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### FOLK VERSION OF "THE KNIGHT IN THE PANTHER'S SKIN"

According to scholars, the Georgian folklore, heroic, love and *philosophical poems*, "*The Story of Tariel*" spread in almost every region of Georgia, or "*The Story of Graceful Darejan and Tariel*" called as a folk version of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" are closely related to the crown of the world poetry, Shota Rustaveli's eternal creation.

Similarity between the folk tale-poem – "The Story of Twenty Brothers" and Shota Rustaveli's poem is a topic of our discussion.

Based on careful consideration, it can be assumed that their contents are very much alike. Namely, the motifs of love, friendship, heroism and bravery are characteristic to the above poems, and the idea of friendship between the nations is deeply embedded in the two literary works. Similar to "The Knight in the Panther's Skin", the folk tale-poem depicts magical creatures such as demons (in Shota Rustaveli's poem) and old women (in the folk tale). The principal characters struggle with tigers, lions and giants. Both literary works describe the victory of good over evil, and both are similar in terms of poetics.

Thus, Shota Rustaveli's poetic creation and its folk version feature similarities. The very folk version may, not unlikely, have been spread before the creation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin", serving as a basis for Rustaveli's powerful poem; or, on the contrary, the latter could precede its folk version.