

წიგნები

The Poems

## 1. Moq'me da vepkhvi

moq'mem tkva p'iršišvelama,  
šibn šaviaren k'ldisani,  
movinadiren, davlaḡen,  
bilik'ni č'iuḡisani.  
šamamḡvdes k'ldisa tavzeda  
ḡoroni žiq<sup>h</sup>vebisani,  
topi v<sup>h</sup>k'ar žiq<sup>h</sup>vsa berq<sup>h</sup>ensa,  
č'alas žaq<sup>h</sup>n iknes rkisani.  
c'amued sašinaoda,  
šibn amerivnes k'ldisani.  
šavvardi vepḡvsa nac'olsa,  
dron iq'vnes šuaymisani.  
vepḡvi ro c'amomiprinda,  
tvalni marisḡna ḡtisani.  
šai<sup>b</sup>nes vepḡvi moq'mei,  
mašin daižrnes mic'ani,  
k'ldeebi čamaišalnes,  
št'on dailec'nes t'q'isani.  
parsa uparebs, ver hparavs,  
vepḡvi čkaria k'ldisani,  
dro aḡar dasča vašk'acsa  
ḡan ro hkoniq'vnes cdisani.  
gazit gaartvna k'altani,  
žač'visa žavšanisani.  
moq'memac q<sup>h</sup>elši iq'arna,  
vadani tavis q<sup>h</sup>mlisani.  
mašin gauč'ra prangulma,  
dron iq'vnes c'akcevisani.  
vepḡvi k'ldet gadmaek'ida,  
t'ot'idan sisḡleb mdinari,  
taod k'ldis tavze čamac'va  
moq'me sul amamdinari,  
kvišas mi<sup>h</sup>yebavs c'itlada  
sisḡli zed čamamdinari.  
vin et'q'vis magis dedasa,  
k'ars usḡeds kadaḡ-mk'itḡavni.  
bečavs čems dedas rad unda  
kadaḡi, anda mk'itḡavi.  
dazebnon čemeb sc'orebma  
q'ure-mareni mtisani.  
ageb žvaln mainc daq<sup>h</sup>elon

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **The young man and the leopard**

The bare-cheeked youth told his story:  
“I went out hunting and wandered  
Steep paths, winding and narrow.  
Crossed over high mountain crests.  
I came to the head of a cliff and  
Found a herd of ibex;  
I shot the largest one,  
The valley rang with the crash of his horns.  
Then I started for home,  
But lost my way in the mountains.  
I came by a leopard’s den,  
By then it was late at night,  
When the leopard leapt out  
My eyes burned with godly wrath.”  
The lad and leopard joined battle,  
The earth was trembling beneath them,  
They made the cliffs to crumble,  
And tore the trees to shivers.  
His shield no longer shielded  
Him from the nimble beast.  
Nor did it give the lad time  
To make himself ready to fight.  
Its claws tore into the breast  
Of the youth’s chain-mail shirt.  
Still the lad kept his hand  
On the hilt of his sword.  
Then the French blade cut home  
And both fighters collapsed.  
The leopard hung over the cliff,  
Blood dripping down from its paws.  
At the head of the cliff slumped down  
The young man, his life-force now spent.  
He too colors the ground  
Crimson with blood pouring forth.  
Who will tell his mother?  
The seers now sit by her door.  
“What need has my poor mother  
Of oracle or fortune-teller?  
Let my companions go searching  
In crevices deep in the mountain.  
Perhaps they might find the bones

*lamazis vašk'acisani.*  
*da debsac šamit'q'obinet,*  
*nač'ap'n daič'ran tmisani,*  
*sc'orebši nuyar gamovlen*  
*mgloviareni zmisani.*  
*iareboda dedai*  
*t'irilit tvalcremliani:*  
*čem švils gžad vepxvi šahq'ria*  
*gažavrebuli, t'iali,*  
*čems švils q<sup>h</sup>mlit, imas t'ot'ita*  
*dye dauyamdat mziani.*  
*arc vepxvi iq'o žabani,*  
*arc čem švil šaxvda č'k'viani,*  
*mat dauxocav erturti,*  
*ar darčen sircxviliani.*  
*cremlebit c'q'rulebs ulbobda*  
*dapetils vepxvis k'lanč'ita,*  
*švilo, ar mahk'vdi, šen gžinav,*  
*dakanculi xar žapita,*  
*es šeni žač'vis p'erangi*  
*t'ialma rogor dagplita?*  
*šenc imas saper hq'opilxar,*  
*q<sup>h</sup>mali knevaši gagicvda.*  
*mart'uk'a šaxvdi dač'rilsa,*  
*mešveli arvin gq'vania*  
*arc iman magca met'i dro,*  
*aýarc šen daacalia,*  
*veyarc šen dagiparebav*  
*šen q<sup>h</sup>elt nač'eri paria,*  
*veyarca vepxvma t'ot'ebit,*  
*q<sup>h</sup>malma dak'uc'a žvalia.*  
*magis met's aýar git'ireb,*  
*šen ar xar sat'iralia,*  
*salaškrod samek'obroda*  
*ar iq'av sac'unaria.*  
*erti švil mainc gaqzarde*  
*vepxvebtan meomaria.*  
*mšvidobit, žvari gec'eros,*  
*egec samaris k'aria.*  
*xan vepxvi, xan tavis švili*  
*elandebodis mžinarsa,*  
*xan vepxvi vitam imis švils*  
*t'anzeita hq'ris rk'inasa,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Of what was a handsome young warrior.  
And my sisters — tell them, for my sake  
They should cut off their braids,  
And not go about with their friends  
While mourning for their dead brother.”  
The mother wanders about  
Keening and shedding tears:  
“My son had met with a leopard,  
A fearsome, accursed beast.  
He with sword, it with claws,  
Darkened the day for each other.  
The leopard was surely no coward,  
Nor did he treat my son mildly,  
They met, and each slew the other,  
Neither brought shame on himself.”  
Weeping, she dressed her son’s wounds,  
Torn by the leopard’s claws.  
“Son, you’re not dead, only sleeping,  
Worn out from your heavy labors;  
This, your chain-mail shirt,  
How could the beast tear it open?  
You were truly his equal,  
You wore down your sword in battle.  
You met him, one man, alone,  
There was none else to save you.  
Your foe gave you no time,  
Nor did you let him prepare.  
The shield you held in your hand  
No longer served to protect you,  
Nor could the leopard’s claws stave off  
The sword that hacked at his bones.  
No more will I weep over you,  
You are not one to be wept for.  
In war, in the front ranks of battle,  
You never brought shame on yourself.  
Indeed I have raised a son  
Fit to do battle with leopards.  
Be at peace, with the sign of the cross  
That marks the door to the grave.”  
The leopard and also her son  
Appeared to her as she slept.  
Sometimes the animal was ripping  
The armor worn by her son,

*չան կ'iden imisi švili  
vepxvs gadaavlevs q'irasa,  
a emag sizmrebs չedavdis,  
gamaeyvızis mt'iralsa.  
չան ipikrebda: udedod  
gazda vina tkva švilisa.  
ikneba vepxvis dedai  
čemze mc'areda st'irisa,  
c'avide, mec ik mivide,  
samzimar utxra č'irisa,  
isic miambobs ambebsa,  
mec utxra čemis švilisa;  
imasac brali eknebis  
uc'q'alod q<sup>h</sup>mlit dač'rilisa.*

## **2. Akhmet'uri p'at'ardzali**

*aչmet'uri kali viq'av,  
aչ net'avi meo,  
ocdaչuti c'elic'adi  
ost'at's vebareo.  
nemss q'unc'i saita hkonda,  
is ver visc'avleo,  
sap'at'arճlod momamzades,  
es miama meo.  
umarili bevri visvi,  
peri vič'arbeo,  
c'arbi c'vrilad ševiyebe,  
tvali visurmeo.  
nepioni ro movida,  
is miama meo,  
dapa-zurna rom dauk'res,  
imas ver avq'eo.  
ճօչi rom daarak'unes,  
čamouareo.  
kurani cչeni momgvares,  
zed gadavճek meo,  
uzangši rom peչi čavdgi  
gadavalaճeo.  
saq'dris k'arsa rom mivedi,  
յvdelsa šavճաչeo,  
aba čkara, še sulճaylo,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

And sometimes again her son  
Was throwing the beast to the ground.  
Each time she saw these dreams  
She awoke, wet with tears.  
And then she would think: without mother  
No child enters this world.  
It is likely that this leopard's mother  
Is grieving as sorely as I.  
I will go, yes I will see her,  
And bring her words of compassion.  
She will tell her son's story  
And I will tell her of mine.  
For he too is to be mourned  
Cut down by a merciless sword.

### **The bride from Akhmeta**

I was a woman from Akhmeta.  
Oh, my goodness me,  
For twenty-five years to a tailor  
They apprenticed me.  
Where the eye of the needle is  
Remained a mystery.  
So they prepared me for marriage.  
I said, "this pleases me."  
I put on gobs of make-up  
And colors without restraint;  
Then I did my eyebrows  
With black antimony paint.  
The bridal party arrived;  
I said "this pleases me."  
They played the shawms and tambours;  
I danced abominably.  
When I joined the round dance,  
They beat time with a stick.  
They brought me a fine brown horse:  
I mounted it right quick.  
I set my foot in the stirrup,  
At a gallop I sped away.  
I rode up to the church door:  
"Bring me the priest, I say!  
Hurry up, you dog-souled man,

*k'ari gaayeo.*  
*yvdelma k'ari ar gaayo,*  
*is mec'q'ina meo,*  
*yvdelma c'igni ver ik'itxa,*  
*xelši c'avgližeo;*  
*diak'vansa gaužavrdi,*  
*tavši vac'q'vit'eo.*  
*cot'a av gunebad viq'av,*  
*k'arga gavxdi meo.*  
*manam maq'rioni mova,*  
*cχens movaxt'i meo,*  
*gavc'ie da c'in c'avedi,*  
*arvis ucadeo,*  
*maq'rioni momzaχoda,*  
*kal, daicadeo.*  
*me imati t'rak'at'ruk'i*  
*arad čavagdeo,*  
*šua gzaši rom movedi,*  
*vašli gavk'bičeo.*  
*darbazis k'ars rom mivedi,*  
*zirs čamovxt'i meo,*  
*c'in t'abla ro mamagebes,*  
*žami gavt'eχeo.*  
*žiχvit yvino mamit'anes,*  
*is miama meo,*  
*χeladit gamamit'anes,*  
*q'eli visveleo.*  
*sayvinit gamamit'anes,*  
*guli vižereo,*  
*dedamtili momegeba,*  
*p'iri varideo,*  
*p'irši šakari čamido,*  
*titi movk'vnit'eo.*  
*šigni-šigan ro ševedi,*  
*sk'ami ševzvereo,*  
*zed bališi avit'ane,*  
*rbilad davžek meo.*  
*dedamtilsa c'avčurčule:*  
*p'uri mšian meo.*  
*erti mc'vadi rom šemic'va,*  
*is mec'q'ina meo.*  
*taroebša dauare,*  
*erbo movszebneo,*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Come and open the door!”  
When he didn’t answer,  
This really made me sore.  
He couldn’t read the prayer book,  
I tore it away from him.  
The deacon, too, got on my nerves,  
I punched him on the chin.  
Soon I quieted down,  
I’d been upset, of course.  
Before the groomsmen came,  
I jumped back on my horse.  
I spurred him and galloped off,  
I left them in my dust.  
The bridegroom hollered after me:  
“Hey, lady! Wait for us!”  
All of their fuss and yelling,  
I paid no heed to it.  
Halfway down the road I stopped,  
Took out an apple and bit.  
I arrived at the palace gates  
And jumped down from my horse.  
They invited me to the table;  
I broke a bowl, of course.  
When they brought me a drinking horn  
This certainly pleased me.  
They brought me wine in a jug:  
I slugged it down with glee.  
Then they brought out a pitcher,  
I drank and slaked my thirst.  
My mother-in-law came toward me;  
I turned my back on her,  
She put some sugar in my mouth.  
Too bad her fingers got bit.  
Then I went back in the house  
And looked for a place to sit.  
I placed a pillow on a chair  
And plopped down on my seat.  
I whispered to my mother-in-law:  
“I want something to eat.”  
She roasted me a shishkebab.  
This insulted me.  
I rummaged through the cupboard  
For food of quality.

*cecxlzeda t'apa šemovdgi,  
k'vercxi ševc'vi meo,  
zedac tapli ro movasxi,  
is miama meo,  
asi k'vercxis erbok'vercxi  
mart'om ševč'ameo.  
dedamtili vžoxe, vžoxe,  
muli gavigdeo,  
imati tmebis nagleži  
banze movpineo.  
mamamtilsac xeli mivq'av,  
c'veri vagližeo,  
imisi c'veris nap'uc'k'i  
yobes mivpineo.  
nepes c'ixli movaxvedre,  
k'arebs vac'q'vit'eo,  
oriode muxis k'et'i  
mazlsac ušxivleo,  
mazli k'arebs epareba,  
ymerto, gadavrčeo.  
ori k'viris p'at'arzalma  
švili všobe meo,  
mere kalebši c'aveli,  
kalebs uambeo.*

### 3. Dæilil k'ožas khelghwazhale

*dæilil k'ožas xelywažale,  
xelywažale twetnām k'ožas.  
gezal isgwi kaw žašq'eda,  
kaw žašq'eda k'ožas kamen.  
čukwan tixerol xodaraži,  
živ xopxič'a čukwan tixerols,  
eš laxkarwe mindwer lekwa.  
esnær zagruš metxwyær anyri,  
metxwyær mepsæy anəyæri,  
metxwyær mepsæyd te xarek'i;  
zagrušw metxwyær č'ur anyæri,  
mindruš tixerol esəyərda.  
ču loxdarže metxwyær mepsæyd,  
metxwyær mepsæyd halæg ægis,  
twep xať'q'wepi nebgwaisga,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

I put the skillet on the fire,  
Set butter and eggs to fry.  
Then I poured some honey on top.  
“This pleases me,” said I.  
An omelette of a hundred eggs,  
I ate it all, alone.  
I kept on beating my mother-in-law,  
Drove sister-in-law from the home.  
The hair that I tore from the heads  
Of my husband’s mother and sisters  
I laid it all out on the roof,  
Then plucked out his father’s whiskers.  
I put his beard-hairs on the fence  
For all the neighbors to see.  
I met my bridegroom with a kick  
And pummeled him awfully.  
With an oaken cudgel  
I went at my brother-in-law;  
“Thank God I’m still alive,” he said  
Cowering behind the door.  
I gave birth to a baby  
Two weeks after my wedding.  
I went to the neighbor women  
And told them everything.

### **Dali is giving birth on the cliff**

Dali is giving birth on the cliff,  
Is giving birth on the white cliff.  
The child you bore has fallen down,  
It has fallen from the cliff.  
Below a wolf is standing watch,  
The wolf below has seized the child,  
Now it runs off down the field.  
A hunter comes from the mountain ridge,  
It is the hunter Mepsay who comes,  
The hunter Mepsay looked around;  
From the ridge the hunter comes.  
The wolf was running down the field.  
The hunter Mepsay watched for it,  
The hunter Mepsay, at the gate.,  
In the forehead shot the wolf,

dælæš gezal ču laχk'warwne.  
dælæš gezal ži læyč'ətχe,  
tχēremiš t'up poq's læyč'iχne.  
dælił k'ožas ik'pieli,  
χošām k'ožær ik'pieleχ,  
metχwyær mepsæy sga lamq<sup>h</sup>edli  
sga læmq<sup>h</sup>edli twetnam k'ožas žiratēsga.  
dede mišgwi, ludwigw aχkwič'!  
wodaw dodew si žerole,  
dedeš mūkwišg mi dor miri,  
dedeš mūkwišg nædird æmye!  
mi χwirōle gezal isgwi!  
isgwi mašed yær irole?  
mišgwi mašed metχwyær mepsæy.  
sam nalwk'wihws alas lalhwedid:  
χocχēndeds i ladæyisga  
k'wicradaq<sup>h</sup>alsi lehwidinid;  
he eža mōdey mæk'aχisga  
čχara q'wil ywašærš lehwidinid;  
he eža modey mišgu lilq'ur.  
lilq'urs isgwa mi deš žæšgde,  
čχara q'wil ywaš lamo!  
ka loχgene čχara q'wil ywaš,  
ešχu wokwreš lumič'w loχwnæčde.  
metχwyær wokre lumič'ws otnæšne,  
ežnem pindiχ mama ædχin,  
metχwyærš laχt'iχ nebgwaisga,  
metχwyær mepsæy ži laygurne.

#### 4. Ts'utisopeli

c'utisopeli ra ari?  
agorebuli kva ari,  
ra c'ams k'i davibadebit,  
ikve saplavi mza ari.  
saca sopelši miχvide,  
suq'velqan ori gza ari,  
šuaši ari χmeleti,  
garšemo didi zyva ari.  
q'vela adamis švili vart,  
tataric čveni žma ari.  
čvensa da someχeb šua

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

He made it drop Dali's child.  
He took the child up in his arms,  
He slung the wolf's pelt from his belt.  
Dali is keening on the cliff,  
Yet even louder the cliffs are keening,  
Now the hunter Mepsay comes,  
He comes to the foot of the white cliff.  
"Mother of mine, let down your braids!"  
"May you have a mother's blessing;  
I have none who calls me mother,  
The beast bore off the one who did."  
"Here I am, I am your child!"  
"Who is the one who rescued you?"  
"The hunter Mepsay rescued me."  
"We will grant him these three choices:  
If he chooses, then each day  
He will catch a male roe-deer;  
If not, then every hunting season  
Nine ibex will be given him;  
Or, if not, he may lie with me."  
"I do not dare lie with you,  
Let me have the nine ibex instead."  
She brought out nine head of ibex,  
She included a gold horn among them.  
The hunter took aim at the gold-horned one,  
But his bullet did not hit it,  
It rebounded toward his forehead,  
It brought down the hunter Mepsay.

### **The fleeting world**

What is the fleeting world?  
It is a rolling stone;  
The moment we are born  
The grave is ready for us.  
Wherever you go in the world  
There will be two paths,  
The dry land in between,  
A great sea lies around it.  
We are Adam's children,  
Even the Tatar's our brother;  
Between the Armenians and us,

*ganq'opileba ra ari?  
tu kali get'q'vis dobasa,  
is uk'etesi da ari,  
agreti gkondes guneba,  
vit moc'mendili ca ari,  
tu ar ic'ameb amasa,  
muclit našobi ra ari?*

## **5. Tavparavneli ch'abuk'i**

*tavparavneli č'abuk'i  
asp'inzis kalsa hq'varobda,  
zyva hkonda c'inad savali,  
gasvlas šig ara zarobda.  
kali antebda santelsa,  
santeli k'elap't'arobda.  
erti avsulı beberi  
važistvis avsa lamobda,  
sark'melze antebul santels  
akrobda, abezarobda,  
tan amas eubneboda:  
«c'inadac ega gq'varobda.»  
važi miangrevs t'alyebsa,  
gul-mk'erdi ara čkarobda.  
calxelit dolabi miakvs,  
calxelit niavkarobda.  
zyvis gayma erti santeli  
gamoyma k'elap't'arobda.  
yame čamodga c'q'vdiadi,  
uk'uns ramesa hgvanobda,  
t'alya t'alyaze nacemi  
važis čantkmasa lamobda.  
dahk'arga poni, šešč'irda,  
morevi bobokarobda . . .  
gatenda dila lamazi,  
k'ek'lucis tvalebs hgvanobda.  
c'q'alsa daexrčo č'abuk'i,  
asp'inzis p'iras kanobda,  
c'iteli movis p'erangi  
zevidan dahparparobda.  
lešs dasždomoda zed orbi,  
guls ugležavda, čarobda.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

What is the difference, really?  
If someone pledges you sisterhood,  
She'll be the best of sisters;  
So may you be of a mind  
Pure as the open sky.  
If you do not believe this,  
What then is born from the womb?

### **The lad from Tavparavani**

A lad from Tavparavani,  
Was loved by a maid of Aspindza.  
He had a wide sea to cross,  
But in no wise was he daunted.  
The woman had lighted a candle;  
The candle sent forth its beam.  
A certain evil-souled crone  
Plotted the young man's destruction.  
The taper that gleamed in the window  
She snuffed out, to bring him to grief.  
And said to herself as she did so:  
"Did not this boy once love you?"  
The young man cut through the waves,  
His heart and lungs were not strained.  
With one hand he held a millstone,  
With the other he swam the sea.  
From over the water a candle  
Shed light to the other side;  
By now the night had fallen,  
A night dark as blackest pitch.  
Wave pounded on wave  
And strove to make the lad drown.  
He lost his guide-beam, was confounded;  
Before him a whirlpool roared . . .  
The morning dawned bright and cheery,  
Bright as a gay maiden's eyes.  
The waters had drowned the young man.  
He drifted ashore at Aspindza.  
His red shirt of finest silk  
Fluttered in the soft breeze;  
An eagle perched on his corpse,  
Tore at his heart and was sated.

## 6. Nest'an-Darejan

*nest'an-darežan, sad ras gezina?*  
– *mindvris bolosa.*  
*zed ra geχura?*  
– *zari-zarbabi.*  
*movel, agχade, sami gak'oce;*  
*samma k'ocnama peri gicvala;*  
*perma nacvalma c'igni dasc'era.*  
*šig ra časc'era?*  
– *kamχa at'lasi.*  
*vis gaugzavna?*  
– *davit mepesa.*  
*rit gaugzavna?*  
– *žor-aklemita.*  
*ra mouvida?*  
– *diba-χaverdi.*  
*rit čamoχada?*  
– *asi k'acita.*  
*diba-χaverdi rita gamosč'ra?*  
– *mak'rat'lis c'verit.*  
*riti šek'era?*  
– *nemsis c'verita, brolis titita.*  
*riti čaico?*  
– *nazi χelebit siχarulita.*  
*rit gaiχada?*  
– *cχare cremlita.*  
*riti garecχa?*  
– *cremlmduyarita.*  
*raze gahpina?*  
– *alvis t'ot'zeda.*

## 7. Avtandil gadinadira

*avtandil gadinadira*  
*kedi mayali, t'q'iani,*  
*verc mohk'la χari, verc puri,*  
*verca iremi rkiani.*  
*švelsa hk'ra gamoprenilsa,*  
*isari orbis prtiani,*  
*cχenis t'aχt'aze dahk'ida*  
*t'q'avgauχdeli, mtliani.*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **Nestan-Darejan**

Nestan-Darejan, where did you sleep?

— The end of the meadow.

What was your blanket?

— Golden brocade.

I came and uncovered you, kissed you three times;

These three kisses, they made your face blush.

With blushing face, she wrote a letter.

What was enclosed?

— Bright silks and satin.

Where did she send it?

— To David the King.

How did she send it?

— By mule and camel.

What was sent back?

— Velvet brocade.

Who unloaded it?

— One hundred men.

How did she cut the velvet brocade?

— The point of a scissors.

How did she sew it?

— The point of a needle in cut-crystal fingers.

How did she don it?

— With delicate hands, and full of rejoicing.

How did she doff it?

— Bitterly weeping.

How did she wash it?

— In her hot tears.

On what did she hang it?

— An aloe-tree branch.

### **Avtandil went hunting**

Avtandil went hunting

On a high ridge, in thick forests,

Caught nothing — not buck nor doe,

Nor hart with full-grown horns.

At last his hawk-feathered arrow

Brought down a swift roe-deer;

He hung it down from his saddle,

The whole deer, not yet skinned.

čamoxt'a t'q'isa p'irada,  
cecχli daanto zliari,  
dažda da tala šampuri,  
mc'vadi aago mcvriani,  
sanam mc'vadi šaic'oda,  
cχensa misca sazovari.  
cχenma k'aci dainaχa,  
šori gzidan momavali.  
šex't'a lurža, šesč'iχvina,  
rom es k'aci avi ari.  
mežinebes dauzaχa:  
«lurža momgvare čkarada.»  
gavaze χeli gadusva,  
zed gadaax't'a karada,  
gzac'vrili gaarbenina,  
mindori upro čkarada.  
uk'u iχeda, mosdevdnen  
is uržuloni žarada,  
asi hk'ra, asi daχk'oda,  
erti gadurča šavada,  
erti imanac esrola,  
sisχli c'avida yvarada.  
muχasa beč'i miando,  
št'o daic'ia parada.  
dažda da c'igni dasc'era,  
mt'redsa šeaba mχarada.  
«es dedačemsa miartvi,  
vegar mogival čkarada.  
giq'varda tetri mandili,  
čemze šeyebe šavada,  
eg čemi čoχa-nabadi  
k'arze dahk'ide parada.  
eg čemi kamar-χanžali  
yvdels miec sac'iravada,  
eg čemi coli p'at'ara  
ar gaatχovo čkarada,  
tu miscem, iset k'acs mie,  
me mžobdes tvalad-t'anada,  
eg čemi ciχe-darbazi  
tan gaat'ane mžitvada»

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

He rode to the edge of the forest,  
Lighted a roaring fire,  
Sat and whittled a skewer,  
Started the meat a-roasting.  
While the meat was sizzling  
He let his horse roam to graze.  
The horse caught sight of a man  
Coming toward them from afar.  
The dapple-grey reared up and whinnied,  
This man is evil, he felt.  
Avtandil called his squire:  
Bring me my steed straight away.  
He patted the horse on the rump,  
Mounted, was off like the wind.  
He raced down the narrow path,  
Across the field even faster,  
Looked back — in swift pursuit  
An infidel army was coming.  
Of a hundred, he struck down each man,  
Till one, dressed in black, remained.  
This man let fly an arrow,  
And Avtandil's blood gushed forth.  
Leaning against an oak-tree,  
A branch drawn in front as a shield,  
He slumped down and wrote a letter,  
Then tied it onto a dove.  
*Bring this news to my mother:  
I'll come no more to you.  
That white veil that you loved,  
Now dye it black for me.  
My cloak and felt overcoat  
Hang on the door as a shield;  
My dagger and my belt  
Give to the priest as an offering.  
And as for my young wife,  
Don't marry her off too soon.  
But if you do, to a man  
With eyes and strength greater than mine.  
My fortress and manor-house  
Send them with her as a dowry.*

**8. A, is ghrubelni miq'varan**

*a, is yrubelni miq'varan  
borbalazed ro diano,  
erti meoris šaq'rasa  
χaroben, meeliano.  
šaiq'rebian ertada,  
mananas čamaq'riano,  
rac unda bevri ecadnen,  
čven erturc ver gagvq'riano.*

**9. Ts'itel ghvinos migagvane**

*c'itel yvinos migagvane,  
č'ikaši mdgomiaresa,  
sasupeveli rat unda  
šens mk'lavze mc'oliaresa.  
mzeni ar daičrdileba  
mag šensa aremaresa.*

**10. Ts'q'alsa mohkonda napot'i**

*c'q'alsa mohkonda napot'i,  
alvis χis čamonatali,  
dadek, napot'o, miambe  
moq'vrisa šemonatvali.  
— šeni moq'vare t'anc'vrili,  
šua gzas vnax̄e dač'rili,  
davdek da bevri vit'ire,  
zed mivaq'are kva c'vrili.*

**11. Shens loq'as vardi hq'vaoda**

*šens loq'as vardi hq'vaoda,  
gšvenoda yia peria,  
yac'vs mocimcime χalivit  
nami cit monaberia.  
šurit dagprenda niavi,  
girχevda dalal-k'avebsa,  
c'arbi-c'amc'ami q'ornisa*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **Ah, how I love those clouds**

Ah, how I love those clouds  
Spread over Borbala Mountain.  
They rejoice so at the prospect  
Of being joined with each other.  
Now they have come together,  
They sprinkle soft drizzle on me.  
No matter how much they try  
They'll never part us again.

### **I've likened you to red wine**

I've likened you to red wine  
Standing in a glass;  
Who could desire a kingdom  
Lying in your arms?  
The sun will never be darkened  
In the space around you.

### **The stream bore me a wood chip**

The stream bore me a wood chip  
Cut from a poplar tree.  
Wood chip, say what my lover  
Sent as a message for me.  
*— Your lover of slender frame,  
I saw him: cut through the bone.  
I rose up and wept for him,  
Covered his corpse with small stones.*

### **A rose blossomed upon your cheek**

A rose blossomed upon your cheek,  
It adorned you with its clear hue,  
By your eye, like a beauty spot  
Glistened a dewdrop wafted from heaven.  
A jealous breeze threw itself at you,  
Tousled your finely-braided hair;  
Raven-dark brows and eyelashes sheltered

*hχuravda gišris tvalebsa.  
tvalsa, ra tvalsa, cis mnaca,  
c'q'vdiadši moelvaresa,  
movlinebulsa amkveq'nad,  
nugešad damašvralebša.  
t'učš dahk'vdomoda yimili,  
alisprad moyadyadesa,  
k'bil margalit'i aprkvevda  
šukurs midamos da velsa.  
ra tamar! raa ketevan!  
vit šegadaro etersa!  
isars dausob guls mnaxvels,  
χelad garbodes t'q'e-velsa.  
prangis kveq'nebi davagde,  
mivzar-movzari zyvebia,  
versad ver ševχvdi sit'urpes  
magret, rom šena gχlebia.*

## **12. Rad ginda kali lamazi**

*rad ginda kali lamazi,  
ra omši gamogadgeba,  
čaicvams c'itel-q'vitelsa,  
gamova, k'arze dadgeba,  
imis šemχedi važk'aci  
k'elap't'arivit dadneba.*

## **13. Mtieli**

*mtieli var, mtači gazrdili,  
guladi, gaut'eχeli,  
arc'ivi, zecit mosuli,  
sp'ilo var moudrek'eli.  
samšoblos mosiq'varule  
var misi dautmobeli,  
me mirčevnia mq'invari,  
sul mudam q'inuliani,  
sali k'ldeebi q'urosi  
da ikve žiχvta t'riali.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Eyes of smoothly polished jet.  
Eyes? What eyes? No, celestial lights  
That once gleamed in the moonless sky,  
Then were brought down to this world  
As a comfort to weary souls.  
A smile had pressed itself to your lips,  
Lips that glowed the color of flame;  
Pearly teeth were scattering forth  
Light beams on the fields around.  
What Tamar! Who is Ketevan!  
How compare Eteri to you!  
You sink your shaft in the gazer's heart;  
Crazed, he runs through woods and fields.  
I have wandered the lands of Europe,  
Hither and yon o'er distant seas;  
Nowhere could I find a beauty  
Such as that you possess.

### **Why do you want a beautiful woman?**

Why do you want a beautiful woman?  
When you're at war what good will she be?  
She will dress up in reds and yellows,  
Come out of the house and stand by the door,  
Any man who would gaze upon her  
Will melt away like a beeswax candle.

### **The mountaineer**

I was born in the mountains,  
Courageous and unyielding:  
An eagle flying skyward,  
An elephant, unbending.  
In my love for my homeland  
I will never relent.  
I love the mountain Q'azbeg,  
Forever covered in ice,  
The sheer rock walls of Q'uro,  
The ibex prancing there.

**14. Khidistavs shavk'rat p'iroba**

*χidistavs šavk'rat p'iroba,  
čven gavχdet γvizli zmanio,  
čauχdet muχran bať onsa,  
tavs davangriot banio,  
rac roma hkondes, c'avartot  
tval-margalit'i, lalio.  
šavidet, gamoviq'vanot,  
tval-žužun tetri kalio.  
kali, ra kali, kalio  
k'oč'amdis scemdes tmanio,  
tmani, ra tmani, tmanio,  
švidk'eca, švidi mχario.  
esχas okros saq'ureni,  
užyrialebdes kario.  
amas ambobdnen: — net'avi  
ar momašora tvalnio.  
arabul cχenze šemovsvat,  
c'els šemovak'rat χmalio,  
sačexis kudi davχurot,  
šig čauk'ecot tmanio.  
sami iseti vak'ocot,  
loq'as avazrot t'q'avio,  
sagarežoši čavidet,  
ik davic'erot žvario,  
švidi dye da švidi γame  
ik movalχinot žario.*

**15. Lekso, amogtkom**

*lekso, amogtkom, oxero,  
toro ikneba vk'vdebode  
da šen k'i, čemad saq<sup>h</sup>sovrad  
saakaosa rčebode,  
gimyerden čemebr sc'orebi,  
panduris q<sup>h</sup>maze hq'vebode,  
kveq'ana mχiarulobdes  
da me saplavši vlp'ebode.  
net'avi, čemo saχelo,  
didχanamc ixsenebode,  
čemo natkomo sit'q'vao,*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **At Khidistav we will make a pact**

At Khidistav we will make a pact:  
We will be blood brothers,  
We'll pounce on the Mukhran-Batoni,  
Bring down the roof on his head.  
Whatever he has, we will take:  
Precious stones, pearls, and rubies;  
We'll go inside and lead out  
A woman, bright-eyed and fair-skinned.  
Woman, what woman? A woman  
With hair reaching down to her ankles.  
Hair, what hair? With hair that is  
Sevenfold long and luxuriant.  
She will wear golden earrings  
Jingling a tune in the wind.  
Others will say — Ah, if only  
My eyes could view her forever!  
We'll set her on an Arabian horse,  
Tie on a sword to her waist,  
We'll place a cap on her head  
And fold her hair up beneath it.  
Let us kiss three women like this,  
Till the skin on their cheeks rubs off;  
Then let us be off to Sagarejo,  
Where we will all get married.  
For seven days, seven nights,  
We will be revelling there.

### **Poem, I will declaim you**

Poem, I will declaim you,  
For soon I may be dying;  
But, so that I'll be remembered,  
You stay behind in this world.  
Young men like me will sing you,  
You will join the *panduri*'s sound;  
Let the world have fun  
While I rot away in the grave.  
My wish for you, my name,  
Is that you'll long be remembered;  
My wish for you, my words,

*šenamc k'i gahkveq'ndebode,  
šen, čemo samaris k'aro,  
šenamc k'i ahq'vavdebode,  
saχlo, ar daišlebode,  
colo, ar gatχovdebode.  
ert egec unda vik'itχo,  
čem sik'vdils vin it'irebsa,  
vin čamaabnevs cremlebsa,  
sakmes vin gaič'irvebsa.*

*amasa vpikrob da gulica  
amasve minamdvilebsa:  
dedis met's čemi sik'vdili  
aravis aat'irebsa.  
tumc natesavni, da-Յmani  
ayar aisχmen Կilebsa,  
colic zalian mit'irebs,  
kveq'anas gaak'virebsa,  
cot'a χnis šemdeg isica  
sχvisa č'irs gaalχinebsa,  
sul q'velas davavic'q'debi,  
q'velas sχva daatirebsa.  
me dedis gulši viknebi,  
zilsac ver daižinebsa,  
venacvle zuzu gamzrdelsa,  
gulit eg damit'irebsa:*

*dedas vuq'varvart švilebi,  
deda ar gvaq<sup>h</sup>son švilebsa,  
da mit'om c'utisopeli  
sul mudam gvacodvilebsa.*

## **16. T'ialo ts'utisopelo**

*t'ialo c'utisopelo,  
šagč'ame χink'alivita,  
šamamep'ara sibere,  
mamχara k'irk'alivita.  
cal tolši ešmak'i mamχvda,  
damšušχα č'inč'arivita;  
calas tolasya vabžut'eb  
mibinduli cisk'arivita.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Is that you'll spread through the land;  
And you, the earth on my grave,  
May you come alive with flowers.  
Household, do not disperse;  
Wife, do not marry another.  
I want to find out one thing:  
Who will be mourning my death?  
Who will be shedding tears,  
Who will be deeply distressed?

I think of this, and my heart  
Brings the truth to my mind:  
No one, except for my mother,  
Will truly mourn at my death.  
Although my sisters and brothers  
Will dress in unadorned garments,  
And my wife will be weeping  
So much that all are amazed,  
Still, a short time will go by  
And they will be comforting others.  
Then everyone will forget me,  
Others will console them.  
But in mother's heart I'll remain,  
She will not sleep at night.  
A blessing on the breasts that fed me!  
With all her heart she will mourn me:

*Mothers love their children;  
We children soon forget them.  
And so, this fleeting world  
Fills us with remorse.*

### **Oh wretched, fleeting world**

Oh wretched, fleeting world,  
I gobbled you up like a *khink'al*;  
Old age crept up, bent me over  
Like the rocker on a baby's cradle.  
The devil got me in one eye,  
Stung it like a burning nettle;  
I squint with the eye I have left:  
It seems like the gloom before dawn.

**17. Iavnana**

*iav nana, vardo nana,  
iav naninao,  
ak bat'onebi mobrzandnen,  
vardo naninao!  
mobrzandnen da gagvaχares,  
iav naninao,  
bat'onebis mamidasa,  
iav naninao.  
kveš gavušlit χaličasa,  
vardo naninao.  
imasac ar davažerebt,  
iav naninao.  
zed gavupent orχosaca,  
vardo naninao.  
am bat'onebis dedasa,  
iav naninao.  
udgia okros ak'vani,  
vardo naninao.  
šig uc'evt bat'onišvili,  
iav naninao.  
usχiat okros kočori,  
vardo naninao.  
at'lasis sabani χuravs,  
iav naninao.  
zar-babtisa art'aχebit,  
vardo naninao.  
movis p'erangi ucviat,  
iav naninao.  
mtvare greχilat uvliat,  
vardo naninao.  
varsk'vlavi yilat ubiat,  
iav naninao.  
lalis čančχura ubiat,  
vardo naninao.  
gadahk'vrnen, gadaarc'even,  
iav naninao.  
amod brzaneben nanasa,  
vardo naninao.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### Lullaby

The violet and the rose, *nana*,  
O violet *naninao*,  
The lords have honored us with their coming,  
O rose *naninao!*  
They came to us and made us glad,  
O violet *naninao*,  
Their father's sister has come here too,  
O violet *naninao*.  
We will rollout a carpet for her,  
O rose *naninao*.  
We do not think that fine enough,  
O violet *naninao*.  
We'll set a plush rug over it,  
O rose *naninao*.  
Here is the mother of the lords,  
O violet *naninao*.  
She stands by a cradle made of gold,  
O rose *naninao*.  
Inside the cradle a lordling sleeps,  
O violet *naninao*.  
They have hair the color of gold,  
O rose *naninao*.  
A satin blanket lies over them,  
O violet *naninao*.  
Adorned with gold and silver brocade,  
O rose *naninao*.  
They are all wearing shirts of silk,  
O violet *naninao*.  
Girdled around with the crescent moon,  
O rose *naninao*.  
For their buttons they have the stars,  
O violet *naninao*.  
Strands of rubies around their necks,  
O rose *naninao*.  
Gently rocking back and forth,  
O violet *naninao*.  
Singing a tuneful lullaby,  
O rose *naninao*.

— *švidi bat'oni da-zmani*  
*ia v naninao.*  
*švid sopels movepineto,*  
*vardo naninao.*  
*švidganve davcit k'aravi,*  
*ia v naninao.*  
*švidganve movilχineto,*  
*vardo naninao.*  
*ia gundis maranšia,*  
*ia v naninao.*  
*γvino dgas da lali sč'vivis,*  
*vardo naninao.*  
*šig alvis χe amosula,*  
*ia v naninao.*  
*t'ot'ebi akvs nargiziso,*  
*vardo naninao.*  
*zed bulbuli šemomždara,*  
*ia v naninao.*  
*šavardeni prtasa šliso,*  
*vardo naninao.*  
— *ia vk'ripe, vardi všale,*  
*ia v naninao.*  
*c'in bat'onebs gavušale.*  
*vardo naninao.*

### **18. Iambe, tsikhis nashalo**

*iambe, ciχis našalo,*  
*ra dro gak gamovlilio,*  
*visi-ra agebuli χar,*  
*visi-ra čamošlilio.*  
*erti stkva ciχis našalma*  
*zalian gasak'virio,*  
*šalvais agebuli var,*  
*sinisa medga žirio,*  
*sisχlis γvra, švildis zuili*  
*bevri mak gamovlilio.*  
*χevis bers uk'urtχebivar,*  
*mašin ar iq'o γvdelio.*  
*moulocia čemtvisa,*  
*nurc mogereva mt'erio,*  
*zurabma eristvisšvilma*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Seven lordly sisters and brothers,  
O violet *naninao*.  
Said “let’s settle in seven towns,  
O rose *naninao*.  
In all seven we’ll pitch our tents,  
O violet *naninao*.  
In all seven we’ll have great feasts,”  
O rose *naninao*.  
In the sapphire storage room,  
O violet *naninao*.  
There is wine and the rubies glow,  
O rose *naninao*.  
Inside a cypress tree has grown,  
O violet *naninao*.  
On its branches are narcissus blooms,  
O rose *naninao*.  
A nightingale has perched there too,  
O violet *naninao*.  
The peregrine falcon spreads its wings,  
O rose *naninao*.  
I picked a violet and spread out a rose,  
O violet *naninao*.  
I laid them both before the lords,  
O rose *naninao*.

### **Speak, o fortress ruins**

Speak, o fortress ruins,  
Of the times you have seen,  
Tell us by whom you were built,  
And by whom destroyed.  
The fortress ruins told  
This remarkable tale:  
I was built by Shalva,  
I have a foundation of bronze;  
Bloodshed and whizzing arrows —  
I have seen many such things.  
I was blessed by the clan-chief,  
There were no priests back then,  
He prayed that I would never  
Fall to enemy hands.  
Zurab Eristavi

*ver šemicvala perio,  
čemi mk'erdi da k'altebi  
sul sisxlit gadasvrilio,  
alvis xec gverdze mdgomia  
xvtisagan molocvilio,  
erti q'opila yuleli  
alšauveli berio,  
iman asc'avla k'at'ai,  
zed xeze dasak'vlelio  
šibi cisak'e gaprinda,  
c'ioda rogorc gvelio.*

### **19. Vazhk'atsis sik'vdili**

*važk'acsa, gulad-mamacsa,  
sik'vdili zili hgonia;  
šin mo'iralis mosvlai  
tavis korc'ili hgonia;  
samarisak'en c'ayeba  
mas tavis saxli hgonia;  
šavsas k'uboši čac'vena  
tavis otaxi hgonia;  
č'iaxuebis moxveva  
tavis c'vrilšvili hgonia;  
q'elze gvelebis daxveva,  
colis mk'lavebi hgonia.*

### **20. Bzha dia chkimi**

*bža dia čkimi,  
tuta muma čkimi,  
xviča-xviča muricxepi  
da do žima čkimi.*

### **21. Aguna**

*aguna, aguna, gameiareo,  
baḡvi, ask'ana, gadmeiareo,  
čvens sopelši q'urzenio,  
mt'ris mamulši purcelio.*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Could not bring me down,  
Although my breast and loins  
Were smeared with warrior blood.  
There stood a cypress beside me,  
Consecrated to God;  
A certain old man of Ghuli  
From the clan Alshaureli,  
Told them to put a cat  
Upon the tree, and kill it.  
The chain that bound it to heaven  
Retracted, and hissed like a snake.

### **A man's death**

To a true man, brave of heart,  
Death will seem no more than sleep;  
The coming of the mourners  
Will seem like his wedding day;  
The grave into which he is lowered  
Will seem to him like his home;  
The dark coffin in which he rests  
Will seem to him like his room;  
The vermin crawling over him  
Will seem to him like his children;  
The snakes wrapped around his neck  
Will seem like the arms of his wife.

### **The sun is my mother**

The sun is my mother,  
The moon is my father,  
The twinkling stars  
Are my sister and brother.

### **Aguna**

Aguna, Aguna, come over here,  
Bakhvi, Askana, come on out.  
In our village, grapes;  
In our foe's fields, leaves.

*čvens mamulši godritaο,  
mt'ris mamulši gidlitaο.  
aguna, aguna, wiio.  
čvens kalebs q'ač'i da abrešumi,  
mt'ris kalebs — t'ari da k'viristavi.*

## **22. Tamar dedopal viq'av**

*tamar dedopal viq'av,  
tavi žirs aɣar daviye,  
zyvaši čavq'are samnebi  
χmeleti čemsk'en movigde.  
kažebša davde ižara,  
isp'aans χarži aviye,  
st'ambuls χmali vk'ar, darubands  
šams sabalaχe aviye.  
usieri mta gavk'ape,  
didi šara-gza gaviye,  
ɣada-ɣuda t'q'e viare,  
kvaze saq'dari avige,  
amdeni sakmis momkmedma  
cχra adli t'ilo c'aviye.*

## **23. Omi gumbrzed**

*mona drooba dagvidga:  
mt'erma mogvt'aca k'aria;  
aɣarc mosaval mavida,  
daic'va mta da baria;  
zmama žma arvin daindva,  
aɣarc vin kali-d zalia;  
titon ena akv egeti,  
tavs masč'ris, rogorc χmalia.  
ižaxan reulobasa:  
aɣar gokv gasavalio.  
χontkris, amboben, žarebma  
šamaandglivna zyvanio.  
akit ma čvena χemc'ipe  
midis, miudis žario.  
midis da midis saldati,  
rogorc zapχulze cχvario.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

From our own fields, basketsful;  
From our foe's fields, handbagsful.  
Aguna, Aguna, *wiiio!*  
For our own women, fine silken fabric;  
For our foe's women, thimble and distaff.

### **I was Tamar the Queen**

I was Tamar the Queen:  
I bowed my head to no one,  
I set my boundary-stones in the sea,  
The dry land came under my rule.  
I laid a tax on the Kajes,  
Took tribute from Isfahan,  
My sword fell on Stambul and Derbent,  
I levied a land-tax in Sham.  
I crossed impassable mountains  
And opened up great thoroughfares,  
Traversed the thickest of forests,  
Set churches on the high rocks.  
I, who accomplished such deeds,  
Took nought but a nine-yard cloth.

### **The Battle of Gumbri**

The time of captivity lay upon us:  
The enemy captured our homes and land.  
There were no longer crops to harvest,  
Mountain and lowland were scarred by flame.  
A brother no longer forgave his brother,  
Nor his wife, nor sister-in-law;  
Each one's tongue had grown sharp,  
It could sever your head like a sword.  
They called this a time of chaos.  
There is no way out, they said.  
They were saying: the Sultan's armies  
Are cutting across the seas toward us.  
From here our king has gone to meet them;  
He goes, attended by his army.  
One after another the soldiers march  
Like a herd of sheep in summer.

*q'vela k'ac magas χk'virobda:*  
«ar ergebian gzanio.»  
*omi mouχda gumbrzeda,*  
*sisχlis brunevdes t'banio.*  
*suli dgas t'q'via-c'amlisa,*  
*tops cecχlis γebav alio.*  
*cašiit tav-peχ čamodis,*  
*aisr ro c'vima-c'q' alio.*  
*kalakši modis dač'rili,*  
*mand riq'eda χq'rav mk'vdario.*  
*amandit ic'erebian:*  
«*χevsurt gvič'iret mχario!*»  
*šaq'rila χevsurt švilebi,*  
*bevr χkonda saubarario.*  
*aik k'i c'aχve, ošk'aco,*  
*sac saχelobdes sχvanio.*  
*zogta tkves: «merdal moua,»*  
*zog-zogebm: sisχlis žvario.»*  
*zogebm eeग्रac iambes:*  
«*zep'ir darčeba mk'vdario.»*

#### **24. Oy Jgëræg-ieha, loygwi-i-she-e-da**

*oy žgërægieha,*  
*loygwíšēda*  
*ihāy ōy iha ohāy*  
*hay i laygwíšeda,*  
*ihay i, o, ihā o hā,*  
*ia oa iha iha io žgëræg*  
*si logwešd i o!*

#### **25. Ak'alæ-æd, mak'alæ-æd**

*ak'alæd-mak'alæd,*  
*eχsa, peχsa, tanæyžina,*  
*rik'sa, pχik'sa kondarasa,*  
*čāmsæri bərdaluq'vi.*  
*k'iri k'irsa, č'iri č'irsa,*  
*č'irsa, pirvsa lapuriša.*  
*cāniša dæšvda dumæy*  
*dumæy ləhne k'eræisga,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Those who saw them were amazed:  
There are not roads enough to hold them.  
They joined battle by Gumbri fortress,  
The blood they spilled formed into lakes.  
The smell of lead and powder rose,  
Rifles gleamed with tongues of flame.  
Sundered heads and feet came down  
As though raindrops from the sky.  
The wounded men are brought to town,  
There, on the riverbank, lay the dead.  
From the city they send the word:  
Khevsurs, come, we need your help!  
The sons of Khevsureti gathered.  
They had much to talk about.  
You, warrior, must go there too,  
Where other men have made their names.  
Some said: They will get a medal.  
Others said: The Cross of Blood.  
And some said: Those who give their lives  
Will live on by word of mouth.

### **Oy Jgëræg [St. George], stand by us**

Oy Jgëræg-ieha,  
Sta-a-nd by-y us!  
Ihaay ooy iha ohaay  
Hay i stand by us,  
Ihay i, o, ihaa o haa,  
Ia oa iha iha io, Jgëræg,  
Stand by us i o!

### **[Svanetian nonsense song]**

*Ak'alæ-æd, mak'alæ-æd,*  
*Ekhsa, pekhsa, on the mountain-pass,*  
*Rik'sa, pkhik'sa kondarasa,*  
*Cha-amsæri bërdaluq'wi.*  
Lime on lime, want on want,  
On want, on the cow in the stable.  
The bear of Tsena's tail-fat,  
Tail-fat melted on the hearth,

*k'a-k'eræy, læmq'inasa unda,  
kuti muyve ka unaq'a,  
žibe-čube nat'æpura  
k'ærk'inasa, p'ærk'inasa,  
zit'q'!*

## **26. Ochop'int'ra**

*očop'int'ra bedniero,  
očop'int'ra mšveniero,  
mogvec šeni moc'q'obileba –  
šeni namc'q'emsuri nadiri.*

## **27. Gonja modga k'arebsao**

*gonža modga k'arebsao,  
aq'vrialebs tvalebsao.  
rilasa da cχrilasa,  
ymerti mogvcems c'vimasa,  
gagvik'etebis q'anebsao,  
simindsa da mč'adebsao.*

## **28. Tsangala da gogona**

*cangala da gogona,  
dalalale, cangala,  
gogona kalaks c'avida,  
q'urzeni moit'ana.  
me q'urzeni ar mač'ama,  
saq'darši šeit'ana.  
saq'darma me ar maloca,  
samare gamityara.  
samareši ver čamt'ia,  
gverdebi čamitala,  
čemi gverdebis natali  
isev zed damaq'ara.  
cangala da gogona,  
dalalale, cangala.  
es bič'i k'argad tamašobs,  
peχis prčχilebze dgeba*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

The slate on the hearth, the baking-stone,  
I have unbaked cheesebread,  
Above and below it are bread-crusts  
Gnawing-gnawing,  
*Zit'q'!*

### **Ochopintra**

Ochopintra, happy one,  
Ochopintra, comely one,  
Grant a favor unto us —  
From your herd a beast to hunt.

### **Gonja came to the door**

Gonja came to the door,  
He rolled his eyes around.  
Melting snow, grain through a sieve,  
God will give us rain.  
He will make the fields produce  
Maize to make our corn-bread.

### **The mandolin and the girl**

The girl and the mandolin,  
*Dalalale*, mandolin.  
The girl went to the city,  
She brought back some grapes.  
She fed no grapes to me,  
She took them to the church.  
The church gave me no blessing,  
They dug me a grave.  
I did not fit in it,  
They shaved down my sides,  
Then they took the shavings,  
Strewed them over me.  
The girl and the mandolin,  
*Dalalale*, mandolin.  
This boy dances well,  
He stands upon his toes,

*aman ro peçi it'k'inos,  
net'av vis dambraldeba,  
cangala da gogona,  
dalalale, cangala.*

### **29. Vazhis nat'vra**

*t'urpa bayi da c'alk'ot'i  
ek'lita vinme šasara!  
rk'inisa k'ari šeaba,  
k'lit'e me momca, šen ara!  
sik'vdilsa šensa sanacvlod  
tavsa me mivscem, šen ara.  
vah tu zed isic damertos,  
me miq'varde da šen ara!*

*t'urpa bayi da c'alk'ot'i  
ek'lita vinme šehnara!  
rk'inis k'arebi šeaba,  
k'lit'e me momca, šen ara!  
sik'vdilsa č'iris sanacvlod  
tavsa me mivscem, šen ara.  
va, tu ese damemartos,  
me k'i miq'varde, šen — ara!*

### **30. Me var Qhel-Samdzimari**

*me var q<sup>h</sup>el-samzimario,  
me var kažisa kalio;  
važiereb čem ȳil-kamarsao,  
okros tmiani da okros košebiani.  
amaši mkonda šazlebaio,  
q<sup>h</sup>meletze viarebodidio,  
č'ima-laxt'aras vzidevdidio,  
amaši mkonda šazlebaio.  
abuletaurt ȳoligasao  
kali sacoled mavsc'ondidio;  
čaveȳvividi, čauc'vidio,  
ȳuzu-mk'erds gamavaȳvividio.  
kažavet viarebodidio,  
naȳirs aikit vadendidio.*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Should he hurt his feet,  
I wonder who he'll blame.  
The girl and the mandolin,  
*Dalalale, mandolin.*

### **A young man's wish**

This lovely garden and orchard,  
Someone has hemmed in with thorns,  
Set an iron gate before it,  
And gave me the key, not you!  
*In place of your death I would gladly  
Offer my own life instead.  
Alas, if it should turn out  
That I am in love, but not you!*

This lovely garden and orchard,  
Someone has planted with thorns,  
Set iron doors before it,  
And gave me the key, not you!  
*Rather than you suffer death I would  
Offer my own life instead.  
Alas, if it should befall me  
That I am in love, but not you!*

### **I am Qhel-Samdzimari**

I am Qhel-Samdzimari,  
I am a woman of Kajeti.  
My bracelets and my buckles jingle,  
I've golden hair and golden slippers.  
At that time I had the power:  
I sojourned upon the earth,  
I fetched chervil and wood-sorrel,  
At that time I had the power.  
Kholiga Abuletauri  
Yearned to have me as his wife;  
I embraced him, lay beside him,  
I drew him close to my breasts.  
I sojourned in Kajeti,  
I drove cattle back from there.

**31. Adgilis dedao**

*adgilis dedao,  
dedao չvtisao,  
šen dagvit'ane baraka,  
չaris naչnavs,  
puris nac'vels!*

**32. Kali khwaramze**

*aymosavletit aymočnda  
tvalad lamazi kalio,  
amahq'va saq'ur-beč'edi,  
užrialebda kario,  
tan moq'me amaiq'ola,  
natlad eyeba pario.  
– ak'ocet kalsa չvaramzes  
me var am kalis kmario.  
ak'oca bič'ma regvenma,  
tavs gadimt'vria չmalio.  
– rad egre, bič'o regveno,  
razed moik'al tavio?  
gac'q'ra, gažavrda չvaramze,  
mayla čašalna tmanio,  
šak'azma mamis luržai,  
zed tavad šažda kalio;  
sarbenlad ar eq'opian  
trioletisa gzanio,  
sazovrad ar eq'opian  
didi algetis mtanio,  
salok'ad ar eq'opian  
samni marilis kvanio,  
sasmelad ar eq'opian  
alazani da mt'k'vario,  
movarda gumbris c'q'alzeda,  
elvit enata tvalio,  
daec'apa da zyva dašra,  
gagliža mosartavio.  
– kaloba daik'veչodis  
kalma չvaramzistanama,  
verc gasč'ra չmalma prangulma,  
verc šaašina danama.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **Place-mother**

Place-mother,  
Mother of God,  
Bring us a bountiful yield,  
Plowed by the oxen,  
Milked from the cows!

### **The woman Khwaramze**

In the East appeared  
A woman of resplendent beauty,  
Her earrings and her rings  
Jangled in the wind;  
A vassal came up with her,  
His sabre painted red.  
— Kiss the woman Khwaramze,  
I am the woman's husband. —  
The foolish young man kissed her,  
Then split his own head with his sword.  
— What means this, foolish youth,  
Why did you kill yourself? —  
Khwaramze grew angry,  
Let down her hair from above,  
She saddled her father's steed  
And she herself jumped on.  
The roads of Trialeti  
Are not enough to run on,  
The great Algeti mountains  
Are not enough to graze on,  
Three stones of solid salt  
Are not enough to lick on,  
The Alazani and Kura  
Are not enough to drink from.  
It came to the Gumbri waters,  
Eyes ablaze like lightning;  
It slurped up the sea till it dried,  
It burst its saddle girth.  
*Any woman like Khwaramze  
Would boast of her womanhood;  
No sharp sword could cut her,  
No knife make her afraid.*

### 33. Monadire zovis kvesh

*sami tve davrči zovs kveša,  
mart'i, ap'rili, maisi.  
mšvildi davq<sup>h</sup>eče bozaldi,  
cecχli davante imisi.  
datvi t'q'av q<sup>h</sup>orcit šavsč'ame,  
k'i c'amc'q'medsaa me isi?  
mauved tavis dedasa,  
švil veyar micno tavis.  
šavesc'ar colis korc'ilsa,  
q'ismat tu iq'o aisi.  
siq'inules uč'erivar,  
ro gavtbebi, gavišlebi.  
cot'a pul čamamaq'olet,  
nasiait avivsebi.  
saikios dukania,  
γvinos davlev davitvrebi.*

### 34. Mzeo, mzeo, amodi

*mzeo, mzeo, amodi,  
cχvars dagik'lav mak'esa;  
šegic'vav, šegimarileb,  
c'in dagidgam t'abak'ita.*

### 35. Mze shina da mze gareta

*mze šina da mze gareta,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
uq'ivlia mamalsao,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
gatenebulao,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
gatendi tu gatendebi,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
gatenebulχaro,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
zilo, rasa mežinebi,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
me sabraleosao,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **A hunter trapped under a snowslide**

Three months under a snowslide:  
March, April, May.  
I broke my bow into slivers  
And made a fire with it.  
I ate a bear, skin and all,  
Is it for this I am damned?  
I came out and went to my mother,  
She did not know her own son.  
I went to my wife's wedding party;  
Is this kismet or what?  
The ice had held me together —  
I warmed up, and I fell apart.  
Send me off with some money,  
And I will have fun somehow;  
In the world beyond there's a tavern:  
I'll drink up their wine and get drunk.

### **Sun, sun, come up**

Sun, sun, come up,  
And I will kill a pregnant sheep,  
I will roast and salt it for you,  
Set it on a plate before you.

### **Sun inside and sun outside**

Sun inside and sun outside,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
The rooster has already crowed,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
It has dawned already,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
Dawn if you will dawn at all,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
You have dawned already,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
Sleep, why do you let me sleep,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
I am so unhappy,

*mzev, šin šemodio!  
t'ans, peχs ara ar macvia,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
titist'aro, k'virist'avo,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
čkara dabrundio,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
male p'erangs ševik'erav,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
c'itel k'abas ševik'erav,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
sanat'relsa, prialasa,  
mzev, šin šemodio!  
čkara dabrundio,  
mzev, šin šemodio!*

### **36. Suletis leksi**

*samzeos dak'lebulebi  
suleca grovdebiano,  
suleči aχalgazdani  
ert alags iq'rebiano,  
santlebs anteben, k'elap't'rebs,  
c'in supras gaišliano.  
suleči beri-moχucni  
supris tavs dasχdebiano,  
aχalgazdani, žeilni,  
su peχzed galobdiano,  
lamaz-lamazi kal-rzalni,  
santlis šuks dasχdebiano,  
aχlad gaq'rilni col-kmarni,  
suleči gačvendniano;  
arca akvt tvalta sinatle,  
arc baged išlebiano,  
mat mχilvel berni-moχucni  
mat codvit ic'vebiano.  
suleči c'vrili balyebi  
dedebsa ezebdniano,  
moat'ans sayamos χani,  
aka ik yondebiano,  
zužu rom moagondebat,  
titebsa ic'oviano,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

O Sun, come on inside!  
I've no clothes or shoes to wear,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
My spindle and my distaff,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
Come back to me quickly,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
I will sew a shirt now,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
And I'll sew a fine red dress,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
Longed-for, blowing in the wind,  
O Sun, come on inside!  
Come back to me quickly,  
O Sun, come on inside!

### **The land of souls**

Those cut off from the sun's domain  
Gather in the land of souls.  
In the land of souls, young people  
Come together in one place.  
They light candles, beeswax tapers,  
Set the table for a banquet.  
In the land of souls, old people  
Sit down at the table's head.  
The young folks, in prime of life,  
All rise to their feet and chant.  
Lovely women, wives and sisters,  
Sit there in the candlelight.  
Newly-sundered wives and husbands  
Show up in the land of souls;  
There is no light in their eyes,  
There comes no sound from their lips.  
The old people, gazing on them,  
Burn with sorrow for their fate.  
Small children in the land of souls  
Wander, searching for their mothers;  
When the day draws to a close,  
They oftentimes become distressed;  
They recall their mothers' breasts,  
With nought to suck on but their thumbs.

*čaeχvevian sχvita muχlt:  
 dedao, p'uri gvšiano;  
 χelsa hk'ren, gadaagdeben,  
 čven gana dedeb gvkviano?  
 samzeos dedis t'irili  
 švils c'vimad gačendniano,  
 dadian dasvelebuleb,  
 samos ver gaišriano,  
 visac hq'avš beri ded-mama,  
 k'altas kveš ipariano,  
 visac ded-mama ara hq'avš,  
 čum-čumad cremlebs sdiano,  
 met'ismet' t'irilisagan  
 suls veyar ibruniano,  
 mat mχilvel berni-moχucni  
 mat codvit ic'vebiano.  
 suleči berni-moχucni  
 q'avaržnebs ezebdniano,  
 q'ovel bednier dŷeebši  
 sak'lavebs moeliano,  
 visac momχseni ara hq'avt  
 p'iruk'uym dasχdebiano,  
 vinac imat moiχseniebs,  
 sulitac cχondebiano,  
 me magis mošairesā,  
 čak'oant k'obe mkviano.*

### 37. Mirangula

*ot', sabrela mirangula,  
 dedes isgva si gar χordæs,  
 naunχološ murq'vams χordæs,  
 ečav žiq<sup>h</sup>daχ sædil-vaχšæms.  
 pisev χaba žimšiš næbozs:  
 mirangulas vaχšæm otq<sup>h</sup>idχ,  
 mirangula des ēsχviddaχ:  
 esnær æmčed læymaχvâlte sævyareši  
 laχasgidna dede miča:  
 mæčχpær zagær bežgvenila.  
 — o, dedēši mirangula,  
 lečwme-učwma mæg žičwmina,  
 gzavrob žeri vešgimp'ilyæš!*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

They will hug the knees of strangers,  
Crying “Mother, we are hungry.”  
They push them away, replying  
“Do you think we are your mothers?”  
The tears of mothers left behind  
Fall like raindrops on the children;  
Dampened to the skin, the children  
Cannot dry their clothing out.  
Those little ones with aged parents  
Are sheltered underneath their garments;  
Those little ones who have no parents  
Wander mutely shedding tears.  
They have wept and sobbed so much  
They no longer can draw breath.  
The old people, gazing on them,  
Burn with sorrow for their fate.  
In the land of souls old people  
Search for canes and walking sticks.  
On each day of celebration  
They have hope of sacrifices;  
Those with none to pray for them  
Must sit with their backs toward the table.  
If someone should pray for them  
It brings blessing on their souls.  
*I, the one who made this poem,  
Am called K’obe Chak’oani.*

### **Mirangula**

Ot’! Alas, poor Mirangula,  
You, your mother’s only child,  
She had spoiled you in the tower,  
They brought up your meals to you.  
May Wednesday night be smeared with pitch!  
They brought Mirangula’s supper,  
Mirangula was not there:  
He had gone to fight the Savs.  
Mother looked out from the window:  
There he stood, on Machkpar mountain.  
“Oh, your mother’s Mirangula,  
All that could be done you’ve done,  
This will be your final journey!”

*χaq'erulda sgimyæš mežwgas,  
 am lēt, næboz ču laybure,  
 sgimyæš mežwga ču χoq<sup>h</sup>aca,  
 čχara q'vil q<sup>h</sup>æn ka χokvita,  
 eži sævyærs ču χobažax.  
 pādæš aχγwič'da sævyareš.  
 ara-čχara ka χok'vara,  
 ara-yet sævyær χodgara,  
 pādæss vešgmav ka laχč'onne.  
 aš χobina liz-ličedi,  
 pādæš aχγwič'da zurālæš.  
 «ež pintare zuralare,  
 pādæš imži mins χaχlēnaχ,  
 mæg aršluræy, mæg lačkuræy!»  
 alyærs vešgmav kād laχč'onne.  
 aš χobina liz ličedi,  
 tanæγ-zagarid anγæri,  
 čχara q'vil sgvebin χork'ala.  
 ež pisræil vezdenila!*

*esnær vezdens gæn loχkvica,  
 ču χodražda tanæγ-zagær.  
 her atγane k'utχvas miča,  
 mirangula ži laygurne.  
 ži læyčokve tæmi-garžuš:  
 «voy γærbet i voy samørtal,  
 tχvim uc'wrad nom[a] amcvirna!»  
 her atγanda k'utχvas miča,  
 vezdens χaq<sup>h</sup>id muč'odisga,  
 vezdenila čud χodgara.  
 «hať, lək'čev li bedi mišgvi!  
 hædurd uc'wra māma χviri:  
 čχara sævyær ču midgaraχ,  
 čχara q'vil q<sup>h</sup>æn kav mikvita.  
 at', sabrela mirangula,  
 lečwme-učwma mæg mičwmina,  
 gzavrob mēri vešgimp'iliš!»*

*q'varq'vali miča patvare  
 šdugværs χuyweχ lasbudarad,  
 tχvimiše isgwi haq'æri  
 užærs χuyweχ læc'ənc'ilad,  
 lesgiše isgve kəp'are*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

At the spring he watched a herdsman.  
That night, when it had grown dark,  
He killed the herdsman at the spring,  
Led away nine head of oxen.  
This the Savs had soon found out.  
A group of Savs came after him.  
He shot eight times, he shot nine times,  
He killed eight Savs, maybe more,  
Forced the chasers to turn back.  
He continued on his way.  
A group of women too pursued him.  
“These are good-for-nothing women,  
How could such as they catch me,  
Without underwear or veils!”  
These as well he made turn back.  
He continued on his way.  
He came to the mountain pass,  
Driving the nine head of oxen.  
But for that accursed Vezden!

Vezden took a shorter path,  
He was watching at the pass.  
Vezden made his rifle shout:  
It rolled Mirangula over.  
He rose to his knees, dismayed:  
“O God, judge of what is right,  
Do not leave me unavenged!”  
Mirangula’s rifle screamed:  
He shot Vezden in the chest.  
Now he has killed Vezden, too.  
“Hat’! may my fate stand upright!  
I will not be unavenged:  
I have gunned down nine Sav tribesmen,  
Led away nine head of oxen.  
At’! Alas, poor Mirangula,  
All that could be done I’ve done,  
This will be my final journey!”

*The curly hairs upon your head,  
Mice will use them for their nests;  
The skull that is inside your head,  
Snakes will use to lay their eggs;  
The ribs that are inside your chest,*

orbæls χādaχ yirib-karkæšd,  
 temiše isgvi girgvdale  
 ywamlærs χādaχ lasærk'aled.  
 ot', sabrela mirangula,  
 næymaχvāl isgvi q<sup>h</sup>anare  
 ka žacχip'daχ giriš mærgvald.

χošād sabral ušgwlæš bap'ær,  
 ežyær laywč'ard malq'ærs ardaχ,  
 ežyær sævyærs čotərmalaχ,  
 væræls k'ačuš χac'aburaχ;  
 χošād sabral ušgwlæš χeχvær,  
 aršvlærs k'ačuš χak'adəraχ.  
 didæb otq<sup>h</sup>æd lamryas ušgwlæš!  
 bap'ær sævyærs ču χačedaχ;  
 mirangulas šuk'wd χalak'aχ.  
 næymaχvāl miča q<sup>h</sup>anare  
 ušgwlæš bap'ær lelχwer χādaχ  
 didæb otq<sup>h</sup>æd lamryas ušgwlæš!

ušguls luχoris χašdabaχ.  
 – sepsk'verd miča im alnæq'id?  
 – k'vecens ælq<sup>h</sup>ded lələnžærus.  
 ečka laməryas χosgoža:  
 – kirsæš sepsk'vers deš χwišgede!  
 k'wecen χašgwmin iursalmiš.  
 lak'læv χādaχ at'k'wer zagær,  
 lac'wrem-lənyav – mušur zagær,  
 lapra-lagoh – twetnuldæš tχum.  
 didæb otq<sup>h</sup>æd lamryas ušgwlæš!  
 sepsk'verd miča ečis lanq'ed.  
 mešχα zuγwas beræl χezgeχ,  
 ywinal-zedæš ečχæn išgvmin.  
 yertem zuγruš q<sup>h</sup>æn oχzəze,  
 muč'wærs χuywe žvid i sak'mel.  
 ušgulæš matχwmi pankvesyān læsw,  
 ušguls luχor ži læybineχ.  
 q<sup>h</sup>eviš læštχas muχvrüč'yāna,  
 ežnær luχor ču χoq<sup>h</sup>vamaχ.  
 mok'ræb bap'ærs darbæz otq'væčχ,  
 ečka luχor čvæmq'velēli.

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

*Hawks will use to line their nests;  
And the whites around your eyes,  
Will be mirrors for the crows.  
Ot'! Alas, poor Mirangula,  
The oxen you seized from the foe  
They stood in a ring around you.*

Pity, too, the priests of Ushgul,  
They had gone for trade to Malq'ar;  
They were captured by the Savs,  
Who shaved off their beards while standing.  
Pity, too, the wives of Ushgul;  
They stripped off their underwear.  
Praised be Ushgul's St. Lamaria!  
Then the priests escaped from Malq'ar,  
On the road found Mirangula.  
The nine oxen he had captured  
They took for a *lukhor* feast.  
Praised be Ushgul's St. Lamaria!

The *lukhor* feast is held in Ushgul.  
— What will we bake for his *sepsk'wer*?  
— We will bring Lenjerian wheat.  
Then Lamaria spoke to them:  
“I will not have lentil *sepsk'wer*!»  
She asked for Jerusalem wheat.  
The threshing-place is At'k'wer mountain,  
The winnowing-place is Mushur pass,  
The drying and grinding at Twetnuld's peak.  
“Praised be Ushgul's St. Lamaria!  
We will bake this for his *sepsk'wer*.»  
Monks are dwelling by the Black Sea:  
Holy wine was brought from there.  
From the sea God sent an ox,  
Tapers, incense on its horns.  
Ushgul's chief was Pankwesyan,  
At Ushgul the *lukhor* started.  
Mukhruchyan from the valley's end,  
He was toasted at the *lukhor*.  
The floor broke under the gathered priests,  
Then they went their separate ways.

**38. Dideb, dideb tarigdzelas**

*dideb, dideb tarigzelas,  
lelq<sup>h</sup>əraled lišeds gušgve,  
mašed gušgve žey sgožile!  
zγudi murgvaldi χacχep'a,  
svet'i vokreši χagena,  
isgan dideban goši li,  
čχeryalay miča tasare,  
tas i avžariwš gošile,  
ləšk'ade miča avžare,  
lənkeč'a miča murq'vame,  
zīrvas rioni χogenda,  
šdulvas šaurden χacχep'a,  
lesgas γvašari χoq'urda,  
sark'i lasgidis χočānda.*

*lalgena miča q<sup>h</sup>anare,  
muč'var ləšk'adil χarenaχ,  
supil met'q'vepil χarena,  
zagniš zagarn ibirywyeleχ,  
lalcχat'ay miča gicrale  
zagniš zagarn ibackvyeleχ.*

**39. Survili**

*mindorši sisχlis t'ba brunavs,  
gadasagdebi sad ari;  
šiga c'evs c'iteli gveli,  
tavsa zrav, bolo sad ari;  
bevrsa hk'lavs bevrīs survili,  
magram gageba sad ari!*

**40. Aleksī Bidzashvili**

*aleksi bižašvili  
soplis boloze damdgari,  
rad gamačine, dedao,  
rad arc'e čemi ak'vani?!  
miq'varda šroma, cχovreba,  
miq'varda satib samk'ali;*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **Glory to the Archangel**

Glory, glory, O Archangel!  
We are praying for our welfare,  
For you are the one who saves us!  
There was a barrier built around it,  
A barrier wall with golden pillars,  
Inside, it was filled with glory,  
His chalices were gleaming brightly;  
It was filled with cups and armor,  
His armor was of hammered metal;  
His tower was adorned with frescoes,  
At its base a river flowed,  
Its embrasures ringed with falcons,  
Ibexes lay at its sides:  
A vision brighter than a mirror.

The oxen sacrificed to him  
Have horns bedecked with hammered metal,  
They plowed up the central square,  
On every ridge they paw and bellow;  
The rams offered up to him  
On every ridge fight with their horns.

### **Wish**

A lake of blood swirls in the meadow,  
Where is the stream flowing out?  
Within lies a crimson serpent,  
Its head moves; where is its tail?  
Loving too much brings doom to many,  
But has anyone understood?

### **Cousin Aleksi**

Cousin Aleksi stood and asked,  
At the edge of the village:  
Mother, was I born for this,  
Is this why you rocked my crib?  
I loved my work and loved my life,  
I loved to mow the hay and corn;

*q<sup>h</sup>elmc'ipis gamogzavnili  
tavs c'amamadga čapari.  
«unda c'aχvide žaršia,  
k'enč'i gakv amosat'ani.»  
avdeg da menac gavsc'ie,  
met'i ra mkonda saq<sup>h</sup>sari.  
šin žalapt davemšvidobe,  
dedam čamidva sagzali.  
nuras idardeb, dedao,  
bevr čemistana sχvac ari,  
bevria b3olis velzeda  
q'ornebis sadil-samχari.*

*sadaχar net'ar aleksi,  
dažangda šeni namgali,  
colic gyalat'obs lamazi,  
gaχda osebis c'ac'ali.*

#### **41. Sheq'varebulis guli**

*nislo, rad giq'vars t'ialo,  
mtebisad gadmopenao,  
an ertad šaq'ra ырubelta  
k'urumad gadmodena!  
guli makv nač'reviani,  
arc mamirčeba žerao,  
ar tu ra ari c'amali,  
ar tu ram icis švelao.  
gulo, ra giq'ia t'ialo,  
bork'iliano enao,  
sadra miimyer net'ara  
važk'aco svilis perao.*

*net'ian čit'ad makcia,  
net'av vicode prenao,  
movprindebodi šentana,  
χo ici čit'is enao!*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

But the Tsar had sent for me,  
His policeman stood before me:  
— You must go and join the army,  
It's your number that they picked. —  
I set off to do my duty;  
There was no way out of this.  
I bid farewell to my family,  
Mother packed some food for me.  
Mother, there's no point in grieving,  
There are many just like me,  
Many on the field of battle,  
Lunch and dinner for the crows.

*Dear Aleksi, where've you gone?  
Your sickle's turned to rust, I fear.  
Your lovely wife is cheating on you,  
She's become the Ossetes' playmate.*

### **A lover's heart**

O wretched mist, how you love  
To cling to the mountain tops,  
Or join up with the clouds  
And float with them in groups.  
My heart is scarred and wounded,  
It has yet to heal.  
What medicine could cure it,  
What could bring relief?  
Wretched heart, what have you done?  
What about you, fettered tongue?  
Rye-colored boy, you were singing,  
Then left — I wish I knew where.

If I could turn into a bird,  
If I could learn how to fly,  
I would come flying to you,  
You know the birds' language, I'm sure!

**42. T'ilebis korts'ili**

*vahme, ra žneli hq'opilyar,  
siyaribeo t'ialo,  
mesam-meotxe c'elia  
ert aḫaloḫni mcviano,  
šig mamik'ruḫdnen t'ilebi;  
c'ic'ilebsa zdiano . . .  
sak'virvel našenoba akvt,  
ert tormet' peq<sup>h</sup>ni sḫiano!*

*t'ilebsa akvis korc'ili,  
perq<sup>h</sup>isas iḫaḫiano.  
bat'arzal šamaiq'vanes,  
k'vernais t'q'avni scviano.  
samc'deos udgan bak'anni,  
zed k'elap't'arni hk'riano.  
uq'uret ema t'ilebsa,  
rarig žiq<sup>h</sup>vebsay scliano!*

**43. T'rpiali**

*t'q'uילad gavsčndi am kveq'nad,  
k'acimc ar gaizrdeboda,  
arc žavri gaatetrebda,  
arc ndomit daic'veboda,  
arcras ra daidardebda,  
guli ar daesžeboda.  
net'ain gulis pikrebi  
tvalitamc inaḫveboda,  
k'acis ertguli, orguli,  
suq'vela gaigeboda,  
c'esadamc iq'os, ro guli  
t'rpialit gaivseboda,  
sul-gulit gakšerebuli,  
sagžladamc čaideboda,*

*žvelimca maasp'o droeba,  
aḫalimc daic'q'eboda,  
ro mudam šentan q'opnita  
arvisgan šamḫatrdeboda:  
net'ain čemi saplavi*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **The wedding party of the lice**

Wah, how hard you have been,  
Wretched poverty!  
I have worn this same shirt  
For about three or four years.  
Inside it lice are brooding,  
Bringing up their chicks.  
They are remarkable creatures:  
Each one has twelve feet.

The lice are having a wedding,  
They're calling to start the round dance.  
Now they have brought out the bride,  
Dressed in marten furs.  
They have got barrels of beer,  
And plates with candles on them;  
Just look at how these lice  
Empty their drinking horns!

### **Love**

In vain I came into this world.  
A man should never grow up,  
Never turn white from fury,  
Never burn with passion,  
Never be pained by worry,  
Never be wracked by his heart.  
If only the thoughts of the heart  
Could be seen with the eyes,  
If a man has one heart or two,  
All of this be understood;  
It should be a law, that the heart  
Be always full with love.  
If you are wholehearted toward others,  
Goodwill will go with you always.

May the old ways be destroyed  
And a new order begin,  
So that to be with you always  
Will be no occasion for scandal:  
I wish that I would be buried

šen gulzenc gaitχreboda,  
čemi mq<sup>h</sup>rebi da mk'lavebi  
šen gulzenc čamodneboda,  
šentanit ar avdgebodi,  
sicocχle gamit'k'beboda.  
ver c'amartomden šen tavsā,  
c'in žari čamisχdeboda.

#### 44. Ra bevri mit'irebia

ra bevri mit'irebia,  
ra bevri cremli mdenia,  
arc guli gamomicvliā,  
arc amiγia χelia.  
rodesac momagondebi,  
medeba cecχlis genia!  
saχsovrat damrča tval-c'arbi,  
okros ulvaši šenia,  
šeni ulvašis črdilebi  
šens saχezeda hpenia.  
irmebisa χar st'umari,  
mesam-meotχe c'elia;  
aγar ergebat t'q'viai,  
zmao, nasroli šenia.  
tu samartali ver giq'on,  
amosc'q'des pšavis χevia,  
žiritamc amovardeba  
mgonia tormet' temia.  
mogik'lav colis c'amq'vani,  
šen sχva ra c'agiχdenia?

damic'eria barati,  
zed mamic'erav χelia,  
gamamigzavne malvita,  
zmao, barati č'relia,  
aravin dagiyalat'os,  
arvin mogk'idos χelia,  
saχelad tamari mkvian,  
egre — tik'unad lelia,  
otχ c'elsa ggoneb šorita,  
siq'varul met'ad znelia!  
t'q'eši ver vicni šen saχlni,

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

In a grave over your heart,  
So that my shoulders and arms  
Would melt down onto your heart;  
I would not rise from you ever,  
And so my life would be sweet.  
They could not take you from me  
Should even an army come at me.

### **How long I have been weeping**

How long I have been weeping,  
How many tears I have shed,  
Still, my heart has not changed,  
Nor have I given up hope.  
When I am thinking about you  
I am seared by the fires of Gehenna!  
Your eyes and brows live in my memory,  
That golden moustache of yours,  
And how your moustache's shadow  
Spreads its black line on your face.  
You are a guest of the wild deer  
For the past three or four years;  
Brother, the bullets you shot  
Have brought them nothing but harm.  
If they cannot do you justice,  
May all Pshavi fall into ruin,  
May the twelve clans of the province  
Disperse and vanish away!  
You killed your wife's abductor,  
What other wrong have you done?

I have written a letter,  
Signed my name at the bottom;  
Send me, brother, in secret,  
An answer with all of your news.  
No one shall betray you,  
None lay a hand upon you.  
The name that they call me is Tamar,  
And my nickname is Lelia;  
For four years I've held from afar  
This love for you, though it's so hard!  
I know not your home in the woods,

*ara makvs mosavlelia,  
gamamegzavna p'erangi,  
šens t'azed časacmelia,  
šentanamc mamca sicocχle,  
šentanamc mamč'ra q'elia.*

#### 45. Chari-rama

*čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, mananao,  
kalo, šenma siq'varulma  
me sicocχle mananao.  
čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, magdanelo,  
gaivse da gaiχare  
čemo damc'vel-damdagvelo.  
čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, gulkanao,  
modi, erti mak'ocnine,  
tetr-punčula, sukanao,  
šenma maq'vala tval-c'arbma  
čaat'ana gultanao.  
čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, magdanao,  
ne'av i šemazlebina,  
momiq'vana madanao.  
čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, mat'ronao,  
ne'av i čvensa saχls da k'ars  
čvenve dagvap'at'ronao.  
čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, bicolao,  
čven šimšilit viχocebit,  
ara gamogvicχo rao.  
čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, mamidao,  
ne'av mogvca is zal-yone,  
rogorc eχla čven gvindao.  
čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, biziao,  
χmal-χanžali čagvžangvia,  
veyar amogvizvriao.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Nor have I a chance to come there.  
I would send you a shirt  
For you to wear on your chest.  
If only I could live with you,  
Or else by slain by your side.

### **Chari-rama**

Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, O Manana!  
Woman, for the love of you  
I've come to rue my life itself!  
Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, O Magdanel,  
You can puff up and be happy,  
You who burn and torment me!  
Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, O Gulkana,  
Come and let me kiss you once,  
White and fluffy, plump and sassy.  
Your blackberry eyes and eyebrows  
Take my very heart away!  
Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, O Magdana,  
Oh, if only there were some way  
I could be with you right now!  
Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, O Matrona,  
If only we could live together,  
Lord and lady of our household.  
Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, uncle's wife,  
We are dying from starvation,  
Won't you even bake us something?  
Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, father's sister,  
If only we'd the strength and power,  
Such as we have need of now.  
Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, father's brother,  
Our sword and dagger turned to rust,  
We'll never take them up again.

*čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, babuao,  
kartul tutuns ver gišovni,  
maχork'ama gabruao.  
čar-čar čari-rama,  
čari-rama, zamiao,  
čveni ase gačereba  
zimc'are da šχamiao.*

**46. Gasatkhovari kali var**

*gasatχovari kali var,  
nena ar mip'irdeba,  
lamaz bič'ebs rom ševχedav,  
guli amit'irdeba.*

*satamašo vašli mkonda,  
šensk'en gadmomivarda,  
šen tu čemi ar gaχdebi,  
pesvic amogivarda.*

**47. Sapeikro: jarav, jarav, bzio**

*žarav, žarav, bzio,  
narti damirtio,  
dedamtilis sap'erangev,  
oχrad damirčio.*

**48. Sapeikro: Araru, Darejanasa**

*araru darežanasa,  
garet gamosdgams žarasa,  
šin ro q'mac'vili t'irodes,  
garedan et'q'vis nanasa.*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, O grandfather,  
I can't find Georgian tobacco,  
And *makhorka* drove you crazy.  
Char-char, chari-rama,  
Chari-rama, my dear brother,  
If we go on living like this,  
It is bitter herbs and poison.

### **I am an unmarried woman**

I am an unmarried woman;  
My mother is no help to me.  
When beautiful boys catch my eye,  
My heart wants to burst into tears.

I have an apple to play with,  
I dropped it, it's rolling toward you;  
If you will not be mine,  
May you be cut off at the roots!

### **Spinning song: Spinning wheel, bzio**

Spinning wheel, *bzio*, *bzi*,  
Won't you spin some thread for me;  
Mother-in-law's shirt to be,  
May you turn out awfully!

### **Spinning song: Araru, Darejan**

*Araru*, *araru*, Darejan  
Set up her spinning wheel outside;  
If her child starts crying inside,  
She'll sing a lullaby outside.

**49. Melekhishe si reki**

*melexiše si reki do  
molexiše ma sac'q'ali,  
ma si kemgeḫolueni,  
komučuni tiši zali,  
mara ḫurgi didi ore,  
šk'as meguržuns ḫobiš c'q'ari,  
do šoriše gižineki,  
čilamurit, ma sac'q'ali.*

**50. Ana, bana, gana, dona**

*ana, bana, gana, dona,  
ertma kalma damayona,  
ena, vina, zena, tana,  
gulši dardi čamat'ana.  
ina, k'ana, lasa, mana,  
šemiq'varda mart'o ana.  
nara, žana, rae, p'ara,  
ana uceb gamep'ara.  
sana, una, para, t'ara,  
kuča-kuča damat'ara.  
kana, q'ara, šina, yana,  
inam zlier damayona.  
šina, čina, zina, cina,  
ḫalḫi čemze gaacina.  
c'ala, č'ala, rae, ḫara,  
anam uceb gamaḫara.  
žana, xana, hae, hie,  
modi q'elze momexvie.*

**51. Net'avi ratme maktsia**

*net'avi ratme makcia,  
bulbulad gadamakcia,  
bulbulis ena masc'avla,  
bayebši šemomačvia,  
davk'ono okros k'onebi,  
davpero vercxlis c'q'alšia,  
sayamo ḫanze giaḫlo,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **There you are, on the other side**

There you are, on the other side  
And I, alas, am over here,  
I would surely come to you,  
If only I could find some way;  
The obstacle is large indeed:  
The river Khobi churns between us —  
From afar I gaze on you,  
Unhappy me, eyes full of tears.

### **Ana, bana, gana, dona (Alphabet song)**

*Ana, bana, gana, dona,*  
Once a woman caused me sorrow,  
*Ena, vina, zena, tana,*  
She brought care into my heart.  
*Ina, k'ana, lasa, mana,*  
I had love for only Ana.  
*Nara, zhana, rae, p'ara,*  
Ana up and left on me.  
*Sana, una, para, t'ara,*  
She led me from street to street,  
*Kana, q'ara, shina, ghana,*  
Ana brought me lots of trouble.  
*Shina, china, dzina, tsina,*  
She made people laugh at me.  
*Ts'ala, ch'ala, rae, khara,*  
Then at once she made me happy.  
*Jana, khana, hae, hie,*  
Come and wrap your arms around me.

### **I wish I could turn into something**

I wish I could turn into something:  
Turn into a nightingale,  
And learn the nightingales' language;  
I'd come to dwell in the garden.  
I'd gather up golden bouquets,  
Dip them in liquid silver,  
I'd come to you in the evening,

*čamogiq'aro banšia,  
dilit ro gamosuliq've,  
šig gageχvios k'avšia.*

## **52. Tvali sheni**

*tvali šeni osetad yirs  
da c'amc'ami arabetad,  
tma – čočχatad, c'arbi – lesad,  
c'in šemoq'ra – ozurgetad.  
šentan q'opna da tamaši –  
saikios natlis svet'ad,  
radgan gat'q'ob ar giq'varvar,  
ayar gakeb amis met'ad.*

## **Saperkhulo simgherebi**

### **53. Tvalzhuzhuna kalo**

*kalo, žužuna da  
[+ II] žužuna-ooda . . .  
tvalžužuna kalo,  
žužunao da žužunao da  
tvalžužuna kalo*

*kalo, maylidgan gad-  
[+ II] -momdariq'o,  
tvalžužuna kalo  
tvalžužuna kalo,  
maylidgan gadmomdariq'o,  
da tvalžužuna kalo.*

*tvalžužuna te-  
[+ II] -tri kalio,  
tvalžužuna tetri kali,  
tvalžužuna kalo!*

*kalo, χels gviknevda da  
[+ II] ak modi-oda,  
tvalžužuna kalo,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

And lay them out on your roof.  
When you come out in the morning,  
May they be entwined in your curls!

### **Your eyes**

Your eyes are worth all Ossetia,  
And your lashes — Arabia;  
Your hair — Chochkhati, eyebrows — Lesa,  
The point where they meet — Ozurgeti;  
Being and playing with you —  
The pillar of light in heaven;  
But as it seems you do not love me,  
I shall praise you like this no more.

## **Round-Dance Songs**

### **Bright-eyed woman**

Woman, bright-eyed one [2nd voice joins in (+II)]  
bright-eyed one ooh-da . . .  
*Bright-eyed woman,*  
*bright-eyed, bright-eyed, and*  
*Bright-eyed woman.*

Woman, from above she  
[+ II] had come down here,  
Bright-eyed woman.  
*Bright-eyed woman,*  
*from above she had come down here,*  
*Bright-eyed woman.*

Bright-eyed white-  
[+ II]-skinned woman,  
*Bright-eyed white-skinned woman,*  
*Bright-eyed woman.*

Woman, she waved her hand at us and  
[+ II] came over here,  
*Bright-eyed woman,*

*χels gviknevda da iak modi,  
tvalžužuna kalo!*

*kalo, šin ara če-  
[+ II] -mi kmario,  
tvalžužuna kalo,  
šin ara čemi kmario,  
tvalžužuna kalo.*

*kalo, c'asrula ci-  
[+ II] -χis sadgursa,  
c'asrula ciχis sadgursao,  
tvalžužuna kalo.*

*kalo, zed dasce-  
[+ II] -mia kvanio,  
zed dascemian kvanio,  
tvalžužuna kalo.*

*kalo, maχarobe-  
[+ II] -li movida,  
tvalžužuna kalo,  
maχarobeli movida,  
tvalžužuna kalo.*

*kalo, mogi-  
[+ II] -k'les kmario,  
tvalžužuna kalo,  
mogik'les kmario,  
tvalžužuna kalo.*

*neťavi k'i  
[+ II] angre iknen,  
tvalžužuna kalo,  
neťavi k'i angre iknen,  
tvalžužuna kalo.*

*šen dagrčen če-  
[+ II]-mi tavio,  
tvalžužuna kalo,  
zed dagrčen čemi tavio,  
tvalžužuna kalo.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

*she waved her hand at us and came over here,  
Bright-eyed woman.*

Woman, my husband is  
[+ II] not at home,  
*Bright-eyed woman,  
my husband is not at home,  
Bright-eyed woman.*

Woman, he has gone to  
[+ II] build a fortress,  
*He has gone to build a fortress,  
Bright-eyed woman.*

Woman, rocks have fall-  
[+ II]-en down on him,  
*Rocks have fallen down on him,  
Bright-eyed woman.*

Woman, the bringer of  
[+ II] news has come,  
*Bright-eyed woman,  
the bringer of news has come,  
Bright-eyed woman.*

Woman, they have killed  
[+ II] your husband,  
*Bright-eyed woman,  
they have killed your husband,  
Bright-eyed woman.*

May it truly  
[+ II] have happened so,  
*Bright-eyed woman,  
may it truly have happened so,  
Bright-eyed woman.*

So may I be  
[+ II] left with you,  
*Bright-eyed woman,  
so may I be left with you,  
Bright-eyed woman.*

*samaḡarob-*  
[+ II]-los gaviyeb,  
tvalžuzuna kalo,  
samaḡaroblos gaviyeb,  
tvalžuzuna kalo.

*tavtetri ni-*  
[+ II]-ša ḡario,  
tvalžuzuna kalo,  
tavtetri niša ḡario,  
tvalžuzuna kalo.

*ḡeze gaval*  
[+ II] q'vavivita,  
tvalžuzuna kalo,  
ḡeze gaval q'vavivita,  
tvalžuzuna kalo.

*čemi kmari*  
[+ II] šeminaḡavs,  
tvalžuzuna kalo,  
čemi kmari šeminaḡavs,  
tvalžuzuna kalo.

*margalit'is*  
[+ II] tvalivita,  
tvalžuzuna kalo.

#### **54. Ia mtazeda**

*ia mtazeda, tovliazeda,*  
*ia davtese, vardi mosula,*  
*ia k'oč'amde, vardi muḡlamde,*  
*irmisa žogi šemočveula.*  
*ne'amc ezovnat, ar gaekelat.*  
*sizē-simamri mtas c'amosulan.*  
*šexvdat iremi korbudiani, –*  
*s't'q'orcna sasižom: mohk'la iremi.*  
*s't'q'orcna simamrma: mohk'la sasižo.*  
*– švilo barbare, me ra gaḡaro,*  
*sakmro mogik'al, tavs nu moik'lav.*  
*– šen mama čemo, darbaiselo,*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

I will give the  
[+ II] messenger a gift,  
*Bright-eyed woman,*  
*I will give the messenger a gift,*  
*Bright-eyed woman.*

A bull with a white  
[+ II] spot on its forehead,  
*Bright-eyed woman,*  
*a bull with a white spot on its forehead,*  
*Bright-eyed woman.*

Like a black crow  
[+ II] I go out to the tree,  
*Bright-eyed woman,*  
*like a black crow I go out to the tree,*  
*Bright-eyed woman.*

My husband will  
[+ II] take care of me,  
*Bright-eyed woman,*  
*my husband will take care of me,*  
*Bright-eyed woman.*

Like a  
[+ II] precious pearl,  
*Bright-eyed woman.*

### **Violet on the mountain**

Violet on the mountain, on the snowy mountain,  
I planted a violet, up came a rose,  
Violets to my ankles, roses to my neck,  
A herd of deer came over this way.  
May they graze freely, but trample them not.  
The groom went out with his father-in-law,  
They met on the mountain a large-antlered buck.  
The son-in-law shot — he killed the buck.  
The father-in-law shot — he killed the groom.  
— “Barbara, my child, what can I tell you?  
I killed your husband, don’t kill yourself.”  
— “May you, my father, my father so noble

— *šen čemi codvit ar moisveno,  
roca gityari, ar gamatxove,  
axla matxoveb — momik'al kmari.*

*momeci c'aldi, gza gavik'apo,  
momec santeli, gza gavinato!  
ahq'e yelesa, dahq'e yelesa,  
ik šeeq'rebi šens saq'varelsa.  
avq'e yelesa, davq'e yelesa,  
ik ševeq'are čem saq'varelsa.  
ažda q'orani, gležda tvalebsa ...  
— akša, q'orano, še gauḫarelo,  
nu glež tvalebsa:  
ertḫelac aris, naḫednimc aris.  
ažda q'orani, gležda mk'lavebsa ...  
— akša, q'orano, še gauḫarelo,  
nu glež mk'lavebsa:  
ertḫelac aris, naḫvevnimc ari.  
ažda q'orani, gležda t'učebša ...  
— akša, q'orano, še gauḫarelo,  
nu glež t'učebša:  
ertḫelac aris, nak'ocnimc ari.*

## 55. Perqhisa

*gvibrzana lašaris žvarma,  
cas vebi okros šibita,  
q<sup>h</sup>mels gorze ber muḫa medga,  
zed avdiodi k'ibita.  
čem q'mati šamonazdyveni  
upaltan šamakv ikita,  
sul k'ulma apciaurma  
amamibruna zirita.  
šamoq<sup>h</sup>da galavanzeda  
gacinebulis p'irita,  
uk'uym čaudev saq'ele,  
vamq'ope codva-č'irita,  
žer švilišvilit davlie,  
memre kal-kalis švilita.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Never find rest from the sin you have done.  
When I asked to marry, you would not let me,  
Now I am married — you killed my husband.”

Give me a hatchet, to cut me a path,  
Give me a candle, to light me the way!  
— Go up the valley and go down the valley  
There you will find the one you had loved.  
I went up the valley and went down the valley  
And there I found him, the one I had loved.  
A raven perched on him, tore at his eyes . . .  
— *Scram, raven, scram, insatiable one!*  
*Tear not his eyes:*  
*There was a time he saw me with them.*  
A raven perched on him, tore at his arms . . .  
— *Scram, raven, scram, insatiable one!*  
*Tear not his arms:*  
*There was a time he embraced me with them.*  
A raven perched on him, tore at his lips . . .  
— *Scram, raven, scram, insatiable one!*  
*Tear not his lips:*  
*There was a time he kissed me with them.*

### **Round dance**

The Cross of Lashara spoke:  
A golden chain linked me to heaven,  
The Qhmelgora oak stood beside me;  
There I ascended to heaven.  
My vassals' praises and gifts  
I brought up to the Lord;  
The cursed one, Aptsiauri,  
Tore out my tree at the roots.  
When he entered the outer gate  
He wore a smile on his lips;  
I turned his collar around  
I filled him with woe and distress,  
Then I consumed his grandchildren  
And those of his womenfolk.

*χvtis k'arze šaviq'arenit  
 χvtis nabadebni dilita.  
 brzaneba gamogvivida  
 dambadebulis p'irita,  
 gvibrzana dambadebulma:  
 – me davdgi mic'a-mq'aria,  
 su tavis mortulobita  
 šamχdari mta da baria.  
 murgvliv sami zyva moavle:  
 tetri, c'iteli, šavia.  
 zed gadavχure zecai  
 sina, č'ika da rvalia.  
 dunia gamičenia  
 ržulad atasi gvaria,  
 šig gavačine mze, mtvare,  
 mravali dye da yamea.  
 samoc sam c'minda giorgi  
 otχsav k'utχeze bžania,  
 krist'iant salocavada  
 gamoχat'uli žvaria.  
 χtis švilni, χtis nabadebni  
 krist'iant salocavia,  
 χtis švilta hq'avis c'mindai  
 tamari dedupalia.  
 ikna χtisagan bžaneba,  
 c'elze šaert'q'a q<sup>h</sup>malia,  
 mamis sanepo daigdo,  
 titon brzandeba kalia;  
 šua zyvas čadga samani,  
 samani rk'inis k'aria,  
 q<sup>h</sup>melet tavisak' maigdo,  
 imtveni hkonda žalia,  
 sat'aχt'o sabrzanebuli  
 titon q<sup>h</sup>mel gorze bžania.  
 p'irdap'ir udga gorzeda  
 layi lašaris žvaria,  
 gverds udga nislis perai,  
 t'redis perni hkon mq<sup>h</sup>arnia.  
 zed okros unagir udga  
 okros c'q'lit lagmis t'aria.  
 šazlebul, gamzadebula  
 gapant'ulni mq'av q'mania.  
 šamauara saq'mosa,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

*We gathered in God's court  
At morning, we, God's offspring.  
A message came to us  
From the Creator's mouth,  
The Creator spoke unto us:  
— I formed the solid land  
With all its ornaments,  
Adorning mountains and plains.  
Around it I set three seas:  
The white, the red, the black.  
Above I covered the sky  
With copper, glass, and bronze.  
I have made the world  
With a thousand faiths;  
I placed the sun and moon,  
And many days and nights.  
Three score and three St. Georges  
Reside in the world's four corners  
To hear the prayers of Christians,  
Marked with the sign of the cross.  
The children, the offspring of God,  
To hear the prayers of Christians,  
The children of God have one  
Saint Tamar the Queen.  
There came a command from God,  
She belted a sword at her waist,  
Took over her father's kingdom  
Though herself a woman;  
In the sea's midst she set  
Iron boundary gates,  
Took the dry land for herself,  
For she had such power.  
Tamar set her throne  
At the Qhmelgora shrine.  
Directly across, on the hill,  
Stood proud Lashara's Cross;  
Beside him, a mist-grey steed  
With wings of bright dove-blue,  
A golden saddle on top  
And reins of liquid gold.  
Potent and prepared,  
His vassals were spread around.  
He journeyed through his fief,*

*mzime šaq'ara žaria,  
visac natkomi ec'q'ina  
imis dak'ruli mc'aria.  
ertguls k'i miešveleba,  
ar hkondes misvlis χania,  
bat'onis gamaržvebita  
q'velas gec'erot žvaria.*

## 56. Betgil

*bail betgil sabral, betgil ležri!  
bail ilba, ilba, bail,  
bail, məlaχ-məžal inzorale,  
bail ilba, ilba, bail,  
bail, žav χagenax lelt'χaš murgvæls  
bail ilba, ilba, bail,  
bail, aš χosk'ina tvetnam k'vicras,  
bail ilba, ilba, bail,  
bail, aš χosk'ina betgiš nabræq<sup>h</sup>s,  
bail ilba, ilba, bail,  
bail, ali betgiš misæn iri!  
bail ilba, ilba, bail,  
– amiš meč'em yæryal iri?  
bail ilba, ilba, bail,  
– amiš meč'em betgil iri.  
bail ilba, ilba, bail.*

*betgil žabarærs ik'arzale.  
χeč'minale nazværs miča:  
sgvebin nazvær məč'æb χera,  
yvešgmav laχsgı nazværs miča,  
nazvar miča demeg teraχ.  
ali betgiš misæn iri.  
sgav mečedli mešχam k'ožte,  
dæli pusdæš lardatesga.  
– χoča ladey dali pusdas!  
– magvær χoča daley žeri,  
ežis mia si lažtonisg!  
imya χo yläť p'irobs mišgva?  
mišgu nahod hœšmild m'adu?  
– eži laq'vra tχurmæš æmsad.  
magvær laq'vra tχurmæš æžsad,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Gathered a mighty army.  
Whoever dislikes these words,  
His downfall will be harsh.  
But he will aid the faithful,  
Be at his side at once.  
*With the Lord's victory*  
*May you be signed with the cross.*

### **Betgil**

Poor Betgil, unhappy Betgil!  
*Ba-il, il-ba, il-ba, ba-il.*  
Mulakh-Muzhal have assembled,  
*Ba-il, il-ba, il-ba, ba-il.*  
They stood for the Lentekh round dance  
*Ba-il, il-ba, il-ba, ba-il.*  
A white roe-deer jumped out toward them,  
*Ba-il, il-ba, il-ba, ba-il.*  
It ran right through Betgil's legs,  
*Ba-il, il-ba, il-ba, ba-il.*  
This indeed is Betgil's fate.  
*Ba-il, il-ba, il-ba, ba-il.*  
— Who will go chase after it?  
*Ba-il, il-ba, il-ba, ba-il.*  
— Betgil will chase after it.  
*Ba-il, il-ba, il-ba, ba-il.*

Betgil straps on his bast sandals,  
He sets off to track the deer.  
In front of him he sees the hoofprints;  
When he turns around, behind him  
There are no tracks to be seen.  
This indeed is Betgil's fate.  
They head up onto the black cliff,  
To the place where Dali reigns.  
— A pleasant day to Lady Dali!  
— The sort of day that you will have  
I will show you straight away!  
Why did you betray your promise,  
Where'd you put the beads I gave you?  
— I left them beneath my pillow.  
— You left them beneath your pillow,

*ežgvær lit'χals mi si žečo?  
dali pusda sga laχtæpa,  
betgil k'ožas sga χaseda:  
lersgvan šimiš labərg læχsad,  
lertan č'išχmiš lægna læχsad.  
betgil sabra betgil ležri!*

*«māi lit'χal mi merole?  
laclas mišgva χonəbaved:  
betgils ču noma χišdəned!  
dedes mišgva χonənbaved:  
miča nanaq' kut i č'išdvərs  
let i ladeyn mipanades,  
χeχvis mišgva χonəmbaved:  
merme mišgvan nor əncχonas!»  
betgil k'ožas kav šq'edeni,  
čukvan lacla živ ik'ədeχ.*

### **57. Dghesam dgheoba visia?**

*dyesam dyeoba visia?  
c'mindisa giorgisia.  
žvar-žvaris droša visia?  
c'mindisa giorgisia.*

*giorgi galavanzeda  
usart'q'lo iareboda,  
giorgis gadmonavalze  
χe alvad amodioda,  
magis šemcode kal-važi  
udrood dašavdeboda.*

### **58. Samaia**

*samaia samtagana  
– ra t'urpa ram χaro;  
samaias tavi miq'varda  
– ra t'urpa ram χaro;  
liso, liso, kari kriso  
– lisim dalaleo;  
šavardeni prtasa šliso*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

Why should I let you return?  
Dali vanished from his sight,  
Stranding Betgil on the cliff.  
He held on by his right hand,  
He held on by his left foot,  
Poor Betgil, unhappy Betgil!

*There is no chance I'll return.  
Give this message to my friends:  
May you never forget Betgil.  
Give this message to my mother:  
For my soul bake kut and ch'ishdwar  
To be offered day and night.  
Give this message to my wife:  
Don't replace me with another.  
Betgil fell down from the cliff.  
His companions fetched his body.*

### **Today is whose festival?**

Today is whose festival?  
St. George's festival.  
Where is this banner from?  
St. George's shrine.

St. George, without his belt,  
Walked around the wall,  
On the ground where he had tread  
A cypress tree came forth.  
The woman or man who sinned against it  
Straightway came to ruin.

### **Samaia**

Samaia, one of three  
— Oh, how lovely you are;  
I was in love with Samaia  
— Oh, how lovely you are;  
*Liso, Liso, so the wind sings*  
— *Lisim dalaleo;*  
*The peregrine falcon spreads its wings*

– *lisim dalaleo;*  
*arigebul, čarigebul*  
– *ra t'urpa ram χaro;*  
*dauvlidi, dahq'vebodi*  
– *ra t'urpa ram χaro.*  
*liso, liso, kari kriso*  
– *lisim dalaleo;*  
*šavardeni prtasa šliso*  
– *lisim dalaleo.*

## Samgloviaro simgherebi

### 59. Darishk'anit momk'wdari

*sad izaxan mat'iralsa?*  
*sad iq'rebis kal-zalia?*  
*χutšabats ayar mavida,*  
*mtvare gušin c'uχr čamq<sup>h</sup>daria:*  
*zecisak'e c'aiq'vanes*  
*kali dabal-dabalia.*  
*mayla-mayla, taiao,*  
*sadac aχalgazdania!*

### 60. Zhamis naqhots kalebze

*kalebo, žamis naq<sup>h</sup>ocebo,*  
*kvišisas ar idenetaeo?*  
*č'išvelsa ar gaχenetaeo?*  
*č'išvel mtiblebi ar tibdaeo?*  
*celebi ar unatobdaeo?*  
*simyeres ar izaxdesaeko?*

### 61. Net'avi mok'la marjek'ali

*net'avi mok'la maržek'ali,*  
*čemi χošaras gamtχuebi,*  
*me χom χošaras ver vicχovreb,*  
*p'ursa vera vč'am kerisasa,*  
*c'mindisasa var dačveuli,*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

— *Lisim dalaleo.*

The line moves up, the line moves down

— Oh, how lovely you are;

Form a ring, and follow round

— Oh, how lovely you are.

*Liso, Liso, so the wind sings*

— *Lisim dalaleo;*

*The peregrine falcon spreads its wings*

— *Lisim dalaleo.*

## Funerary Poems

### Dead from poison

Where are they summoning the mourners?

Where are the womenfolk gathering?

She did not come on Thursday night;

Yesterday evening the moon went down.

She has been carried off to heaven,

A woman as low as can be.

Higher and higher, the cord winding up,

Up where the young people are.

### Women slaughtered by the plague

Women slaughtered by the plague,

Didn't you go to Kvishisa?

At Ch'ishvel did you see them all?

Weren't they mowing hay at Ch'ishvel?

Didn't their sickles gleam in the sun?

Weren't they calling out the song?

### Woe betide the matchmaker

Woe betide the matchmaker

Who set up my marriage in Khoshara;

I cannot live there anymore . . .

I can no longer eat barley bread,

I am accustomed to unhulled grain;

*c'q'alsa vera vsom gubisasa,  
mdinaresa var dačveuli,  
samk'alis ver vili balyiani,  
brac'ze ver vabam ak'avansa;  
moχdeba t'ial mic'iszvra da  
bac'arsa gagležs ak'avani.  
damigordeba, č'alas c'ava,  
čavdgebi švilis codvašia.*

*rosnamde viq'o t'irilita,  
rosnamde vk'ripne balyis q<sup>h</sup>orcni,  
rosnamde vχvio k'alatšia,  
rosnamde vac'q'e erturtzeda.  
čamkolet, čemo moťiralno,  
amis met's get'q'vit veyarasa.*

## **Sat'rpo leksebi**

### **62. Bat'arik'a kalai var**

*bat'arik'a kalai var,  
nu mayoneb, codva ari,  
saikios dagt'anžaven,  
tu sad sulis q'opna ari.*

### **63. Net'avi kalo Ninao**

*net'avi kalo ninao,  
ertadamc dagvac'vinao.  
migvχura pardag, t'q'avebi,  
da opli mogvadinao.*

*mivelí, šentan vizine  
magram zalian grilao.  
me ak veyar momec'one  
tan c'amomq'evi šinao.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

I can no longer drink from a cistern,  
I am accustomed to river water.  
I will not go with my child to the fields,  
I will not lash the crib to a bush;  
For the earth will shake, the string  
Holding the cradle will snap.  
Down it will roll, down into the gorge,  
Leaving me bereft.

How long must I be in mourning?  
How long must I pick up my baby's flesh?  
How long must I gather it up in my dress?  
How long must I set the pieces together?  
Strike me down with stones, fellow mourners,  
I have nothing more to tell you.

## Love Poems

### I am a very young woman

I am a very young woman,  
Don't make me sad, it's a sin;  
They will torment you "over there,"  
If there is a place where souls live.

### Nina woman

Nina woman, if there were some way  
We could lie at each other's side,  
Cover ourselves with carpets and furs,  
And work up a mighty sweat!

*So I went and lay with you,  
But it is much too chilly here.  
I could never enjoy you like this,  
Why don't you come inside with me?*

**64. Eter shen silamazita**

*eter, šen silamazita  
mzes eubnebi: čamodi,  
ver gavzey siq'varulita,  
mtavaro sulo, amodi.*

**65. Aksha aksha mamalo**

*akša, akša, mamalo,  
ar mamdis šeni q'ivili,  
šen bevrebi gq'av c'ac'lebi,  
men k'i mk'lavs gulis t'k'ivili.*

**66. Zghvashi shatsurda k'urdgheli**

*zyvaši šacurda k'urdyeli,  
tan mela misdevs t'ivita,  
kalav, eg šeni survili  
mabrunebs c'iskvilivita.*

**67. Net'ain mamk'la mtashia**

*net'ain mamk'la mtašia,  
dammarča bunebašia,  
net'ain gamagebina  
ra gize gunebašia.*

**68. Tval k'i mich'irav shenzeda**

*tval k'i mič'erav šenzeda,  
rogorc miminos mc'q'erzeda.  
net'ain gamagebina  
šen ra gul gize čemzeda.  
rodisra gamitendeba,  
ro geḡveode q'elzeda.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **Eter, with your beauty**

Eter, with your beauty  
You tell the sun: come down —  
I could not slake myself with love,  
Chief of the spirits, come up.

### **Aksha, aksha, rooster, scam!**

Aksha, aksha, rooster, scam!  
I can't listen to your crowing;  
You have so many lovers,  
And I'm being killed by heartbreak.

### **A rabbit swam into the sea**

A rabbit swam into the sea,  
A fox follows it on a raft;  
Woman, my desire for you  
Spins me around like a mill-wheel.

### **May I die in the mountains**

May I die in the mountains,  
Be buried in nature's midst;  
May I find out somehow  
What thoughts you have on your mind.

### **I have an eye on you**

I have an eye on you  
Like a hawk watching a quail.  
May I find out somehow  
What your heart feels toward me.  
Some day, may the dawn find me  
With your neck on my arm.

**69. Nadobis k'abas vapere**

*širakis tavši cχvar midga,  
uk'uym mabrunebs karia,  
šamočnda sulta p'ep'ela,  
c'itlit č'relni hkon mq<sup>h</sup>arnia.  
sapšaod gadmaemarta,  
gadmuaq'olen tvalnia,  
didχan q'ureba mec'ada,  
ar miq'enebda karia.  
nadobis k'abas vapere,  
ymerto, damc'ere žvaria,  
c'adi da isac uambe,  
k'argada hq'avis cχvaria!*

**70. Dghe tu ghame**

*dyei sžobav tu yamei?  
χalχno, me gk'itχav amasa.  
yame niade k'argia,  
dyei sinatit szalavsa.  
χmeletze manatobeli  
mzei maudis tanaca,  
cχvar-չրօղա maepineba,  
mayla mtas, dabla č'alasa,  
maašrobs dilis cvar-namsa,  
mc'q'er q'anas et'q'vis salamsa.*

*magram ro yame ar iq'os,  
isi ymertm daiparasa!  
ra dadges yamis c'q'vdiadi,  
bevrsa uχaris kalasa.  
zmobiltan c'asvla ygulavis,  
žnela ro daešalasa.  
važasac molodini akv,  
ar ucdis p'uris č'amasa,  
c'ava, gaigebs loginsa,  
gaibunbulebs čalasa.  
gulšia gulis misnada,  
tana k'i pikrobs amasa:  
«k'i ara mamivides, ra,  
rom rait daišalasa?»*



## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

### **I likened it to my sister-spouse's dress**

My sheep were standing on Shirak's crest,  
The wind was blowing straight back at me,  
A butterfly came from the land of the souls,  
Its body bright with splashes of red.  
It was heading north toward Pshavi,  
I followed its flight with my eyes;  
I would have watched it even longer  
But the wind did not let me.  
Its color reminded me of her dress,  
My sister-spouse — O God, save me from this!  
Go now, and bring her a message:  
My sheep are doing well.

### **Day or night**

*Which is better, day or night?  
People, I am asking you.  
The night of course is very good  
But day will outdo night in brightness.  
It brings light to all the land;  
When the sun climbs in the sky,  
The cattle and the sheep spread out;  
In mountains above and meadows below,  
It dries up the morning dew,  
In the cornfield the quail greets it.*

But yet, if there would be no night,  
May God save us from such a thing!  
When the dark of night has come  
A woman rejoices in her heart.  
She longs to see her "brother-spouse,"  
It would be hard to keep her away.  
The lad as well, full of eagerness,  
Cannot take time to eat his meal.  
He goes and readies the bed for her,  
Lays the sheets, fluffs up the straw.  
Heart is working its magic on heart;  
At the same time, he is thinking  
"Could it be, she will not come,  
Or that something has gone awry?"

*kal midis c'q'nari bižita,  
ar ačučunebs čalasa,  
amoit'olebs botlasa,  
žalaptad manap'aravsa.  
«ra q'inčad damžinebia!»  
moq'me daic'q'ebs zarvasa.  
kal male gamaayvižebis,  
arc aleviebs χanasa.*

*q'ba ro q'bas gameet'olas,  
mk'erdi mk'erds šaaxalasa.  
uc'indel nacnauria,  
nadobs ayaras malavsa, —  
memr daic'q'eben k'ocnasa,  
p'iridan nerc'q'vis p'arvasa.*

*dye tu γam, romeli žobnis?  
χalχno, me gk'itχav amasa.  
t'urpa kveq'ana tvalit čins,  
sik'etit dyei zalavsa,  
mušais samušaveblad,  
sarčos šin mosat'anada,  
cχvar-չրոչա maepinebis,  
balaxs szovs mtasd da barada,  
manatobeli kveq'nisa  
mzei amua tanaca,  
gaašrobs dilis cvar-namsa,  
mc'q'er nanas et'q'vis q'anasa.*

## VIOLET ON THE MOUNTAIN

The woman approaches, with quiet steps,  
She draws not a rustle from the straw.  
In her hand she carries a bottle  
Of vodka, taken from her home.  
The man pretends to be asleep,  
Toying with his sister-spouse.  
The woman quickly rouses him;  
Neither wants to waste much time.

The jaw of one meets the other's jaw,  
Chest is pushed up against chest.  
Their relation has long been known,  
She no longer needs to hide it.  
Then they begin to kiss each other,  
Sharing slaver from each other's mouth.

*Day or night, which is better?  
People, I am asking you.  
Our eyes can see the beautiful land,  
Day thus outdoes night in kindness.  
It gives the workers the chance to work,  
To bring the food their households need.  
The cattle and the sheep spread out,  
Grazing on mountain and lowland alike.  
It brings light to all the world,  
When the sun ascends the sky  
It dries up the morning dew,  
The quail in the field sings a lullaby.*

## Notes to the Poems

1. **Moq'me da vepkhvi** (“The young man and the leopard”). Sources: PKh 132-134; Ko 104-106; Go 5-7; ShKh 208-209; FY 78-79. The variant in PKh was recited by N. Khornauli in 1924, in the Pshavian village K'ats'alkhevi. The version given in Ko and Go was transcribed by Vakh. Razik'ashvili in the Pshavian village Chargali. The text printed here mostly follows the first-mentioned version. This is an extremely popular poem, and almost every Georgian schoolchild can recite it from memory. The motif of a hero proving himself in single combat against a ferocious feline is an important element of the epic poem considered by Georgians to be the finest expression of their virtues and world-view: Shota Rustaveli's *Vepkhist'q'aosani* “The knight in the leopard's skin” (written ca. 1200). The striking conclusion to the poem, in which the mother of the slain warrior goes to commiserate with the leopard's mother, is the creation of Giorgi Jabushanuri of Arkhot'i, a Khevsur bard active at the turn of the century [see the note in ShKh 559-565]. The idea, however, did not originate with him; several ethnographic accounts refer to the practice of “mourning” a leopard killed by a hunter (*vepkhvis dat'ireba*), a ritual accompanied by the *perkhuli* round dance [DGF I, 161]. Among the Khevsurs, the leopard was given a warrior's funeral, with armor and weapons placed by its body [GOM 31]. The legendary Svan hunter Tabi Goshteliani, as recounted in a poem collected by Elene Virsaladze, killed a leopard that had slain several of his fellow villagers. But instead of rejoicing, Tabi intoned the following lament over the animal's body: “Rather than kill you, would that I had killed one of my own children! Rather than kill you, would that I had set fire to my home! Rather than kill you, would that I had killed myself!” [GOM 303]. The humanlike status of the leopard is reflected as well in Rustaveli's epic. One of his principal characters, the hero Taniel, relates how he saw a lion and leopard together. They appeared to be “lovers” (*hgvandes ratme moq'varulta*), and the sight pleased him. The lion, however, began to quarrel with its companion and put it to flight. Taniel, outraged by this behavior, attacked the lion with drawn sword, and killed it. Going over to the wounded leopard: “I tossed aside my sword, reached over, and took the leopard in my arms. I wished to kiss it, because of her who burns me with hot flames. It roared at me, and hurt me with its blood-shedding claws. I could bear it no longer: my heart enraged, I killed it also.” [VT 908]. In any event, the lion and the leopard are probably the most frequently-evoked animal tropes in Georgian poetry. They are associated with manly prowess, but also can be utilized as symbols of a woman's strength of character. The one “who burns me with hot flames” is Taniel's beloved, Nestan-Darejan, whom he likens elsewhere in the poem to a “beautiful leopard” [VT 654; also VT 520]. Two remarks on lexical meaning: (1) Some readers familiar with Georgian literature in translation may wonder why *vepkhvi* — rendered as “panther” or “tiger” in the English versions of Rustaveli's epic — is here translated as “leopard.” Georgian scholars as well have held different opinions concerning the original reference of this word, which denotes “tiger” in the modern literary language. I have decided to follow the interpretation offered by a series of experts, from Davit Chubinashvili and Nikolai Marr to Sargis Caishvili and Tamaz Gamq'relidze, that the original *vepkhvi* was a variety of leopard (Russian *bars*), a spotted beast weighing up to 300 pounds, known to have prowled the Caucasus mountains as recently as the 1920's [ShKh 559-565]. (2) The expression “French blade” (*pranguli*), by which Georgian mountaineers denote an especially fine sword, whatever its origin, probably dates back to medieval times, when Georgians fought alongside Frankish soldiers in the Byzantine army.
  
2. **Akhmet'uri p'at'ardzali** (“The bride from Akhmeta”). Sources: Ko 62-5; Go 192-4. Transcribed by Iv. K'akhadze in the Kakhetian village Napareuli. The town of Akhmeta is in the northern part of the province of Kakheti. The humor in this poem, of course, is the mayhem wreaked by the title character on her new husband's family: the bride from Akhmeta is a Georgian mother-in-law's worst nightmare. In the Caucasus, newlyweds customarily moved into the husband's parents' home, and the new bride, being — in a social sense — an outsider, must accommodate herself to her new situation. While the strictures imposed on the bride are hardly as severe as those obtaining in many countries, she is still expected to defer to her in-laws, especially her mother-in-law (on the position of wives in traditional Caucasian cultures see Louis Luzbetak *Marriage and the family in Caucasia* [Vienna: St. Gabriel's Mission Press, 1951], chapters X and XI). On the other hand, it should be

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noted that the Georgian ideal of womanhood, to whom the bride from Akhmeta would be contrasted, is along the lines of Tamar the King (see the notes to poem #22) and not a subservient homemaker. She is proud and strong-willed, with a fiery and vivid personality. As was mentioned above, the image of a leopard is applied in Georgian poetry to women as well as men. The bride from Akhmeta has a leopard's temperament indeed, but she is a leopard run amok.

3. **Dælil k'ojas khelghwazhale** ("Dali is giving birth on the cliff"). Source: SvP 268. Transcribed in 1936 in the Upper Svan village of Muzhali (Mulakhi community). The title character is probably the most widely-known personage in Svanetian mythology. In many stories and invocations she is represented as a sort of hunter-goddess, and protector of the wildlife dwelling in the high mountains. Although often referred to in the singular, some texts make mention of a community of Dalig inhabiting the inaccessible peaks and cliffs of the Caucasus, who can aid or destroy a hunter, depending on his behavior (e.g. the poem "The hunter Chorla," SvP 288-296). Several variants of the poem presented here are found in MP 89-91, 194-208. In one (pp. 201-2), Dali's child is identified as a girl; the others make no mention of gender. Other Svanetian legends credit her with giving birth to Amiran, the Georgian Prometheus [PC 26, 57, 165-7]. Dali offers to reward Mepsay with animals from her herd, or, if he chooses, to share her bed with him. The latter alternative seems hard to refuse, on the face of it: Dali is frequently described as a woman of ravishing beauty, with long hair and glistening bright skin. Her lovers are assured of superhuman success in the hunt. But they are doomed as well. Dali is jealous, and her favorites are subject to numerous restrictions — in particular, they are barred from consorting with human females [GOM 71]. In every case recorded in Georgian folklore, the hunters taken as lovers by Dali eventually incite her jealousy, with fatal consequences. So what happens to Mepsay? In most variants of the poem Dali accepts the hunter's refusal to sleep with her with magnanimity, and sends him off with a blessing and a promise of success in hunting. In the version given here, Mepsay's downfall results directly from his decision to shoot at the gold-horned ibex. It was believed that the goddess herself often took the form of a specially marked animal within the herd she protected, and mountaineers would avoid shooting an animal with unusual coloration. Violation of this taboo, it was thought, would bring disaster upon the hunter [GOM 33, 75]. Lexical note: Throughout the anthology, the word "ibex" translates Georgian *jikhvi* and Svan *ghwash*, which denote the Caucasian mountain goat (*Capris caucasica*).
4. **Ts'utisopeli** ("The fleeting world"). Sources: Ko 25; Go 13-14. The poem was recited by Kh. Merabashvili in the Kartlian village Dighomi. Variant in GMD 137. The compound word *ts'uti(s)-sopeli* (literally "village of a minute") is used to describe the temporality of earthly existence. This popular poem embodies the Christian notion of "two paths" (toward heaven or toward hell) upon which one can travel in the course of one's life, as well as the fundamental equality of all humankind. This point is driven home by the assertion that "even the Tatar [Turk or Azerbaidjani] is our brother," and that "between us and the Armenians" there is no difference in God's eyes. The poem includes a reference to the pledge of "sisterhood" (*doba*), that is, a bond of friendship between a woman and a man which, although emotionally fulfilling, must not terminate in marriage. The relationship of *ts'ats'loba* referred to elsewhere in this book may be thought of as a particularly intense realization of the sister/brotherhood pledge. The assurance that bonding oneself to a woman in this way will give one "a mind pure as the open sky" does not seem to have been enough for at least one anonymous poet. These lines were recorded in Kartli in 1870 [OL 40, #35]:

*In the month of Mary [August],  
I caught a fish in high waters;  
Woman, you are much too beautiful:  
I can never pledge sisterhood with you.*

5. **Tavparavneli ch'abuk'i** ("The lad from Tavparavani"). Sources: Ko 29; Go 5-7. Transcribed by M. Kh. Merabishvili in the Kartlian village K'avtiskhevi. Variants in LP 147-148, 350-353. The villages Tavparavani and Aspindza are located in southern Georgia. The word "Tavparavani" means "at the head (*tav*) of Lake Paravani, a large lake in Javakheti (100 km WSW of Tbilisi). According to an

Armenian legend [cited in Ko 332], this lake was formed from the tears of a woman whose lover died while trying to bring her an “undying fire.” The theme of the poem is well known in European literature, most notably in the Greek legend of Hero and Leander. In that legend, as told by Ovid, it is the sea — and not a jealous woman — that extinguishes the candle guiding Leander across the Hellespont. A closer parallel to our Georgian poem is found in Arnim and Brentano’s collection of German folksongs *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* [“Die Edelkönigs-Kinder,” II:252]:

*Es waren zwei Edelkönigs-Kinder,  
Die beiden die hatten sich lieb,  
Beisammen konten sie dir nit kommen,  
Das Wasser war viel zu tief.  
Ach Liebchen könntest du schwimmen,  
So schwimme doch her zu mir,  
Drey Kerzlein wollt ich dir anstecken,  
Die solten auch leuchten dir.  
Da saß ein loses Nönnechen,  
Das that, als wenn es schlief,  
Es that die Kerzlein aufblasen,  
Der Jünglein vertrank so tief ...*

The young man wears a silk shirt — a frequently employed trope indicating wealth or nobility — which is dyed red. Evidence from Svan texts implies that in ancient Georgia, red (rather than black) was the color of mourning. (In one of the variants of the poem “Betgil,” a hero about to die tells his wife: *ts’ërnid ighapis lachaki* “Dye your veil red” [SvP 284]).

6. **Nest’an-darejan** (“Nestan-Darejan”). Source: Ko 221-222. Recorded by T’er. St’epanishvili, “Iveria” #115, 1886. This and the following poem employ characters that — in name at least — can be linked with Rustaveli’s “The knight in the leopard’s skin.” Rustaveli’s Nestan-Darejan is a princess who has been kidnapped by the Kajes, a people with superhuman powers. Her distraught fiance Tariel (the leopard-skin-wearing knight in the title) is befriended by the warriors Avtandil and Pridon; after various adventures they succeed in rescuing the princess. While in captivity Nestan-Darejan does in fact write a number of letters, but aside from that superficial resemblance there is no other connection between her story and that of her namesake in this poem.
  
7. **Avtandil gadinadira** (“Avtandil went a-hunting”). Sources: Ko 116-117; Go 10-12. Recited by G. Khut’ashvili in the Kartlian village Nichbisi. Musical settings: GFS (Kakhetian; three voices, 4/4 meter); MFS #23 (three variants, all homophonic, in 4/4 or 7/4 meter; sung as accompaniment to dance). This is another of the many verses, stories, and songs from all parts of Georgia which feature characters from “The knight in the leopard’s skin.” The beginning of this poem bears a slight resemblance to the scene preceding Avtandil’s discovery of the cave where Tariel and Asmat live: “Though Avtandil was become wild with heart-groaning and sighing, yet he wished to eat, after the wont of Adam’s race; he killed game with his arrow, with arm longer than Rostom’s [a Persian hero — KT]. He alighted on the edge of the reedy ground and kindled a fire with a steel. “He let his horse pasture while he roasted the meat. He saw six horseman coming towards him. He said, “They look like brigands; else what good is to be found? No other human being has ever been here.” [VT 192-193 (Wardrop’s trans.)] As it turns out, these men are hunters, who describe to Avtandil their unexpected encounter with Tariel: “Suddenly there appeared a knight, morose and gloomy of visage, seated on a black horse, black as Pegasus” [VT 201 (Wardrop’s trans.)]. The youngest of them challenges Tariel, but is struck down, his head cleft open. The poem we have here may represent a reworking (or garbling) of this material, with Tariel recast as the black knight who wounds Avtandil. The ending is similar to those of other folk poems concerning warriors killed in battle: the giving of instructions to one’s mother and other relations to insure that one’s death is properly mourned (compare, for example, poem #15 *Lekso, amogtkom* “Poem, I will declaim you”).

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8. **A, is ghrubelni miq'varan** (“Ah, how I love those clouds”). Sources: LP 132; Ko 31; Go 19. Recorded by Tedo Razik'ashvili in the province Pshavi, ca. 1910. Mount Borbalo (or Borbala) is a 3300 meter mountain at the head of the Alazani and Iori rivers, about 80 km north of Tbilisi. The poem's meaning hinges on a play on words: The word *manana* is used in the sixth line (*mananas chamaq'riano*) to denote a fine summer drizzle. It is also a common female given name, and this sets up the interpretation of the “us” of the final line as “(my girlfriend) Manana and me.”
9. **Ts'itel ghvinos migagvane** (“I've likened you to red wine”). Sources: Ko 34; Go 25. Recited by S. Gachechiladze in the Imeretian village Shorap'ani. Variants in LP 46, 163-164.
10. **Ts'q'alsa mohkonda napot'i** (“The stream bore me a wood chip”). Source: LP 149. Recited by Gvaramadze in the Meskhetian village Khizabavra in 1884. Longer variant in Ko 37; Go 19-20. Musical settings: GFS (three voices, 4/4 meter); HGF #77 (Kartlian-Kakhetian; solo with three-voice choir, in 4/4 meter). Throughout most of its recorded history, Georgia has either been under foreign domination, and struggling to free itself; or independent, and fighting to maintain its freedom. Times of peace have been few and far between. These circumstances have given rise to a series of songs detailing the attempts of women to receive word concerning their menfolk gone off to war. Invariably the news they receive is bad. The best known example of this genre is the song *Gaprindi shavo mertskhalo*, one of the jewels of Georgian polyphonic folk music. (“Fly away, black swallow, follow the course of the Alazani; Bring back news of my brother who has gone off to war”). The theme of the floating wood chip as a bearer of news about an absent lover is also employed in the tale of Tristan and Iseult [Ko 345].
11. **Shens loq'as vardi hq'vaoda** (“A rose blossomed upon your cheek”). Sources: LP 50-51, Ko 42; Go 25-26. This poem, from the Kartlian village Ertats'minda was recorded by I. K'argareli, ca. 1913. Variant in LP 176. The inventory of feminine beauty given here makes use of a lexicon of similes common to most Georgian love poems. Some of these expressions can also describe masculine beauty (for example in “The knight in the leopard's skin”: Tariel and Avtandil's light-shedding teeth [VT 279], Avtandil's eyelashes of jet [VT 1250]). The women whom the addressee of the poem outshines are: Tamar (see poem #22); (?) Queen Ketevan, mother of King Teimuraz I and a martyr for the Christian faith (17th century); and the legendary beauty Eteri, a shepherdess whose ill-starred relationship with a prince (Abesalom) is the topic of a well-known poem .
12. **Rad ginda kali lamazi** (“Why do you want a beautiful woman?). Sources: Ko 42; Go 28. Transcribed by Mikh. K'avsadze. This song is from eastern Georgia (Kartli and Kakheti), and is performed as follows: The soloist declaims, in a sort of recitative, a line of the poem, in alternation with the chorus (which sings the nonsense syllables “He-e-e va-ra-lo”). As the song progresses, the tempo becomes faster and faster [Ko 352] .
13. **Mtieli** (“The mountaineer”). Source: Go 57. Recorded in the province of Khevi. Q'azbeg is a celebrated 5000-meter mountain in Khevi, along the Georgian Military Highway. The mountain Q'uro forms part of the border between Khevi and the North Caucasian province of Kist'eti. The sentiments expressed in this poem are echoed in a variety of poems and stories written by patriotic mountaineers, such as the following lines by the poet and ethnographer Raphael Eristavi:

*I prefer the black cliff,  
Covered with snow and ice,  
Where the hawk nests, and where  
The crystalline waterfall thunders:  
Where ibex and chamois abound;  
Their salty meat suits me just fine.  
I would not trade these sheer cliffs  
For the tree of eternal life;  
I would not trade my homeland  
For another land's paradise!*

14. **Khidistavs shavk'rat p'iroba** ("At Khidistav we'll make a pact"). Sources: Ko 60; Go 67. Recorded in the Kakhetian village Shashiani. Variant in LP 149 #612. Khidistav (lit. "bridge-head") is a village near Gori in central Kartli. The Mukhran-Bat'onebi ("Lords of Mukhran") were a branch of the Georgian royal family, the Bagratians. They took their name from the seat of their domain: Mukhran, a village on the Ksani river about 30 km NW of Tbilisi. They reached the zenith of their power during the period from 1650 to 1722, when they ruled all of eastern Georgia and had great influence at the Persian court in Isfahan [see HGP pp 174-180]. Sagarejo, where the three raiders marry their beautiful captives, is in western Kakheti, about 50 km east of Tbilisi. The rest of the poem is readily interpretable, though one detects echoes of the Mzekala ("Sun-woman") legend in the description of the woman liberated from the Mukhran-Bat'oni's court. The detail of earrings jingling in the wind also occurs in "The woman Khwaramze" (poem #32). The seating of the captive, disguised as a man, on an Arabian horse — which seems unmotivated in our poem — resembles an episode in the folktale "Mzekala and Mzevarda" [GNS 331-338] in which Sun-woman, in order to escape from her undesirable husband, dressed herself as a man, folded up her hair inside a cap, and rode off on her faithful horse Mzevarda ("Sun-rose"). Finally, the rather violent kissing to which the women in "Khidistavi" are subjected by their captors (*loq'as avadzrot t'q'avi* "let us peel off the hide from their cheeks") echoes a phrase in "Lurjasi," which is also a Sun-woman tale in K'ot'et'ishvili's opinion. A talking horse instructs its female rider: "Mount me, hit me with the whip three times, so that three pieces of my hide come off" (*sami p'iri t'q'avi amdzvres*) [cited by Ko 357].
15. **Lekso, amogtkom** ("Poem, I will declaim you"). Sources: Ko 21; Go 77-78; IWRP 200. Composed by the Pshavian Mikha Khelashvili; transcribed by V. Khornauli in the Pshavian village K'ats'alkhevi. This poem expresses with especial clarity the particular intensity of a mother's love for her children, a notion finding expression in almost every corner of Georgian linguistic culture. Looking in the dictionary under the word *deda* "mother," one finds, in addition to familiar idioms such as "mother tongue" and "mother earth," the expressions *deda-azri* "mother idea," a key or fundamental principle; *deda-bodzi* "mother pillar," the column supporting the roof in a traditional Georgian house; *deda-kalaki* "mother city," the capital of a country. According to traditional belief, each village, stream, valley and forest was under the protection of a local spirit known as *adgilis-deda*, "place-mother" (see poem #31). By contrast, *mama* "father" is almost never used in a metaphoric sense. All of this gives one the impression that deep in the Georgian national consciousness motherhood is linked with the notion of support, of being the center and base, of nurturing and protecting. It should not be seen as unusual, then, that the dying Avtandil dispatches a carrier pigeon to his mother, not his father or wife (poem #7). The young warrior in the poem expresses the hope that his name will be remembered each time the ballad he left behind is sung. It is a sadly ironic fact that the powers that ruled over Georgia for many years would not allow this wish to be honored. Mikha Khelashvili, born in 1900 in the Pshavian village Akhadi, participated in the anti-Communist revolt led by Kakutsa Choloq'ashvili in 1924. After the uprising was crushed by the Soviet Georgian government, Khelashvili went into hiding in the mountains. In January of 1925 the young poet was betrayed and killed. Until recently his name could not be mentioned in print, even though some of the poems he composed were widely anthologized (biographical information provided by Z. K'ik'nadze).
16. **T'ialo ts'utisopelo** ("Oh wretched, fleeting world"). Source: IWRP 204. Composed by the Pshavian poet Bat'ark'ats Bekauri. Folk poetry is still a living tradition in Georgia, and many mountaineers continue to compose poetry within the tradition of their ancestors. Vakhusht'i K'ot'et'ishvili included a dozen recently composed poems in his anthology of folk poetry, including this one. The poet declares that he has eaten up his life "like a *khink'ali*." This is one of the staples of Pshavian cuisine: spiced meat encased in a bag of dough, then boiled or fried. (One can easily put away a dozen or more at a sitting, washed down with beer). Old age has bent him over like a *k'irk'ali*, a curved piece of wood, especially one fashioned as a rocker for a cradle.



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17. **Iavnana** (“Lullaby”). Sources: Ko 26; Go 79-81. Recited in the Kartlian village K’arbi by Ek’. Bidzinashvili. Musical settings: GFS (two variants for women’s chorus, both in 3/8 meter); HGF #2 (solo and two-voice chorus, in 4/4 meter, accompanied by the *panduri*, a three-stringed lute). The women’s vocal ensemble Mzetamze has recorded no fewer than ten variants of the *Iavnana* on their first two CDs. In its basic form this lullaby comprised the melody, rhythmic pattern, refrain, and certain of the verses; the rest was improvised on the spot. The two flowers, violet and rose, frequently appear together in Georgian folk literature. In “The knight in the leopard’s skin” they are symbols of happiness and fulfillment (sometimes opposed to the saffron, a sign of sorrow). Only once are the two flowers mentioned with contrastive senses: *ornive mikhvdet ts’adilsa, igi vardobdes, shen ie* “May you both attain your desire; may he [Tariel] be a rose and thou [Nestan-Darejan] a violet” [VT 1267, Wardrop’s translation]. K’ot’et’ishvili notes that in a certain folk tale [cited in Ko 324], the violet is associated with the “queen of the underworld,” and the rose with its king. In both cases, the violet is linked with a woman and the rose with a man. The Western reader would never imagine that this charming lullaby, with its sumptuous images of satin, gold, and rubies, was addressed to the supernatural beings that the traditional Caucasians dreaded more than any others. The word “lords” (*bat’onebi*) is a euphemism for those contagious diseases, measles and smallpox, which until recently exacted a horrible toll of death and disfigurement among the children of the Caucasus. As portrayed by the Svans of a century ago, “Smallpox and Measles are brothers. They have a mother who lives atop a high cliff by the sea shore ... In the center of their home stands a pillar encrusted with human eyes. [The mother said:] ‘My child Smallpox brings all of the eyes he has ruined, and we fasten them to this pillar.’” [HEE I, 147-148]. The “lords” strike where they will, and can only be warded off by being persuading, in the most deferential terms, to leave. The Ossetians, an Indo-Iranian people of the central Caucasus, would put on great month-long feasts to appease the spirit of smallpox [MIE 48-60], and among the Georgians not so long ago the *Iavnana* was sung as part of a ritual for curing sick children. A detailed description of this practice is given in the story *Bat’onebma ar daits’unes*, “The lords were not displeased,” by the 19th-century writer Anastasia Eristav-Khosht’aria, from which I quote this excerpt: “A chair covered with a red cloth was placed before the sick children. On the cloth were little pastries, sweets, cloth scraps in various colors, dolls, flags, red-dyed eggs, and so forth. This was a banquet set for the lords. In a low voice Melana recited the *Iavnana* to the children:

*The violet and the rose, nana,  
O violet, naninao,  
O you lords, o you merciful ones,  
O violet, naninao,  
I pluck a violet, I spread out a rose,  
O violet, naninao,  
Bring relief to our little ones,  
O violet, naninao!*

“Melana rose to her feet and circled around them, dancing and waving her hands (*khelebis k’vants’it chamouara*):

*The lords are out in the garden,  
O violet, naninao,  
A white mulberry is bearing fruit,  
O violet, naninao,  
I was in a grove of trees,  
O violet, naninao,  
The aspen tree wrapped around an aspen,  
O violet, naninao,  
We came here from the white sea  
O violet, naninao,  
Seven brothers and seven sisters,*

ოც მთხბერა

*O violet, naninao!*  
*You spread out to seven towns,*  
*O violet, naninao,*  
*We'll pitch our tents in seven towns,*  
*O violet, naninao,*  
*As your arrival has made us glad*  
*May your parting do likewise,*  
*Nana, nana, to the lords,*  
*O violet, naninao!*

“Melana finished dancing, sat down by the children and said: ‘Lords, may the path before you bring happiness, and in the same measure may you bring relief to my little Ila, Pepa, and Daro, do not deprive them of comfort!’” [cited in Ko 326-327; my translation]. K’ot’et’ishvili draws a parallel between the “seven lordly brothers and sisters” of the *Iavnana* and the “seven evil spirits” which, in ancient Babylonian belief, brought illness and other misfortunes [Ko 325-326; cp. Volkert Haas, *Magie und Mythen in Babylonien: von Dämonen, Hexen und Beschwörungspriestern* (Lüneburg: Merlin, 1986), pp. 133-138]. The departure of the seven brothers and sisters would be interpreted as the hoped-for departure of the cause of illness.

18. **Iambe, tsikhis nashalo** (“Speak, o fortress ruins”). Sources: Ko 100; Go 106-7. Recorded in Khevsureti by Tamar Mach’avariani. Another Khevsur variant was collected by Tedoradze (FY 201). The variant in PKh 74-75, recorded in 1931 in the village Bisio, is essentially identical for the first 18 lines. The description of battle that follows, however, contains no mention of the tree-felling incident. The fortress in the title is believed to have stood in the village Barisakho, along the Aragvi River in southern Khevsureti. Alongside it, according to legend, stood a tree of special significance. The text given here specifies a cypress (*alvis-khe*), often employed in poetry as a symbol of beauty. Other versions mention an oak tree, by means of which the highly elliptical account of Alshaureli and the cat can be linked with the tale of the cutting down of an ancient sacred oak (*bermukha*), variants of which have been collected throughout the mountainous districts of northeast Georgia [DGF I, 74]. The best-known and best-studied version is that of the sacred oak of Qhmelgora, in Pshavi [see M. Chikovani “Demetres ts’minda mukha” (Demetrius’ sacred oak) in QGG 47-50 and the discussion in SR 659-678]. The story of the oak of Qhmelgora associates elements of Georgian mythology with the history of the Georgian nobleman Zurab Eristavi [1591-1629; *eristavi* is a title roughly corresponding to “Duke”]. Zurab led an army into the mountainous region along the Aragvi River north of Tbilisi, in an attempt to subjugate the local population, which has rarely submitted to the rule of lowland authorities. The desperate skirmishes fought by the mountaineers against Zurab’s army have provided material for an enormous number of Pshavian and Khevsur poems. The oak tree of Qhmelgora was consecrated to the deity Lashari, an important figure in the pre-Christian Georgian pantheon (more about him in the notes to poem #55). It was linked to heaven by a golden chain, upon which its guardian spirit moved up and down. As long as the oak stood, the shrine of Lashari and the community of mountaineers in the vicinity remained invincible. Zurab’s invasion was stymied outside of Qhmelgora, until a local villager betrayed the secret of the sacred oak. It could be chopped down only if one killed a cat and spilled its blood on the tree. (Cats and dogs were regarded as unclean by the Pshavs and Khevsurs; threatening to sacrifice the blood of a cat or dog over the graves of an enemy’s ancestors is an extremely serious threat [CD 55]). To avoid pollution by the cat’s blood, the golden chain retracted upward to heaven, the now-defenseless oak was cut down, and the Pshavians were defeated in battle .
19. **Vazhk’atsis sik’vdili** (“A man’s death”). Sources: Ko 292; Go 78. Recorded in the Tianetian village Didi Toneti by V. Ghonghadze. The Georgians had no equivalent of Valhalla with which to reward their slain warriors. The dead, with some exceptions, dined together in the “land of souls,” usually described as a dreary shadow-world (see poem #36 and the accompanying notes). In the following excerpt from a ballad collected in the mountains north of Tbilisi in 1913 [GMD 167], those

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mourning the deceased hero Jabana are comforted with the thought that a bit of sunlight will follow him to the banquet in the underworld:

*His womenfolk were weeping, their faces bathed in tears.  
Do not weep for him, womenfolk: Jabana will not fare badly.  
Jabana went down to the land of souls, a ray of sunshine followed him;  
There he found the feasting-table spread with food and wine.*

20. **Bzha dia chkimi** (“The sun is my mother”). Source: MP 81. Recorded in Mingrelia by K’ Tatarishvili, ca. 1910. Note that, *pace* Francis of Assisi and his “Brother Sun and Sister Moon”, Georgian folklore identifies the sun as female and the moon as male. The pattern recurs in poem #32, “The woman Khwaramze.”
21. **Aguna** (“Aguna”). Source: MP 113. Recorded in Ach’ara by T. Sakhok’ia in 1898. Aguna is the Georgian Bacchus, the deity of viticulture. His cult is observed throughout the grape-growing regions of West Georgia. This poem is to be recited in the vineyards or wine cellar on the first or second day of the new year. The accompanying rituals vary from one locality to another. In Guria, the family’s first guest of the year brings bread and the head of the pig served at the New Year’s dinner out to the vineyard. While striking the pig’s head with a stick, he intones the poem to Aguna [DGF I, 22]. In the province of Lechkhumi, the elder of the household calls on Aguna while pouring wine onto the base of a grapevine [MP 265]. Bakhvi and Ask’ana (second line) are neighboring villages in southern Guria, near the province of Achara .
22. **Tamar dedopal viq’av** (“I was Tamar the Queen”). Sources: Ko 144; Go 135. Variants: Ko 257-258; PKh 61, RFl 259-267. Songs and legends about Tamar, who ruled from 1184-1218, abound in all parts of Georgia. It is not difficult to understand why. The reign of the woman the chroniclers called Tamar Mepe (“Tamar the King”) saw the culmination of her nation’s Golden Era. The Georgian crown exercised authority over a territory reaching from Samsun to Baku and south to the Araks River, including much of the North Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. Tamar’s subjects may have numbered ten million or more. “The knight in the leopard’s skin,” considered by Georgians to be the finest work ever written in their language, was composed in her honor. Within two decades after Tamar’s death, Mongol armies were sweeping through eastern Georgia, and so began a long period of decline and foreign occupation, leading up to the annexation of Georgia by the Russian Empire in 1801. While the exploits of Tamar the King, coupled with an understandable nostalgia for the cultural and political glories of her time, are sufficient to guarantee her a special place in the hearts of her people, there is another factor as well. The Tamar of folklore has the attributes of a deity, probably the result of an amalgamation of the historical Tamar and a pre-Christian celestial goddess [see SR 679-700]. The poem is in the form of an epitaph, in which the deceased monarch summarizes her achievements (no actual epitaph has come down to us, and Tamar’s grave has never been found). In addition to collecting tribute from human cities, she is credited with the conquest of the “Kajes,” a race of demons with magical powers frequently mentioned in Georgian folklore. Tamar is believed to have ordered the building of churches and castles throughout Georgia, and in every part of the country stand ancient edifices which, according to the local population, were built at her command. Many of these shrines and towers are located atop steep ridges. According to an account recorded in the province of Kartli, “at Tamar’s command the swallows brought sand and the cranes brought stones, and in this way she erected churches, monasteries, and fortresses on inaccessible mountains and cliffs” [Ko 375]. Numerous variants of this “epitaph” have been collected throughout Georgia [see RFl 259-267]. In some, Tamar is credited with the construction of particular churches (for example, the cathedrals of Ubisi and Manglisi, which in fact were built long before her time), and the list of cities she is said to have subjugated varies somewhat. Almost all versions mention her placing of boundary markers in the sea and drawing the dry land toward her (placing the land and sea under her dominion), and conclude with the lines “I, who accomplished such deeds, took nought but a nine-yard cloth” [that is, I took nothing with me into the grave save my burial shroud]. Two versions specify that she drew her last

breath at Vardzia, a city built into the cliff overlooking the Mt'k'vari (Kura) River near the Turkish border.

23. **Omi gumbred** (“The Battle of Gumbri”). Source: ShKh 178-179; Go 114-115. Recited by Nadira Arabuli in the Khevsur village Chirdili in 1911. The fortress of Gumbri is in central-southern Georgia. According to Shanidze, the battle described here took place during the Russo-Turkish wars of 1877-78. The expression “Cross of Blood” (*siskhlis jvari*) refers to an honorable death in battle.
24. **Oy Jgëræg-ieha, loyawi-i-she-e-da** (“Oy Jgëræg, stand by us”). Source: SvP 312. Svanetian hymn recorded by Ak'ak'i Shanidze in 1932. The use of nonsense syllables is rather common in Georgian songs, especially in refrains (rather like the *fa-la-la-la* 's and *hey-diddle-diddle* 's of English folk tunes). In the province of Svaneti, where the style of singing and the harmonic structure of the songs are markedly different from what is found elsewhere in Georgia, a number of hymns, laments, and dance tunes have “texts” that are largely or entirely uninterpretable. There are, in fact, two types of such texts. In the first type, of which this song is a typical case, a small number of simple, open syllables is employed (other examples in SvP 266-7). For a song of the second type, see #25.
25. **Ak'alæ-æd, mak'alæ-æd** ([Svanetian nonsense song]). Source: SvP 356. Recited by Khabji Chkhet'iani in the Upper Svan village of Lenjer, ca. 1939. As can be easily seen, the nonsense syllables in this song have a more complex phonological structure, resembling actual words. Mixed in with the completely uninterpretable sounds are Svan sentences and phrases (for example *tsæ:nisha dashwd* “the bear of Tsena,” from a humorous song about the misadventures of a bear wandering from one Svanetian village to another). There are also a few classical Georgian words (*k'iri k'irsa, ch'iri ch'irsa* “lime on (to?) lime, want on want”). More-or-less mangled fragments of classical Georgian, the language of the Orthodox liturgy, are particularly common in Svanetian prayers and spells. Nonsense lyrics of differing degrees of wordlikeness have also been noted in the songs of the Havasupai Indians of the southwestern United States; see Leanne Hinton *Havasupai song* [Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 1982].
26. **Ochop'int'ra** (“Ochopintra”). Source: MP 107-8. Recited by G. Lobzhanidze in the Rachan village Ghebi. Georgian hunters traditionally believed that the wild animals they killed for food and fur were under the protection of a divinity, who insured that only those hunters who maintained themselves in a state of rectitude and observed the taboos would be allowed to take their prey. The Svans, as we have seen, represented their deity of the hunt as a woman (Dali). By contrast, Georgians of the eastern provinces (Khevsureti, Kakheti) and of the upland districts of Racha invoked a male figure, Ochopintra, for success in hunting [see MP 247-8]. Interestingly, the Circassians of the North Caucasus are likewise of divided opinion concerning the gender of their hunter deity, Mezythe: S/he is female for the East Circassian Kabardians, but male for the West Circassians [GOM 43, 108-9; PC 171 note 1]. Before setting out, the mountaineer hunter will ask Ochopintra to spare an ibex from his herd. If he succeeds in killing one, he pauses to give thanks to the deity. If the hunter should kill too many animals, however, he risks incurring Ochopintra's wrath. (Dali likewise was believed to punish those who overkilled).
27. **Gonja modga k'arebsao** (“Gonja came to the door”). Source: MP 111. The poem was recorded by N. Bregadze in the Rachan village Ts'edisi in 1964. A variant is sung by the ensemble Mzetamze on their first CD. The figure of Gonja was invoked during times of drought in western Georgia (Imereti, Lechkhumi, Racha). The poem was chanted while a ritual such as the following, which was observed in Lower Racha, took place: A group of young men from the village chose one of their number to play the part of “Gonja.” This man stripped down to the waist, and was smeared with lampblack. Holding a long, thorny branch in his hand, he and his companions went from door to door, singing this song [MP 259]. The eastern Georgian equivalent is called “Lazaroba,” during which young women go about the village barefoot and call upon a personage named “Lazare” to bring rain [DGF I, 224-5].

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28. **Tsangala da gogona** (“The mandolin and the girl”). Sources: Ko 85; Go 159. The poem was recited by M. Biminashvili in the Kartlian village K’arbi. Musical setting: GFS (Kakhetian; three-voice chorus, in 2/4 meter). The *tsangala* is a plucked stringed instrument, similar to the Georgian *chonguri*, a type of four-stringed lute. In the song, the *tsangala* itself is represented as speaking, complaining about ill treatment and being blamed when a dancer makes a mistake .
29. **Vazhis nat’vra** (“A young man’s wish”). Sources: Ko 136; Go 157. Recorded by T. Razik’ashvili in the province of Kartli. Variants: LP 70-1, 216-17.
30. **Me var Qhel-Samdzimari** (“I am Qhel-Samdzimari”). Source: MP 105, 107. The first section was recited by Jukha Gogoch’uri in the Khevsur village Buchuk’urta in 1964; the second part was recorded by T. Ochiauri in the Khevsur village Shat’ili. Qhel-Samdzimari (or simply Samdzimari, Samdzivari) was one of three women said to have been brought back by the deity St. George after his military expedition in Kajeti, a land inhabited by metal-working demons with wondrous powers. Her name derives from the beads and bangles (*mdzivi*) with which she adorns herself. Among her magical powers is the capability of changing her shape, so that she appears to mortals in the guise of a human female. While sojourning upon the earth, she becomes the object of desire of various semilegendary priests and oracles. Their cohabitation with the deity Samdzimari symbolizes their powers of communication with the gods [SR 570]. The Khevsur Kholiga Abuletauri, according to one account, was not given permission to marry by the powerful deity Qhaqmat’i. He was to live as a monk (*beri*) in the service of Qhaqmat’i’s shrine. One day, Samdzimari came to Kholiga at the shrine in human form, and consented to live with him as his wife [MP 246-7]. Her divine nature was not discovered until one day her mother-in-law saw her magically fashioning a golden ring in a pot of molten butter. Samdzimari then resumed her true form and flew off [SR 569, 577]. Khevsur hunters have been known to invoke Samdzimari’s name in praying for luck in hunting, and, if successful, to offer the horns of a deer or ibex at her shrine in gratitude. This fact, combined with the legends concerning Samdzimari’s amorous affairs with mortals, has led the folklorist M. Chikovani to consider her, and not Ochopintra (poem #26), the original northeast Georgian counterpart to the Svanetian goddess Dali [MP pp 243-8]. According to the poem she gathers *ch’ima*, the name of a local variety of chervil [*Chaerophyllum caucasicum*] and *lakht’ara*, an herb similar to wood sorrel (GMD 349). Charachidzé notes that the Khevsurs prepare an “extremely nourishing” dish from the leaves of the *ch’ima*, which only women are allowed to eat [SR 579-80, 613-14].
31. **Adgilis-dedao** (“Place-mother”). Source: MP #103, p 140. Recorded by A. Ch’inch’arauli in Khevsureti in 1939. In traditional times the Georgians believed, in the words of the poet and ethnographer Vazha-Pshavela, “that each place — mountain, hill, ravine — has a mother, which they call the ‘place-mother.’ A hunter camping in the mountains or in a ravine will commend himself to the local place-mother: ‘Mother of this place, I entrust myself to you; grant me your favor and bounty.’” (*Collected works* vol V, p. 11). The cult of the place-mother has been closely associated with that of the Virgin Mary (note that the place-mother is addressed as “mother of God” in our poem). One common feature of rituals in honor of either the place-mother or Mary is the offering, typically in springtime, of small cakes, and the smearing of butter on the shrine, a small tower of stones. The participants in the ritual are women and children. The place-mother is asked to provide bounty to the household, especially in dairy products and grains (MP 352-3; DGF I, 23; Natia Jalabadze “Adgilis dedastan dak’avshirebuli zogierti rit’ualis shesakheb” [Concerning some rituals associated with the Place-mother] *Ist’oriul-Etnograpiuli Sht’udiebi* II, 1985). The place-mother may also function as a portent of doom, as in the following quatrain [cited in ShKh 569] entitled *Adgilis-deda chioda* (“The place-mother moaned”):

*The place-mother moaned,  
The village elder’s dying,  
Do not kill him, Lord Creator,  
We too will be ruined.*

32. **Kali khwaramze** (“The woman Khwaramze”). Sources: Go 17-18; Ko 69-70; variant in PKh 87-88. Recorded in Pshavi by Tedo Razik’ashvili. The word *khwaramze* appears to be a compound of the Persian and Georgian words for “sun” (Persian *hwara* + Georgian *mze*), and indeed this poem can be linked with the Mzekala (“Sun-woman”) cycle of Georgian mythological texts. K’ot’et’ishvili offers the following interpretation: Khwaramze is the rising sun. The “foolish young man” is her consort, the moon. (Although this identification is not always strictly maintained, in Georgian folklore the sun is female, and the moon male). The moon takes a sword to his own head, and so he usually appears in the sky with less than a full head. A Lithuanian legend noted by K’ot’et’ishvili contains a similar account: Husband Moon cheats on his wife, the Sun, and makes love to Aushrine, the Morning Star. On finding this out the Sun unsheathes her sword and splits her husband’s head in twain [Ko 357-358]. Khwaramze saddles her horse and rides off. For this mighty steed, “the roads of Trialeti (the southern part of Kartli, west of Tbilisi) are not enough to run on, the great Algeti mountains (just west of Tbilisi) are not enough to graze on,” etc. The horse also has a phenomenal thirst. Not satisfied with the Alazani (the major river in eastern Kakheti) and Kura (Georgian *Mt’k’vari*, the chief river of northern Transcaucasia), it drank up the “Gumbri waters” (presumably one of several lakes near the Georgian-Armenian border) until the cinch binding its saddle burst. We note, first of all, that Sun-woman is frequently accompanied by a horse of prodigious abilities. A good example is the horse Mzevarda, “Sun-rose,” in the folk tale “Mzekala and Mzevarda” [GNS 331-338]. Among other things, this remarkable animal can talk, hunt, build a shelter, and traverse large distances in the wink of an eye to save its mistress, Sun-woman, from harm. As for the horse’s thirst, this may be the remnant of a just-so story accounting for the drying up of creeks and ponds during hot sunny weather.
33. **Monadire zovis kvesh** (“A hunter trapped under a snowslide”). Source: PKh 139. Narrated by Ch’reli K’och’lishvili in 1945 in the Pshavian village Udzilaurta. Variants in GMD 129, 162. Avalanches are by no means a rare occurrence in the Caucasus mountains. As recently as the winter of 1986-87, several entire villages in the province of Svaneti were destroyed by snowslides, and dozens of people lost their lives. In this poem, a hunter manages to survive beneath the snow, using his bow for firewood, and eating a bear “skin and all.” As one would expect of people engaged in an activity where luck plays an important role, Georgian hunters were extremely superstitious. In eating the bear whole, our hunter would have violated any of a number of rules governing the skinning and cutting-up of the corpse, the offering of certain portions to the deity who “allowed” the hunter’s arrow to hit the mark, etc. The consequences could be anything from poor luck in hunting to death (see the notes to #56, “Betgil”). One also notes some correspondences with the legend of the hunter Ivane of Kvartsikhe, who was stranded on a mountain. To avoid starvation, he makes a fire with his bow and arrows, and roasts his faithful dog Q’ursha, after which he exclaims “This is why I have been cursed” [PC 146-147]. Three months later the snow melts, freeing the hunter from his icy prison. But in his village, everyone assumes he has died. His own mother does not recognize him, and his wife is getting married to someone else. The black humor in these lines can be better understood by comparing them to what was said above (notes to poem #15) about the special quality of a mother’s love for her children. Compare also poems #7 and #56, in which the doomed protagonists specifically request that their wives not remarry too soon, presumably so that they will be available to mourn and offer sacrifices for the well-being of their late husbands’ souls in the afterlife. On discovering just how little impact his “death” has had on his loved ones, our poor hunter decides that maybe *saikio* (literally, “the place over there”) would not be so bad after all. At least he can get drunk over there (this may be an oblique reference to the libations of wine offered to the souls of departed relatives at Georgian feasts).
34. **Mzeo, mzeo, amodi** (“Sun, sun, come up”). Source: MP 79. Recorded by P’. Umik’ashvili in Imereti, ca. 1900. This song was performed (sometimes accompanied by round-dancing) in the cold days of early spring, when the sun is hidden behind clouds. In some variants a goat is offered instead of a sheep [MP 168-69].

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35. **Mze shina da mze gareta** (“Sun inside and sun outside”). Source: MP 80-81. Recorded by Sev. Gachechiladze in Imereti. Musical setting: MFS #43 (monophonic lullaby, in 6/8 meter). This is one of the best known Georgian folksongs, and numerous versions have been collected and published [notes and variants in MP 170-6]. Most variants, unlike the one printed in this anthology, celebrate the birth of a male child:

<i>Sun inside and sun outside,</i>	<i>O Sun come on inside!</i>
<i>The rooster has already crowed,</i>	<i>O Sun come on inside!</i>
<i>Rise if you will rise at all,</i>	“ “
<i>The sun lay down and bore the moon,</i>	“ “
<i>A baby boy has been born to us,</i>	“ “
<i>Our enemy thinks it is a girl,</i>	“ “
<i>The boy’s father is not at home,</i>	“ “
<i>He has gone to town to get a cradle,</i>	“ “
etc. etc. [Ko 25-6]	

In Chikovani’s opinion [MP 171-2; see also DGF II, 25], this poem was originally a hymn to the sun-goddess, later reworked as either a lullaby or a spinning song, as in the version given here .

36. **Suletis leksi** (“The land of souls”). Source: Ko 289-90; variant in MT 189-90. Recited by S. Tsisk’arashvili in the Tushetian village Alaznis Tavi. The traditional Georgian belief concerning the afterlife is not greatly different from that of the Greeks of Homer’s time. *Suleti*, “the land of souls,” is a dank, cheerless place, illuminated by a dim light, similar to the last rays of the sun at dusk, called “the sun of the dead” (*mk’wdris mze*). Entering souls must pass over a giant cauldron of boiling water on a tightrope made of hair. The souls of sinful persons are heavier, and thus more likely to fall into the cauldron [CD 58-62; DGF 94; note the similarity to the Chinwad bridge of ancient Iranian religion, which widens or narrows depending on the sinfulness of the soul entering the afterlife]. The souls of the deceased retain many of the characteristics they had at the time of death (age and infirmity, for example), but at the same time are shadows of their former selves. They speak, if at all, very softly. A large banquet is spread before them, but they do not actually eat the food, merely gaze at it. Nonetheless food and drink are essential for the souls’ well-being, and it can be supplied only through sacrifices and libations made by their living relatives. Souls that are not provided for in this way cannot participate in the banquet, and must “sit with their backs toward the table.”
37. **Mirangula** (“Mirangula”). Source: SvP 6-13; variant in *SbMat* XVIII. Narrated by Giorgi Kharziani in 1927 in the Upper Svan village K’ala. Transcribed by V. Topuria. Musical setting: HGF #34 (three-voice male chorus accompanied by the harp (*changi*) and viol (*ch’uniri*), in 4/4 meter). Mirangula has been kept by his mother in the defense tower (*murq’wam*) that adjoins almost every Upper Svan homestead. The variant in *SbMat* states that he was keeping watch, while the later text in SvP says that his mother “spoiled” him (*naunkholosh khordas*) by making him stay there. Whatever the case may be, Mirangula leaves the tower to go on a raid in Balkaria (in Svan, *Malq’ar*), the province on the other (north) side of the main ridge of the Caucasus. He crosses the pass on Machkpar (“waterfall”) Mountain, which links Ushgul, the easternmost and uppermost Svan village, with Balkaria. Mirangula kills a herdsman and captures his oxen. He is pursued by the “Savs” (*savvar*), a Svan corruption of a word meaning “Ossetian,” but which is applied indiscriminately to Balkarians and other North Caucasians. The North Caucasians are nominally Muslims, and the Svans, like most other Georgians, are nominally Orthodox Christian. After he shoots a party of men, a group of Sav women comes after him. Mirangula finds them offensive. In the *SbMat* variant he terms them “unclean and unbelievers”; in the version translated here he specifies that they do not wear the *lachak*, the wimple-like headdress traditionally worn by Georgian women, nor underwear (*arshwil*). This latter remark probably reflects the special fear male that Caucasian mountaineers have of being “contaminated” by menstrual blood [ONS 140]. A certain Sav named Vezden heads off Mirangula at the pass and guns him down (literally, “rolls him over”

with a bullet). The code of blood-price and vendetta was very much alive in Svaneti until recent times, and the dying Mirangula's principal fear is that his death will be unavenged. He prays to God for one last shot, his wish is granted, and he kills Vezden. In his final speech Mirangula totals up the score, and — satisfied that he came out ahead — breathes his last. The episode ends with a macabre description of the uses to which his corpse will be put by various animals. At this point the scene returns to Balkaria, where some Ushgolian “priests” (*bap'ar*) have been taken captive. The *SbMat* variant states that the Savs shaved the priests' beards off and forced them to eat *k'erjin*, Balkarian sourdough bread. This is regarded as a serious outrage: the wearing of a beard is a sign of the priesthood, and *k'erjin* is seen as an infidel substitute for *sepsk'wer*, the “communion bread” consumed in Svan rituals. The SvP (but not *SbMat*) text further mentions the humiliation of Ushgolian wives by having their underwear stripped off. The priests escape their captors and head back to Georgia. At the pass they find Mirangula's body, and also the nine oxen he stole. They lead the animals to Ushgul to be offered at a *lukhor*. This word literally means “gathering,” that is, a meeting of the clan elders. The *SbMat* text specifies that a funeral feast (*lagwaen*) is held. The older version further states that invitations are sent “as far as Chubeqhev,” that is, representatives from all of Upper Svaneti attend the feast. To further mark the occasion, “wheat from Jerusalem” is used to make the *sepsk'wer*, and wine is brought from the Black Sea coast. (Because of the high altitude, grapes do not grow in most of Upper Svaneti). The wheat is processed at three sites in the vicinity of Ushgul, mentioned in both versions of the poem. Twetnuld is a 5000-meter peak near the border with Balkaria; At'k'wer is an alpine pasture, and the mountain named Mushur is part of the ridge separating Upper and Lower Svaneti (information from Ambak'o Ch'k'adua, *Svanur t'op'onimta saleksik'ono masala* [ms.]). In addition, God (in the *SbMat* variant, St. George of Ilor) sends an ox adorned with candles and incense as an offering. The image of an ox sent by a divinity for sacrifice recalls an incident which is reported to have occurred annually on the feastday of St. George at the celebrated shrine in his name at Ilor (near the Black Sea coastal town of Ochamchira). The saint was believed to lead an ox to the church at night, and miraculously leave it inside the locked church. The next day, the priests opened the church doors and discovered the animal. It was then slaughtered and pieces of its meat, believed to have curative powers, were distributed to the faithful (Sergi Mak'alatia, *Samegrelos ist'oria da etnografia*. Tbilisi: Sakartvelos mxaretmcodneobis sazogadoeba, 1941, pp. 354-358.) Both versions have the same rather odd conclusion: The priests are gathered in the *darbæz*, the upper floor of a Svanetian house, and the floor collapses under them. According to the *SbMat* text, “many men were injured.” The *lukhor* breaks up, and thus it ends. It is not known whether this account is based on an actual incident, or serves as a hyperbolic means of indicating the large number of people who attended the funeral. The deity periodically invoked in the poem is *Lamrya Ushgwlaesh* “(St.) Lamaria of Ushgul.” The name is ultimately derived from Mary, the mother of Jesus. The shrine dedicated in her name — an ancient stone church encircled by a wall — is located outside of Zhibiani, one of the four hamlets within the Ushgul community.

38. **Dideb, dideb tarigdzelas** (“Glory to the Archangel”). Source: SvP 316-317; variant in *SbMat* XXXI:4, pp 4-7. Recorded by Arsen Oniani in 1917 in the Lower Svan province of Lashkheti. *Tarigdzela* (variants include Tærglezer, Taaringzel) is the Svanified rendering of medieval Georgian *Mtavarangeloz*, “Archangel.” In the religious system of 19th-century Svaneti, the Archangel was one of the four chief deities, along with *Khosha Gherbet*, “Supreme God”; *Jgëræg*, “St. George”; and *Lamaria*. According to Charachidzé, he “functions as ‘grand vizier’ to the supreme god, exercising authority in his name, representing the power of the ‘celestial sovereign’ in the terrestrial realm” [SR 286]. As is characteristic of pre-Christian Georgian hymns, praise is addressed to both the deity and the shrine dedicated to him. It is not clear which shrine inspired this poem, since there are so many (two dozen in Upper Svaneti alone) that bear the Archangel's name. In any event, the description is probably not greatly exaggerated. First, quite a few Svanetian churches, like the one in the poem, are adjoined to a defense tower and surrounded by a stone wall. Second, no visitor to Svaneti can help being awestruck by the stunning collection of gold and silver artifacts, crosses, illuminated manuscripts, and icons that some churches have accumulated over the centuries. For the most part, these items were presented to the shrine, and hence the deity, by individuals who sought or had received some favor, or to appease the deity if — in the opinion of a seer — some disaster



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which had befallen them was an expression of divine wrath. Besides gifts of precious metals, Georgian shrines received animal sacrifices. Two different types of sacrificed animal are mentioned in the hymn to the Archangel: wild and domestic. Should a hunter kill an ibex or other important prey, he would give thanks to the gods for delivering the animal to him and sacrifice its horns to the shrine. Domestic animals (oxen, sheep, goats) were slaughtered in the shrine precincts, and a portion of their meat presented to the deity. The variant of this hymn in *SbMat* specifies that the sacrificed oxen were *uskhway*. This means that they were specially fattened by their owners and never used for farm work. These pampered animals were slaughtered on special occasions. The text of the hymn to the Archangel is closely related to that of the well-known Svanetian liturgical song *Lile*. *Lile* (the meaning of this word or name is no longer known) is believed by some to have been a hymn to the sun, which was later redone as, or combined with, an invocation of the Archangel (MP 177-183). Because of this hymn's importance in the field of Georgian folklore studies, I will give here a translation of the complete text of a version of *Lile* collected by A. Shanidze in the Upper Svan village of Tskhumar in 1923:

*Oi, Lile, You are filled with glory, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, Glory, glory, O Archangel, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, We are praying for our welfare, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, May his power stand beside us, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, You have offerings inside (your shrine), oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, You have offerings of oxen, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, They have horns bedecked with gold, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, You have offerings of rams, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, They have long and twisted horns, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, On every ridge they paw and bellow, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, Deer are lying at your base, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, Your embrasures ringed with falcons, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, A golden ring-wall lies around you, oi, Lile!*  
*Oi, Lile, A flawless house was built for you, oi, Lile!*

39. **Survili** (“Wish”). Source: PKh 192. Recited by M. Gusharashvili in 1937 in the Pshavian village Tvalivi. Variants in OL 44 #63; GMD 243. This is a poem about unrequited love, dammed up within the singer like a lake, as deep as the crimson snake is long. There is, alas, no outlet: the young woman does not — or will not — acknowledge his love. The intense image of a lake of blood (*siskhlis t’ba*) does occur elsewhere in Georgian folklore. The warrior-hero Amirani and, in a quite different context, the deity Iaqhsar are nearly drowned in blood after slaughtering a family of ogres. Charachidzé [PC 43-46] sees in these accounts the echoes of a ritual purification, part of the initiation of a shaman or warrior. Whether anything in the wistful love poem presented here can be explained in the light of Charachidzé’s findings is a question best left for future research .
40. **Aleksi Bidzashvili** (“Cousin Aleksi”). Source: PKh 187-188. Recited by Giorgi Mart’iashvili in 1942 in the Pshavian village Gudarakhi.
41. **Sheq’varebulis guli** (“A lover’s heart”). Source: PKh 192-193. Recited by G. Ts’ik’lauri in 1941 in the village Ingeti. The term “rye-colored boy” (*vazhk’atso svilis perao*) does not sound as silly in Georgian as in English. It denotes a light-brown, sun-tanned complexion .
42. **T’ilebis korts’ili** (“The wedding party of the lice”). Sources: GMD 140, 247; Ko 214. The poem as presented here is an amalgam of two closely related versions: one recited by Giorgi Dadalauri and Memtskhware Archemashvili in the Pshavian village Magharosk’ari in 1913, and the other by M. Ogaidze in the province of Tianeti.
43. **T’rpiali** (“Love”). Source: PKh 200; variant Ko 216-7. Recited in 1936 in the Pshavian village Shuapkho by Elisbar Elisbarashvili. It is probably the case that the “old ways” against which the

speaker in this poem rebels are those forbidding a man to marry his “sister-spouse.” Since he cannot remain with his beloved while alive, he hopes to be united with her in a quite literal sense in the grave (see the notes on *ts’ats’loba* in the Introduction, and poem #59) .

44. **Ra bevri mit’irebia** (“How long I have been weeping”). Sources: LP 97-98, Ko 219-220. Recited by Babale Mindodauri in Pshavi. The object of the intense young woman’s love appears to be a fugitive, who has fled the village after killing a man for what he (and she) believe to be a just reason. He has taken refuge in the woods. The woman does not where he is, and has presumably given the message expressed in the poem to one of his companions. In addition to giving her Christian name, Tamar, she mentions her *tik’uni* (translated here as “nickname”), an additional name used by family members and close friends (see Sh. Apridonidze “Das System der georgischen Personennamen” *Georgica* #7 [1984], pp. 21-26).
45. **Chari-rama** (“Chari-rama”). Source: Ko 249-250. Collected by Al. Mirakashvili in Guria (Sak. Mus. #1924). *Makhorka* is a Russian word for cheap, poor-quality tobacco.
46. **Gasatkhovari kali var** (“I am an unmarried woman”). Source: Ko 253. Recited by Duduna Geladze in the Gurian village Ozurgeti.
47. **Sapeikro: jarav, jarav, bzio** (Spinning song: “Spinning wheel, bzio”). Source: Ko 194. Recited by L. Okrop’iridze in the Kartlian village Disevi. Georgian spinning songs, such as the two given here, typically contain nonsense syllables (*bzio*, *chari-rama*). The rhythm pattern of the first song is 6+6+8+6, the same as that of the Mingrelian poem “The sun is my mother” (#20). The phrase “shirt to be” is an attempt to render the force of the derived word *sa=p’erang=e* “material to be made into a shirt.”
48. **Sapeikro: araru darejanasa** (Spinning song: “Araru, Darejan”). Source: Ko 194. Recited by L. Okrop’iridze in the Kartlian village Disevi.
49. **Melekhishe si reki** (“There you are on the other side”). Source: LP 142 #593. Recited by Agr. Tsomaia-Iosava in the Mingrelian village Tskhak’aia in 1965. The theme of lovers separated by a river has also been treated in a celebrated poem by Vazha-Pshavela [1860-1911] entitled *Gamoghmit me var, gaghma shen* (“I am on this side, you’re on that side”). The first stanza reads:
- I am on this side, you’re on that side,  
A river runs between us;  
We have no bridge over the water,  
Impatient thoughts are killing us.  
I want to kiss you, and you to kiss me,  
I see you smiling over there;  
But there’s no way I can cross over  
This damned river.*
50. **Ana, bana, gana, dona** (“Ana, bana, gana, dona”). Source: LP 120 #420. Recorded by Giorgi Natadze, ca. 1940 (site not noted). “Ana, bana, gana,” and so on, are the names of the letters in the Georgian alphabet. Many poems of this type, termed *anbant-keba* (“praise of the alphabet”), have been used throughout Georgia to help children learn their letters [DGF I, 41].
51. **Net’avi ratme maktsia** (“May I turn into something”). Source: Ko 241; notes pp. 397-9. Recited by M. L. Bidzinashvili in the Kartlian village K’arbi. Variant in OL 38 #20 .
52. **Tvali sheni** (“Your eyes”). Source: Ko 253-4. Recited by Duduna Geladze in the Gurian village Ozurgeti. The three villages used to estimate the worth of the beloved’s features — Chonchkhati, Lesa and Ozurgeti — are located in the province of Guria .

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- 53-58. Round dance songs.** The round dance (Georgian *perqhisa* or *perkhuli*) is an integral element in traditional religious celebrations. In Charachidzé's analysis [SR 703ff], one of the fundamental oppositions in traditional Georgian cosmology is that between continuity and discontinuity. Human society, woven together by kinship relations, is thought of as coherent, cut from whole cloth, and as such is opposed to the world of nature, which is filled with discrete entities not linked by any comparable system. This distinction between society and nature is reflected in the symbols associated with them in Georgian culture. The *perkhuli*, the most solemn of Georgian dances, performed by an unbroken ring of dancers linked arm to arm, can be seen as a symbolic representation of the continuity underlying Georgian pagan society [SR 710-2].
- 53. Tvalzhuzhuna kalo** ("Bright-eyed woman"). Source: LP 366-368. Recited by Eprosine Bak'uradze and Tek'le Giorgashvili in the Upper Racha village Glola in 1960. Variants in LP 354-370, Ko 65-66. Variants of this poem, also known as *Maghliḡan gadmōdgariq'o* ("She had come down from above"), have been recorded in almost every Georgian province. In the lowland regions it is performed as a choral song, or by an individual singer accompanied by the *panduri*. The version given here is believed to represent its most ancient form: a round dance performed by women. According to informants from Upper Racha, the dance was performed in February, at the conclusion of the festival P'iriurts'q'oba. Throughout the day the villagers abstained from all food and drink. In the evening, after breaking their fast, the women dressed up like men and the men like women. They played games, had a snowball fight, and then the women went about the village dancing and singing the *Tvalzhuzhuna kalo*. In performing the song, Eprosine Bak'uradze led off with the first four to six syllables of each line, and was joined by Tek'le Giorgashvili. I have tried to convey something of this manner of singing in the English translation.
- 54. Ia mtazeda** ("Violet on the mountain"). Source: LP 146-147. Recited by M. Murjik'neli in the Javakhetian village Baraleti in 1930. Variants in Ko 58, LP 341-349. Musical settings: GFS (two versions in 3/8 meter: one monophonic, the other — "a women's round dance song" — for solo with three-voice choir); MFS #44 (monophonic, in 8/8 [2+3+3] meter). In the exogamous and virilocal societies of the South Caucasus, a young woman traditionally left her village in order to marry. At the same time, outsiders were regarded with a measure of suspicion, and consent to marriage was only obtained from the woman's parents after lengthy negotiations and the exchanges of gifts. One way out of this predicament was marriage by abduction, and in fact this was once a common occurrence in the Caucasus. In most cases, the "abduction" was agreed to in advance by both families. Still, the form, if not the spirit, of the practice had to be observed, and a squad of the groom's friends (*maq'rebi*) were dispatched to the bride's village to escort her to the church. Along the way, the *maq'rebi* shouted and fired their rifles into the air, a vestige of their original function. In the event of an actual hostile abduction, the male relatives of the captured bride were expected to take up arms and fight to get her back. The killing of the newly-married young man by his father-in-law in the poem harks back to this practice. But the bride, who no longer wants to be treated as her father's chattel, protests her predicament. The opening of the poem, I believe, tells the same story in symbolic language. Evidence from other texts shows that the violet has female connotations, and the rose is its masculine counterpart (see the notes to poem #17 above). The parents sow a violet (the bride, their offspring), but a rose (the groom) appears. The male deer represents the bride's father; she implores him not to trample her beloved, the rose. The opening and middle sections of the poem are bridged in a way that shows so well the special genius of folk literature. In killing a buck, the bridegroom is symbolically killing the father-in-law. To the anonymous creators of this poem, he is as much a party as the father-in-law is to the hostility that once accompanied the transfer of a woman from one clan to another. Charachidzé has pointed out another factor that would exacerbate the relation between bridegroom and father-in-law [PC 203]. Seen against the background of Georgian mythology, the hunter — in particular, the hunter who pursues his vocation to excess — stands in opposition to the principles of the settled agrarian life of the village, to wife, home, and hearth. In his words "l'idéologie géorgienne conçoit le chasseur excessif comme un *anti-gendre* [emphasis mine — KT] ... La libre activité du prédateur absolu ... implique la destruction du foyer et du mariage, la vanité de tous les travaux quotidiens, la négation du groupe social tel qu'il est, dans sa structure et

ses enterprises” [PC 203, 206]. Finally, in her discussion of “Violet on the mountain” and its variants, Virsaladze offers the interpretation that — in the original form of the myth at least — the father-in-law did not intentionally shoot the bridegroom. The guilty party is the goddess-protector of wild beasts, who caused the father-in-law’s arrow to go astray and kill the young man, in revenge for the buck the latter had just slain. In some variants the bereft bride washes the hunter’s body with deer’s milk (*egeb gavretskho irmis rdzitao*), which is believed to be a means of counteracting Dali’s power [GOM 174-180].

55. **Perqhisa** (“Round dance”). Source: PKh 62-63. Recited in 1925 by D. Gianashvili, in the Pshavian village T’ushurebi. Variant in Ko 259-260. This poem and its accompanying dance are associated with *Lasharis jvari* “Lashari’s Cross.” The name Lashari comes from the epithet for Tamar’s son and successor Giorgi IV Lasha (1194-1223). In the religious system of the Georgian mountaineers Lashari is the male counterpart of the deity which bears Tamar’s name (for an extensive discussion of this topic see SR §8). Lashari’s shrine in the Pshav community of Qhmelgora is regarded as especially powerful by the Georgian mountaineers. Unlike the other shrines, which pertain to individual family groups, Lashari’s Cross presides over all of the twelve Pshavian clans. In Charachidzé’s words “the sanctuary of Lashari, paired with that of Tamar nearby, is the political and religious center of the entire Pshav territory” [SR 639]. Its major festival, called *Lasharoba*, not only draws worshippers from all of the provinces of northeast Georgia, but even the nominally-Muslim Kist’is will set aside their perpetual feuds with the Georgians in order to ask the protection of this powerful deity [DGF I, 229]. The opening line attributes what follows to the mouth of “Lashari’s Cross.” It may well be that this text originated in the words of a *kadagi* (oracle), who saw a manifestation of Lashari in a vision. (Readers interested in Georgian oracular practice, reminiscent of shamanism in some respects, will find a wealth of information in SR §2). There follows a recounting of the tree-felling incident already discussed in the notes to poem #18 (“Speak, o fortress ruins”). This version places particular emphasis on the vengeance exacted by the deity on a certain Aptsiauri, who is said to have given away the secret of how to destroy the tree. Lashari “consumed” the descendants of Aptsiauri, and the clan died out. (Some versions omit this section, and begin with the lines “We gathered in God’s court”). In the second section of the poem, *Dambadebuli*, “the Creator,” speaks. This personage is credited with the creation of the universe — land, seas, and sky — and also is the progenitor of the deities known as the “offspring of God.” Among them we have “three score and three St. Georges,” that is, sixty-three shrines of that name with their guardian spirits. (Other mythological texts give the number as “three hundred three score and three,” so that each day of the year a St. George is commemorated somewhere in Georgia). Tamar is also numbered among the divine offspring. Some of the exploits recounted in poem #22 (“I was Tamar the Queen”) are echoed here: placing boundary-markers in the sea, bringing the dry land under her rule. There is a shrine dedicated to her (Tamar-Ghele) not far from Lashari’s Cross. In the final section Lashari’s horse and army are mentioned. The term *q’ma* “vassal, serf, servant” here denotes the community — specifically, its menfolk — who are said to be the “vassals” or “subjects” of their patron deity. Pshavi itself is referred to as Lashari’s *saq’mo*, “fief.” Like a good feudal lord, Lashari will come to the aid of a vassal who remains faithful to him .
56. **Betgil** (“Betgil”). Source: MP 95-97. Narrated by Tengiz Dadishkeliani in 1923 in the Upper Svan village Becho. Transcribed by A. Shanidze. Variants in SbMat XXXI:4, pp 40-43; SvP 282-285, and MP 209-227. The ballad of the Svan hunter variously known as Betkil, Betken, or Metki is in fact a mythological poem, and it is sung while dancing the solemn round dance known as the *samti ch’ishkhaash* [GOM 113-14]. The text presents a number of problems, not only for the general reader but for experts on Georgian folklore as well. Fortunately, in the first volume of his collection of Georgian folk poetry Chikovani has published seven variants of the Betgil poem, and comparison among them does much to clarify many obscure passages. I will walk the reader through the text, and provide as succinctly as possible the information necessary to render the poem comprehensible. Betgil (or Betkan) is one of several fabled Svan hunters who met an unhappy end in pursuit of his livelihood (for a selection of poems on this theme, see MP 195-243). We have already encountered Mepsay, who was killed by his own bullet after he refused to share the bed of the hunter-deity Dali

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(poem #3). Another hunter, Chorla, was punished for killing too many game animals [SvP 288-296]. The cause of Betgil's demise will be discussed presently.

SCENE I. The villagers of Mulakh and Muzhal, two neighboring communities of Upper Svaneti, have assembled to dance a round dance, the *murgwæl* or *ch'ishkhæsh*. This dance is an important component of certain Svanetian festivals. The roe deer (in other versions, a chamois or an ibex) is said to be white, and it runs through Betgil's legs into the circle. The disruption of the round dance by a wild animal is a powerful symbol: The deer, a representative of the world of nature, has intruded on the realm of human society, symbolized by the circle of dancers. (All versions specify that the beast ran between Betgil's legs. This has led at least some to the implication that he was castrated by the animal's horns [Howard Aronson, private communication] — a not implausible reading given the sexual nature of Betgil's "offense" against Dali.)

SCENE II. In pursuit of the deer, Betgil heads toward the top of a mountain, specified in one version as Mt. Totan, a 3000-meter mountain about 10 km south of Mulakh. Although Betgil can see the tracks of the animal before him, when he turns around there are no tracks visible behind him. This is clearly no ordinary deer. In one version it is said to be a black demon, which turns into a white roe deer after Betgil takes off after it; others imply that it is Dali herself. According to some variants the path behind Betgil is "becoming ruined" (*khedomeni*): there is no way back.

SCENE III. Betgil is confronted by the goddess Dali, who is frequently portrayed as the secret lover of successful hunters. She asks him for a trinket she had given him as a token of their love after an earlier tryst. He has left the string of beads under his pillow, in the bed he shares with his wife, of whom Dali is jealous. (The appearance of this particular prop is further evidence that Dali and the eastern Georgian deity Samdzimari ["the bead-wearing one"] have a common origin. See the notes to poem #30). She decides that Betgil has been unfaithful to her and abandons him on the cliff, hanging by one foot and one hand. Other versions lay the blame on an affair between Betgil and his *telaghra* (son's or brother's wife) Tamar. In any event, Betgil has violated the taboo against contact with mortal women before going hunting [GOM 74].

SCENE IV. Betgil realizes he is doomed. For the sake of his soul in the afterlife, Betgil asks his mother to bake *kut* and *ch'ishdwar*, flat round loaves with cheese in the middle. These two types of bread have a particular association with the Svanetian rites for the commemoration of the dead. In one version, Betgil's wife is asked to dye her headdress red, the traditional funerary color.

SCENE V. Some versions, but not this one, describe the efforts of the villagers to rescue Betgil. In one particularly difficult version [SvP 282-285], the rock-tower on which he is trapped magically rises to keep him out of reach of the ladders brought by a rescue party (*chukwan k'ichkhærs migaemalakh, murq'wam zhibav brets'enila*). Finally, Betgil falls (*shq'edeni*) to his death. Three other variants, including the oldest one, state that Betgil jumps (*khosk'ida*) from the cliff. I will not venture into the treacherous domain of interpreting the Betgil poems, but I can refer the curious reader to two monographs that deal with *Betgil* and the other doomed-Svan-hunter poems in considerable detail: Virsaladze's GOM, and Charachidzé's PC (especially pp.131-172). According to the latter, traditional Georgian ideology opposed the life of the hunter or warrior — who prefers the wide-open spaces far from human habitations, and who kills at will — to that of the peasant, bound to home, hearth, and village (as mentioned in the notes to poem #54). The conflict is resolved in mythological language by literally inverting (hanging from a cliff) the hunter who overkills.

57. **Dghesam dgheoba visia?** ("Today is whose festival?"). Source: MP 114. Recorded by S. Mak'alatia in the Tushetian village Chigho in 1933. The song was accompanied by an elaborate two-tiered round dance known as the *kor-beghela*, "tower-granary," which was performed at the annual festival of Lashari [= Giorgi Lasha (see #55 above)] in Tusheti. Mak'alatia provided the following description of this fascinating dance: "The men formed a mighty ring, each man's arm around the shoulder of his neighbor. A second ring formed on top of the first, and this two-tiered circle moved toward the shrine (*khat'i*) while singing 'Today is whose festival? — St. George's festival ...' The people all participated in the *kor-beghela*, because, in their belief, those who did not join in would be jinxed by the shrine. The *kor-beghela* must proceed in a direct line toward the doors of the shrine without collapsing, no matter how long or difficult the path might be. Outside the shrine doors the *kor-beghela* rotates three times while calling: 'May Lashari's *jvari* have mercy on you,' and then

breaks up” [MT 213; cp. MP 267-68]. The dancing of the *kor-beghela* is also a means of foretelling the future: Should the “tower-granary” collapse, or the song be badly sung, it is an omen that humans and livestock will suffer misfortune [SR 650-1]. V. Bardavelidze included a photograph of men dancing the *kor-beghela* in her survey of the shrines of Tusheti [TCM Vol II, Pt 2, p. 135]. The photo dates from 1965, and shows four men in the top ring, supported on the shoulders of about eight to ten men in the lower ring. That evening, after the singing and dancing have concluded, the young people of the locality are expected to pair off with their “brother-spouse” or “sister-spouse,” and indulge in the pleasures of *ts’ats’loba*. They may do this in the vicinity of the shrine or even inside it. For the Georgian mountaineer, according to Vazha Pshavela, “*ts’ats’loba* is a sacred and religious activity. They say that *ts’ats’loba* is obligatory for the vassals of Lashari [i.e., the Pshavians (see the notes to #55 above)] ... That is why these amorous practices are permitted and indeed recommended within the interior of the sanctuary” [cited in SR 651-2]. The banner (*drosha*) mentioned in the third line is an important item found in most shrines in the mountain districts. It is carried at the head of the procession on feast days. According to Zurab K’ik’nadze (pers. comm.), the symbol of the cypress tree (*alva*) is to be interpreted in the light of the “Knight in the leopard’s skin,” in which the cypress is referred to as “the tree of Eden” [VT 77:4; also 51:1 and 522:1]. The reference to “the woman and man who sinned against it” then becomes obvious.

**58. Samaia** (“Samaia”). Sources: Ko 59; Go 23-4. Recorded in Kartli. This song accompanies a round dance that is danced by women only. It is believed to be very ancient: A fresco in the 900-year-old Cathedral of the Living Column in Mtskheta, which bears the name “Samaia,” depicts three women dancing in a ring. Unfortunately, the dancing of the Samaia has all but disappeared in lowland Georgia, though it is said to be still performed at weddings in the mountain provinces [Ko 355].

**59-61. Funerary poems.** The three poems presented here represent two closely related genres: poems intoned in the memory of the deceased (*khmit nat’irali*), and hay-mowing songs (*mtibluri*). The *khmit nat’irali* was often performed responsorially, with a local woman noted for her singing ability — sometimes a professional hired for this purpose — singing a phrase, after which the body of mourners replies with a refrain (see the collection of texts, with photos and musical transcriptions, in CD 91-158). The soloist will weave information about the deceased into the text of the *khmit nat’irali*, which may go on for some time. There are strong similarities between the musical and textual structure of the *khmit nat’irali* and that of the *mtibluri*. According to a singer from the province of Rach’a, the hay-mowing song “is like mourning or lamentation [*motkma-t’irilivit*], but more brisk” [WP 506]. Furthermore, in Khevsureti the villagers will participate in a commemorative banquet for the recently deceased before commencing the hay harvest in late July [DGF I, 184]. This curious conjunction of hay-mowing and the dead is discussed at some length by Charachidzé in SR. According to his analysis, traditional Georgian religion was structured by a matrix of binary oppositions, which extended to almost all aspects of the human, animal, and vegetable domains. Women, vodka, and hay, for example, are aligned with the underworld; and men, beer, and meat are linked with the gods. The chanting of funerary songs while mowing hay is one reflection of the underlying structure of ancient Georgian cosmology.

**59. Darishk’anit momk’wdari** (“Dead from poison”). Source: ShKh #522. Collected in Khevsureti by Tedo Razik’ashvili. This is a lamentation for a young woman who killed herself by drinking rat poison while in seclusion in the menstruation hut (*samrelo*). The mention of “Thursday night” in the third line makes it clear that the woman was a *ts’ats’ali* (young Khevsur women customarily spent Thursday and Saturday nights with their “brother-spouses”). The reason for her suicide is not stated, but it has been noted that when the time came to break with their *ts’ats’ali* in order to marry, many young women in Pshavi and Khevsureti preferred death. Charachidzé [SR 102] states that the suicides usually occurred in the menstruation hut, a place viewed with horror and disgust by men (the words “a woman as low as can be” may reflect this attitude); see also CD 52-3, FY 129-130.

**60. Zhamis naqhots kalebze** (“To the women slaughtered by the plague”). Source: RP #72. Recited by Ashekal Ch’inch’arauli in the Khevsur village Shat’ili. “Many years ago,” according to Chikovani

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and Shamanadze, “there was an outbreak of the plague in Khevsureti, and many died. Whole groups of infected people would go to the mausoleum (*ak’ldama*), located outside of the village. They sheltered themselves there and awaited the end.” The mausoleums are still to be seen near Shat’ili (FY 66-76).

61. **Net’avi mok’la marjek’ali** (“Woe betide the matchmaker”). Source: WP #701. Recited by Kh. Kist’auri in the province of Pshavi. According to the commentary accompanying the poem, a woman from the village Khoshara took her child with her out to the fields at harvest time. In mountainous districts such as Pshavi, where arable land is at a premium, every bit of earth that can feasibly be worked is under cultivation, even where the terrain is quite steep. Presumably for this reason the protagonist of the poem hitched the cradle containing her child to a bush (specified as a *brats’i*, a decorative bush with white flowers of the family *Spirea*). The earth began to tremble, not a rare occurrence in the Caucasus, and the cord binding the cradle to the bush snapped. The cradle rolled down into the ravine, killing the infant. As represented in the poem, the bereaved mother cannot bear to return to her husband’s village, and is wandering disconsolately in the ravine collecting the pieces of her child’s body. The version given here is a hay-mowing song, based on the woman’s lament for her dead child.

- 62-70. **Love poems.** Much has been said in the Introduction to this anthology (Section 4) and in the Notes concerning the institution of *ts’ats’loba* in pre-Christian Georgian society: its sacred aspect, its nature as an “antimarrriage.” It seems appropriate to conclude the anthology with a selection of the delightful love poems inspired by *ts’ats’loba*. Most are short, a simple quatrain improvised by a love-smitten mountain lad or lass, either to be recited or sung to the accompaniment of the three-stringed *panduri*. Some poems impressed their hearers enough to be memorized and handed down, and a few dozen have made it into folklore chrestomathies, or ethnographic accounts such as SKh 174-82 or FY 133-40, 166-7. One well-known example was quoted by Vazha-Pshavela in a 1914 essay on the image of women in Pshav folklore (*Pšavlebi, etnograpiuli masala: dedak’aci*):

*You, my great hope,  
Sun, spreading forth in the morning  
Source of immortality,  
You flow through a pipe of gold,  
May I be sated at your side,  
Lying and sleeping beside you.  
May I be a field for your sickle,  
That I be mown by its blade —  
Or may I become your sworn sister  
To feel pangs in my heart for you,  
Or may I be a golden cup,  
That I be filled with wine for you,  
May I be tinted in red,  
Drink me — I will refresh you,  
May I be a silken shirt,  
That I might melt on your heart.*

Most of the following verses come from the anthology of Pshavian and Khevsur poetry edited by I. Khornauli.

62. **Bat’arik’a kalai var** (“I am a very young woman”). Source: PKh 195. Recited by G. Khornauli in the Pshavian village Grdzalch’ala in 1939.
63. **Net’avi kalo ninao** (“Nina woman”). Source: LP 69. Recited by D. Gurgenedze in the Kartlian village Ertats’minda in 1930. Variants in LP 214-215, PKh 207.

64. **Eter, shen silamazita** (“Eter, with your beauty”). Source: PKh 208. Recited by N. Khornauli in the Pshavian village Magraneti in 1939 .
65. **Aksha, aksha, mamalo** (“Aksha, aksha, rooster, scam”). Source: PKh 208. Recited by N. Khornauli in Magraneti in 1939 .
66. **Zghvashi shatsurda k’urdgheli** (“A rabbit swam into the sea”). Source: PKh 209. Recited by El. Elisbarashvili in the Pshavian village Shuapkho in 1946. Variants in OL 45 #65 and 63 #167. According to the Kartlian variants in OL (collected ca. 1880), the poet is spun around “like a whetstone” (*kharat’ivita*).
67. **Net’ain mamk’la mtashia** (“May I die in the mountains”). Source: PKh 216. Recited by Ioseb Udzilauri in the Khevsur village Kvemo Kedi in 1946 .
68. **Tval k’i mich’erav shenzeda** (“I have an eye on you”). Source: PKh 216. Recited by N. Elisbarashvili in the Pshavian village Shuapkho in 1940. Variants in LP 49, 174 .
69. **Nadobis k’abas vapere** (“I likened it to my sister-spouse’s dress”). Source: PKh 206. Narrated by K’ok’o Udzilauri in 1938 in the Kakhetian village P’ank’isi. Variants in LP 129, 300. The central idea of the poem is conveyed by an omen, which Z. K’ik’nadze unravelled for me as follows: The shepherd is tending his flocks in the summer grazing lands. A butterfly appears, a messenger from the land of souls. The butterfly’s coloration reminds him of the dress worn by the woman with whom he had contracted a bond of *ts’ats’loba*, which can be read as an omen that she has died. The shepherd begs God that the omen not be true, and tells the butterfly to pass on some good news (his sheep are doing well) to his sister-spouse, wherever she is.
70. **Dghe tu ghame** (“Day or night”). Source: Go 144-6. Variants in ShKh 143-144, 518-520; FY 139-140; SR 97-8 (in French). I will just touch on two details in the poem that require amplification: First, the straw upon which the young couple are enjoying themselves is probably inside a stable. The Caucasian mountain tribes used to have the practice, found in many parts of the world, of secluding women from the rest of the family during times of blood flow: childbirth and menstruation [ONS 140]. In some areas (for example Khevsureti) the women retreated to a special hut (*samrelo*); in Pshavi the stable fulfilled this role. Given the extremely grave consequences that an illegitimate child would bring crashing down on their heads, the young *ts’ats’lebi* usually confined their love-making to this time of the month, when the risk of pregnancy was at a minimum. The poem also contains a reference to a bottle of vodka, which the woman brings with her to the tryst in the stable. This calls to mind a ritual observed in Svaneti at the end of the last century: The couple forming a bond of *lintural* (the Svanetian equivalent of *ts’ats’loba*) seal their new relationship by invoking God’s blessing and drinking cups of vodka, as a sign that this bond was sanctioned by heaven as well as the community.



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