself is quite uncertain. The religious references in the poem all bear on the surface a cheerful indifference, which smacks more of toleration under the Mongols than of the renewed acerbity between Islam and Christianity, which especially marks the sixteenth century. This hypothesis, moreover, has the further great advantage in that it fills out the historical continuity between the period of efflorescence and the period of recrudescence in

1 Kekelidze, pp. 109-110.  
2 Ibid., pp. 131-134.  
3 See note 5 above on p. 30 in the last article cited.

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Georgian literature. That all literary and intellectual activity stopped in Georgia from 1240 until about 1450, over a period of 200 years, is a priori most unlikely.

An additional point made by Kekelidze in fixing the date of "The Man in the Panther's Skin" is that the author appears to have been acquainted with the works of the Georgian lyric poets at Tamara's court.1 Some poems of this school, about ten in number, have come down in the manuscripts under the name of Ch'akhrukhadze. Whether this is the name of the author or not, we do not know. The first group of these is generally classed together under the general title of T'amariani;2 the second is known as the Praise of David the Restorer and Tamara.3 These poems use four line stanzas of five syllables each with internal rhyme, which we have described above.4 The rhyme appears to be a borrowing from the Persian, as Benveniste has recently shown that the Ajayatkar i Zarneran, or the memorial of Zarner, which is written in verse, proves that rhyme was frequently employed in Pehlevi poetry.5 The stanza itself may possibly be Persian, but seems more likely to be a native Georgian form. The text is highly imagistic and extremely hard to understand, which is due in part to the poet's endeavor to produce striking effects, which do not help the grammatical construction, and in part to the fact that the manuscripts which are late in date were no more understood by their copyists than by modern commentators. It appears from the references in these poems that they all date from the latter part of Queen Tamara's reign (after 1200). These three epics and the two groups of odes comprise the entire extant material which survives from the primal period of Georgian secular literature.6

The Period of the Renaissance

Beginning approximately with the year 1500, Georgian literature suddenly engenders a swarm of epic and romantic tales, for the most part in verse, but in some cases in prose. The writers of this period felt that verse was the nobler instrument; as King Ar'cil expresses it, "Verses better catch the ear, a tale in prose sounds illy." Kekelidze classifies these productions together under the general title of epics, but employs the term in a sense rather broader than would be applicable in English. In all cases they contain a very considerable amount of the

1 Kekelidze, pp. 137 ff.  
2 Ibid., pp. 143-154.  
3 Ibid., pp. 154-166.  
4 See above, p. 29.  
6 Best edition by N. Marr, Dremeroskharis Odopistsy (St. Petersburg, 1904).
heroic and romantic element, which forms an indispensable attribute of an epic, but some slight deviations from the author's categories seem advisable. These poems are almost entirely translations or adaptations from Persian originals; if a Persian original cannot be identified, they are composed of motifs and materials that are undoubtedly Persian in origin.

**Heroic poems**

(1) Firdausi's Šah-Nameh. As we have seen above, this masterpiece was translated, at least in part, during the earlier period. This primary version is wholly lost. The present surviving adaptations are the work of various hands and merely form fragments of the Persian author's immortal production. Translations exist both in prose and in poetry for all three of these sections. The prose versions appear for the most part to be the older, and the poetical adaptations are based on them. The various sections of the poem bear separate names in the Georgian textual tradition; the appellations are for the most part derived from the main protagonist in the given section of the story. Firdausi’s epic also forms an exception to other kindred works, in that it has been published in a first-rate critical edition by Justinè Abuladze in Tiflis, 1916. A list of the various parts of the poem is appended.

(a) P'ridoniani. Extant both in a prose and in a metrical version. This contains the beginning of the poem and takes its name from Feridun, who is one of the chief figures in it. The poetical version is derived, as Kekelidze shows, from the prose. Neither the name of the author nor the date is known.

(b) Zaa'k'iani. This survives in metrical form only and was composed by the royal secretary Mamuka for King Levan II about 1647.

(c) Rostomiani. This forms the major section of the poem and centres in the adventures of its hero, Rustum. The translation appears to be the work of several hands and has come down to us only in a metrical form. It was begun by a certain Kedelauri, apparently in the sixteenth century or possibly at the end of the fifteenth. It was continued by Serapion Saba'svili, whose work was written before the middle of the sixteenth century, and completed by Khosro Turmanidze in the first half of the seventeenth. Somewhat later this was revised in part by P'arsdan Gorgijanidze about the end of the seventeenth century. The translations vary somewhat in merit, and for the most part are rather free. They distinctly abridge Firdausi's text, but in a few instances expand episodes lightly touched upon by the original author.

(d) Imitations of the Šah-Nameh. Firdausi's success gave birth to a flock of imitators in Persia. For the most part these epigonids merely expanded episodes or developed stories implied or referred to in the original work. Three of these are extant in Georgian, and are entitled respectively, the Saamaniani, the Baamaniani, and the Širinosiani. The first of these, preserved both in prose and poetry, recounts the life of Rustum's grandfather, Saam. The poetical version must be dated around 1624, but we do not know its author. The Baamaniani describes the adventures of Baaman, the son of Spendiat, and is preserved only in prose, while the Širinosiani involves the adventures of a larger group of figures from the Šah-Nameh. This is preserved in prose, and from internal evidence appears to belong to the first half of the eighteenth century.

(2) The romance of Amiran and Darejan, in accordance with the custom of the time, was done over in a metrical form about 1681 by the Georgian lexicographer, Saba Sulkan Orbeliani. He did not finish the version, and it was completed by his brother, Beg't'abeg.

(3) Seilaniani, the story of Seilan, which the author, the Georgian prince Ioané, avers is a translation from the Persian version of an Indian tale, whose original has not yet been located. This was translated into Georgian in St. Petersburg about 1791.

(4) The Alghuziani. This tale recounts the heroic deeds of Alghuz, the King of the Ossetes and Circassians. This poem has evoked an active controversy. A number of scholars have thought that it is based upon some of the living traditions of the mountain tribes, and as such would accordingly be a historical source of considerable importance, in spite of the legendary character of the general mise-en-scène. Kekelidze points out that the poem cannot be old, as the Georgian text manifests a number of undeniable Russianisms. This being the case, the poem cannot have been written earlier than the latter part of the eighteenth century, and Kekelidze makes it highly probable that its author was the Ossete Ioané Ialghuzidze. We know of this individual that he was active in translating certain liturgical and sacred books into the Ossete language in Georgian transcription, and the suspicious

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1 Kekelidze, pp. 185 ff.
2 Ṣah-Nomes anu Meşt'et'a Cignis k'art'ul' versiobj gamos'c' da cinasîqvaoba da lek'sîqon'i daurt'o Justinè Abuladze. Cf. the review of this book by N. Marr mentioned above, p. 33, n. 1.
3 Ed. by Abuladze, loc. cit., pp. 39–298, but only in the metrical version.
4 Unpublished.
7 Ed. N. Gamrkeli (Tiflis, 1885); ed. M. Janašvili (Tiflis, 1897). Kekelidze, pp. 197 ff.
8 Around 1820–1825.
likeness between his name and that of the chief hero of the poem makes it probable that the work is in reality a production of the early part of the nineteenth century: it has accordingly no historical value whatsoever.

(5) Dilariani. According to the Georgian tradition, this romance was originally translated by a certain Sargis T'igmveli, probably in the thirteenth century, but this version, if it ever existed, has been completely lost. An entirely new poem by this name was written towards the end of the eighteenth century by a certain Petre Laridze. We know quite a little about this writer (d. 1837), who was one of the most active littérateurs in the train of the Georgian princes who were brought to the Russian court. The work was begun at the request of King Heracles of Kakhelia, and recounts the adventures of King Dilar of Abyssinia and of his bride Anusia. The poem is obviously based on older Georgian models, but betrays at the same time strong influence from western European sources. It was completed before the year 1825.1

(6) Alek'sandriani. The Alexander romance, as we have seen above, did influence the composer of the oldest part of the Georgian chronicles.2 A new version of this tale was translated by King Ar'q'il sometime after the year 1700. This version, which is in prose, came into the hands of A. S. Kakhhanov, who made a special study of the tale and showed that it was derived from the Serbian version.3 The whereabouts of this manuscript is now unknown. Later on a certain Petre, who Kekelidze makes out good grounds for believing was the Petre Laridze just mentioned, put this translation into verse.4

**Romantic Tales**

A second group of stories is more definitely romantic in character, as opposed to the heroic ones we have just passed in review.

(i) First among these in point of time come the continuations to "The Man in the Panther's Skin." 5 These deal for the most part with the later lives of the chief characters and the careers of their descendants. As far as we know, they all appear in the oldest existing manuscripts of the poem, and must consequently go back to the end of the sixteenth century. The writers' names are unknown with the excep-

1 Kekelidze, pp. 205 ff. This text was edited by S. Gulisa'vilii at Tiflis; Kekelidze does not give the date (p. 208, note).
2 See above, p. 31.
4 Kekelidze, pp. 215-216.

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220. The interpolations figure in all the editions of the epic, and have been carefully studied by A. Sarajishvili in a series of articles entitled *Ve'khish-quadmosi qabi adigli* (The Fraudulent Passages in the 'Man in the Panther's Skin'), *Moamo* (1895-1901), and separate.
3 Koran, Sura 12.
4 Kekelidze, pp. 224 ff.
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(8) Baramgulandamiani. This recounts the adventures of Baram (Bahram), the son of the King of Rûm, who sought the hand of Gulandam, the daughter of the King of China. This Persian tale has survived in that idiom, both in prose and in verse; as the Georgian version was made in Russia at the command of King Vakhtang, it must be based on the prose recension, since the metrical Persian tale is later in date than the Georgian. Who the author was, we do not know. A Russian version of the tale was published at St. Petersburg in 1773 by one Semyon Ignat'iev.

(9) Baram-Gulianiani. This romance depicts the adventures of Gulian, the daughter of the King of China, and of her betrothed Bahram. A metrical version in Georgian of this story exists from the pen of Onana K'obulašvili, written at Astrakhan in 1726. The Persian original apparently exists in a manuscript in the British Museum, but has not been studied. The Georgian version has not much literary merit: the verses run smoothly, but lack poetic fire and inspiration.

(10) Mijnuri' Badé (The Lovers' Net). The romance describes the adventures of P'rangistan, the son of the King of the Giants (K'ajî), and of his bride Gul-Bahr. It was written by K'al'kusro Andronikašvili, the mad'vonbegi or chancellor of King Heraclius II of Kakhet'la, sometime during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The poem is short but well written, and is one of the best productions of the renaissance period.

(11) Saridoniani. The adventures of Saridon, the son of a merchant. It was probably written in the eighteenth century. There is a distinct bias in favor of the merchant class. The author's identity is unknown, but certain dialectical forms show that he hailed from western Georgia.

Fabulous or Mythological Romances

A third group of these tales is classed by Kekelidze under the name of fabulous or mythological epics, as distinct from the heroic and romantic types of the preceding groups. These tales could be more properly termed romances of adventure. In all cases they appear to have been translated from the Persian, but for the most part their Persian original is not known to us. The first of these tales is the

Rusudaniani. This is perhaps the most interesting of the group, as it appears to be an original reconstruction of Persian materials. It is distinctly Christian and moralizing in tone, with a considerable amount of the didactic element, and seems to have been influenced from the point of view of its literary form by the Sindbad story. It appears to belong to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The other tales are the P'irmaliansi, the Zalum-Janiani, the Mariani, the Qaramdzianiani, — which is a translation of the Persian poem by Abu Tahir Ibn Tarsûs, one of the imitators of Firdausi, — Çar-Davrišiani, the Varsiqiani, the tale of the City of Bronze, — which is concerned with an expedition sent by the Caliph of Baghdad to discover the City of Bronze wherein Solomon had confined the jinns, — and the Qamardzianiani.

Tales Primarily Didactic and Moralizing

(1) Mep'et'a Salaro (Treasure of Kings). This document contains a brief sketch of the qualities needed in a ruler with appropriate examples and anecdotes illustrating these prerequisites. We have a whole series of similar documents in Persian, of which the best known is that by Said Ali Ibn Sihab ud-Din (d. 1385), which is entitled the Daharat-ul-Mulk. The only extant manuscript of the Georgian version is mutilated at the beginning, so that we cannot tell from what or by whom it was translated.

(2) Testamentum (Ânderdzi) Basili Imperatoris. This well-known Byzantine document, which was translated into numerous languages during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, was put into Georgian from the Russian by Alexander, the son of Prince Bak'ar, and printed at Novgorod in 1739.

1 Ibid., pp. 267 ff. One story from it has been published and translated by N. Marx in Vostochnoia zametsi: Sbornik stat'ei i issledovanii professorov i predpochitelnykh vostochnyk Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta (St. Petersburg, 1895), pp. 221–259: “Gruzinskii izvod skazki o tryokh ostrounnykh brat'yakh.”
2 Ibid., pp. 275 ff. Ed. by A. Khakhazashvili, Moombe (1904), No. 6, pp. 1–58.
5 Ibid., pp. 283 ff. Ed. at Tiflis, 1875–1883, by D. Lazarev and N. Kobladze; in 1886 by Lazarev and Edigarov and reprinted in 1902.
6 Ibid., pp. 285 ff. Ed. twice in 1876 and 1890, somewhat abbreviated.
7 Ibid., pp. 286 ff. Unpublished.
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(3) The Wisdom of Lies. This is a collection of fables and stories written by the lexicographer, Saba Sul'kan Orbeliani (1658–1725). They are interesting and piquantly written in a dialect very close to the popular speech.1

(4) Kalilah wa Dimnah.2 This famous collection of fables was translated into Georgian from the Persian version, it is said, in the thirteenth century, but the work was later lost. A second partial translation was made by King David of Kakhet'ia (d. 1602) from the Persian form of the collection entitled Anvar-i-Suheli. This unfinished work was continued by King Vakhtang VI with the help of an Armenian and later on of a Persian. The version, which was made in prose, was finished by Vakhtang in Persia between 1710 and 1712. We have a number of manuscripts whose mutual differences show the various stages through which Vakhtang's work passed. The king then sent his translation to Saba Sul'kan Orbeliani, who put it into verse. This, too, has come down to us in the manuscripts.

(5) and (6) The Sindbad story is represented by two partial versions entitled respectively the Bakht'ar-Nameh3 and the T'imsariani,4 the latter belonging to the longer version of the original tale. In both cases they are translated from the Persian.

(7) The Fables of Aesop.5 The Georgian translation belongs to that category of manuscripts which contains a lengthy biography of the fabulist. The language of the Georgian translation is simple and clear, but very ecclesiastical in cast. It appears to have been translated directly from the Greek, but the author is unknown. The manuscripts contain a note saying that the translation was finished in 1765.

(8) The Book of the Fox. This is a translation of the well-known collection of fables composed by the Armenian writer Vardana.6 The translation was unquestionably made from the Armenian and presumably by one of these races. Kekezldize dates the work about 1750.

(9) Apophthegmata. Of these we have three collections in Georgian: First, one going under the name of Amir Nasar, which appears to be a revamping of the so-called Qab'is-Nameh, written by Kaika'us Ibn

1 Ibid., pp. 320 ff. Ed. Umika'svili (Tiflis, 1872); ed. Ç'arkviani (ibid., 1881). Russian translation by A. Tsagareli (St. Petersburg, 1878); English translation by Sir J. O. Wardrop (London, 1895[?]).

2 Ibid., pp. 305 ff. The text has been edited by I. Ç'orqia.

3 Ibid., pp. 311–313. Unpublished.


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Qab'is in 1082 A.D.1 It exists in Georgian, both in prose and in poetry. Secondly, the Wise Sayings of the Philosophers,2 in slightly differing redactions, one translated from the Greek, the other from the Russian. Lastly, a Georgian version of the wisdom of Akhikar.3 The Georgian appears merely to be a late translation of the Armenian form of this highly interesting document.

Historical Poems

(1) The Passion of Queen Ke't'evan. This lady suffered martyrdom at the hands of Šah 'Abbas for refusing to abjure her faith. The poem, which in part is highly realistic, was written by her son, King T'ëmuras 1, in the early part of the seventeenth century.4

(2) Šah-Navaziæ. This poem recounts the life and valorous deeds of King Vakhtang V, surnamed Šah-Navaz, during the period 1658–73. It is composed of 1147 quatrains, and was written by P'erangi P'asvibertqadze. The style is not too pure and the author intermingles an extremely large number of foreign words in his production. Occasionally, however, there are telling passages.6

(3) T'ëmurasian.6 This poem, written by King Arč'il, describes the agitated life of King T'ëmuras I. In addition to the bibliographical details on the hero, Arč'il includes as well a sketch of the previous history of Georgia. The poem was finished in 1681 when the royal poet was in Osseti'a.

(4) Didmoraviani. This is a historical poem dealing with the life of the great Mo'irav, Giorgi Saakadze, who played an important rôle in the turbulent whirl of intrigues and disturbances which fill the history of seventeenth-century Georgia.7 The poem, which betrays certain ecclesiastical connections in the language, was written by Giorgi's

1 Ibid., pp. 320 ff. Unpublished.


6 Ibid., pp. 348 ff. Unpublished except for the section dealing with the chief protagonist's biography, which has been edited twice, once by Plato Joseliani (Tiflis, 1853) as the Life of T'ëmuras 1, and again by L. Ma'l'dadze (Tiflis, 1888) under the title of Arč'iliani.

7 Ibid., pp. 358 ff. Ed. by Plato Joseliani (Tiflis, 1851); a part was printed in the journal C'isori (Dawn) in 1852. Second edition by I. Imeda'svili and S. 'il'dadze (Tiflis, 1867). There is an excellent monograph by A. P'ur'e'dadze on Giorgi Saakadze, Giorgi Saakadze da misi dro (Tiflis, 1911).
kinsman Ioseb, the metropolitan bishop of Tiflis. The date of the poem is probably between 1682 and 1687.

(5) Kat’olikoz-Bak’aria, or the story of the Kat’olikoz or patriarch and Bak’ar.
This poem deals with the history of events in western Georgia between the years 1730–32, turning upon the relations between the Kat’olikoz Domeni, a cadet of the royal house, and King Bak’ar. The bias of the poem is distinctly in favor of the patriarch, and it was apparently written by someone who had accompanied him into exile.

(6) Vakhtangiani.
This poem describes in 288 stanzas Vakhtang VI’s journey to Russia. It was apparently written by one of those who accompanied the exiled monarch. The writer’s name appears to have been Pavlenisvili, and by internal evidence it must have been written before 1730.

(7) Ciri K’art’lisay, or the sufferings of K’art’li (eastern Georgia).
This is a work of the lyric poet Davit’ Guramisvili, and tells the sufferings of the country during the period 1700–30.

(8) The last poem of this group is the “Chronicle of the Bagratids, the descendants of David.” This poem, which is wholly based upon the Georgian chronicle, deals in 607 stanzas with the history of Georgia up to the thirteenth century, and was written in the early part of the nineteenth century by Petré Laridze, whose work we have touched upon above.

Lyric Poets

The authors of this category of poetical compositions manifest much less foreign influence, and the vocabulary which they employ is distinctly closer to popular speech. Kekelidze touches only upon the main writers who made a distinct contribution in literary form, technique, or content, and passes over a large body of minor individuals, anonymous or otherwise, whose works have come down to us.

(1) King T’ei’muraz I (1589–1663). T’ei’muraz’s mother was Queen K’et’evan, who met a martyr’s death in Persia and whose sufferings were described by her son, as we have pointed out above. Sorrow and disaster dogged him and his family, and the only consolation and solace he could find from the woes and misfortunes which repeatedly overwhelmed him were in literary composition. Most of his work, in consequence, was done during the periods when he was in exile. His

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1 Ibid., pp. 365 ff. Ed. by E. T’aqaiali (Tiflis, 1893).
4 The title of the poem is “Davit’jan-Bagratovant’a Matianč.” Unpublished.

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literary productions fall into three well-defined categories. The first group is composed of translations or adaptations from the Persian. The most important of his poems are “The Rose and the Nightingale,” 1 “The Lamp and the Moth,” 2 “The Praise of Spring and Autumn,” 3 and “The Majama,” 4 a collection of short poems. T’ei’muraz is distinctly a mystic, and a strong ascetic strain runs through his poetry. He appears to have been the first Georgian author to use the dialogue or disputational form (gabádseba) in his compositions; this became very popular among later writers.

(2) King Ar’cil, son of King Vakhtang V (1637–1712). The last thirteen years of his life were spent at the village of Svenska, near Moscow. Ar’cil’s life was more disturbed but less harassed than that of T’ei’muraz I. He was continually being chased out of one or another section of Georgia, but the family misfortunes which overtook his predecessor did not fall to his lot. His works appear to have been collected during his lifetime. Unfortunately the majority of them have never been published, and such as have been printed were most inadequately edited. His main works are “A Dispute between Man and the World,” 5 dated 1684; “The Customs of Georgia,” a most interesting poem in which the life and customs of the people are described with great accuracy and wide local knowledge; it contains much interesting material for social history in general; 6 and “The Comparison of the Chief Organs of the Body.” 7 A considerable number of shorter poems have likewise survived, as well as many odes. Ar’cil also wrote a poem entitled “The Praise and Blame of the First and Subsequent Kings,” 8 and some other minor poems of a more or less historical nature. Ar’cil is a less attractive writer than T’ei’muraz I, but is not so strongly under Persian influence.

(3) King Vakhtang VI (1675–1737). 9 Vakhtang, like most of his predecessors, had a disturbed career. From 1703–12 he was ruler of K’art’li, where in addition to doing a great deal of literary work himself, he charged many others to do translations for him and likewise founded the first Georgian typography. Here among other things the first edition of “The Man in the Panther’s Skin” was printed with

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1 Several editions, the last being by Z. Čicinadze (Tiflis, 1880).
2 Full edition by Givišvili and Akhpalatov (Tiflis, 1872).
3 Best ed. by Z. Čicinadze (Tiflis, 1886).
4 Ed. (incomplete) by Z. Čicinadze (Tiflis, 1886).
5 Unpublished.
6 Ed. in Iveria (1885).
7 Unpublished.
8 Unpublished.
9 Kekelidze, pp. 422 ff. Vakhtang’s poetical works have not been published.
Vakhtang’s moral commentaries. From 1724–37 Vakhtang lived in Russia, where he died at Astrakhan. Vakhtang’s prose works have been touched upon at various points above. In addition, he wrote “A Praise of Georgia” and “A Poem of the Lover to the Loved One,” who in this case is God himself. His smaller poems he gathered together in a collection entitled by the same name as that of T’emuraz I, Majama. Vakhtang’s poetical productions are somewhat less appealing to us than they may have been to his contemporaries, because of his burning desire to find a high moral meaning in everything he read. He was an earnest Christian who, except for his personal misfortunes, might easily have become a fanatic.

(4) T’emuraz II (1665–1761), King of Kakhet’ia. His main works are “The Dispute between Day and Night,” also entitled “The Mirror of Sayings”; “The Praise of Fruits,” and an “Encomium on his Family,” which contains some autobiographical material; “An Elegy on the Death of the Goat-herd of King Heraclius”; and “How to Play Checkers, Chess and Backgammon.” He wrote several acrostics, which were a favorite literary form of this period; one of these is a love poem to some Russian lady, written just before the monarch’s death. T’emuraz, like Vakhtang, was highly religious, but his verse lacks smoothness and is bereft of high poetical inspiration.

(5) Mamuka Bara’t’asvili. This writer was a nephew of King Vakhtang V’s wife and a relative of the lexicographer, Saba Sulkhan Orbeliani. He was brought up with Vakhtang VI and later entered the Russian army. Bara’t’asvili’s work forms a turning point in Georgian literature for two reasons. In the first place his maiden production, Čašniki (Russian, “cup-bearer”), is the first discussion of the nature of poetry and of poetry applied to nature, the first theoretical disquisition on the theory and practice of verse composition which was produced in Georgian literature. Secondly, he frankly broke with the traditional versification schemes which previous poets had undeviatingly followed, and wrote a large number of Georgian songs to be sung to various Russian tunes. To a certain extent these songs reflect Russian influence, but he also employed not a few popular motifs from Georgian circles which had hitherto been denied access to polite Georgian literature. He likewise produced one or two longer poems of the older type, such as that entitled “Praise and Laudation,” and

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1 Ibid., pp. 435 ff.
2 Ed. G. K’ork’aśvili, K’ut’aś (1870). The other poems of the royal author have not been published.
3 Kekelidze, pp. 444 ff.
4 Ed. A. Khakhanaśvili, Moambe (1900), no. 12. The other poems are unpublished.
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(8) Sayát'-Nová. Sayát'-Nova belongs definitely to the category of bards (Armenian ashuk). He was the court singer of King Heraclius II, and by tradition is said to have met his end in the sack of Tiflis by Muhammad Agha Khan in 1795 for refusing to abjure his religion. Sayát'-Nova, like many of the Caucasian bards, was vocal in more than one dialect. He wrote songs in Armenian and also in Tartar, which have come down to us, and in addition we have some twenty poems by him in Georgian. They show, like most of the lays which are interwoven in the bardic Hek’iyat (medleys), a very simple structure and unpretentious rhyme, but withal a very considerable depth of emotional feeling.

The last category of Georgian secular literature on which we have to touch may be dismissed very briefly. This is the drama. There is no real dramatic literature in Georgia during the Middle Ages nor during the early days of the Renaissance. Certain of the ceremonials of the court implied or involved pageants to a certain extent, but real dramatic action was absent. So, too, did the liturgy in certain regards, and likewise the disputes and dialogues of the Renaissance period involve certain dramatic elements. Drama in the proper and technical sense of the term came into being in Georgia only towards the end of the eighteenth century, and is wholly based upon translations from the Russian.


THE ENGULFED LUCERNA OF THE PSEUDO-TURPIN

By H. M. Smitser

NOT all the sources of the twelfth-century *Historia Karoli Magni et Roholandi*, better known as the *Pseudo-Turpin*, have yet been described. The task of identification and analysis is one of peculiar difficulty. Much of the chronicle is composed of summaries of earlier *chansons de geste*; on the other hand, many a later *chanson de geste* is merely a verisimilitude and elaboration of materials in the chronicle. All extant *chansons* (except the *Roland*) which contain analogues to the *Turpin* are younger; the student must decide, therefore, in the case of any of them whether those analogues come from a lost source of the *Turpin* or from the *Turpin* itself. Most of the evidence which can be derived from comparison of texts is ambiguous. Let us take for example the fragment of the *Chanson d’Agolant* and its relation to those chapters of the *Turpin* (VI, VIII–XIV) which summarize the story of Charlemagne’s wars against Aigolandus. The two accounts have much the same nomenclature. Are we to infer that they drew their proper names from the same source? or that the *Turpin* is the source of the fragment? There are six probabilities of one answer and half a dozen of the other. Paul Meyer observes that the *Chanson d’Agolant* deals with an episode which does not appear in the *Turpin*. He argues that this episode must have appeared in a source common to


2 Ed. Ferdinand Castets (Montpellier, 1886). For a review of this edition and a promise (never fulfilled) of one which should be based on a more representative group of manuscripts, see Gottfried Baist, *Zeitschrift f. rom. Phil.*, V (1881), 427–428. For a list of earlier editions, see Gaston Paris, *De Pseudo-Turgin* (Paris, 1865), pp. 11–14, and August Potthast, *Bibliotheca historica medii aevi* (Berlin, 1866), II, 1075–1076. My friend Mr. Walter Muir Whitehill writes from Barcelona that he is at present engaged in editing the *Codex Calixtinus* at the request of the Seminario de Estudos Galegos de Santiago. The fourth book of this Codex is perhaps the oldest and certainly the most interesting of the many manuscripts of the *Turpin*; it has never hitherto been published. Mr. Whitehill has very kindly collated a few passages of Castets with his own transcripts, for my benefit. The results will be duly noted, below.

3 Ed. Paul Meyer, *Romania*, XXXV (1906), 22–31. The brevity of this fragment (it is only 160 lines) makes it not the fairest example, but I choose it because we must refer to it again. It will be seen then that the problem which it raises is no less puzzling when raised by the long romance of *Gui de Bourgogne*. See p. 68, n. 3, below.