

Philology

Unpublished Writings of Shio Aragvispireli

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(Presented by Academy Member Elizbar Javelidze)

Abstract. This paper examines the unpublished and archival writings of Shio Aragvispireli in order to reassess his literary legacy and creative methodology. Aragvispireli belongs to those rare authors whose works were regularly published during his lifetime under his direct supervision. Although the publication of his writings continued after his death, some of the completed texts remained unpublished. These materials have survived as “draft autograph manuscripts” and are currently preserved at the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature and Ilia Chavchavadze House-Museum in Kvareli. Through close textual and contextual analysis, this study demonstrates that these archival materials provide valuable insight into Aragvispireli’s engagement with the historical, political, and cultural realities in Georgia during the first half of the twentieth century. It is widely acknowledged that the literary legacy of this distinguished author is characterized by a certain restraint. Not only Aragvispireli’s unpublished works and thematically diverse completed writings are of considerable interest, but his unfinished pieces, drafts, outlines, and especially his notebook entries are of special noteworthy. Together, these materials illuminate his creative process and intellectual development. By introducing these archival materials into scholarly discourse, the study contributes to more comprehensive understanding of Aragvispireli’s literary legacy. © 2026 *Bull. Natl. Acad. Sci. Georg.*

Keywords: Shio Aragvispireli, unpublished writings, archive materials

Introduction

Shio Aragvispireli is one of the few writers whose works were regularly published during his lifetime under his direct supervision. As evidenced by the bibliography of his writings kept at the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature, Aragvispireli maintained active collaboration with leading Georgian journals and newspapers such as *Iveria*, *Tsnobis Purtseli*, *Lomisi*, *Poeziis Dghe*, *Sakhalkho Gazeti*, *Glekhi*, *Faskunji*, and *Moambe*.

The recollections of his college friend Aleksandre Mikaberidze provide valuable background information concerning Shio Aragvispireli’s collaboration with the newspaper *Iveria*. Mikaberidze recalls that Aragvispireli regularly submitted his works to the editorial office, while Tedo Sakhokia, based in Tbilisi, supervised these submissions and maintained communication with the editorial board, and sent Aragvispireli written updates as required.

Regarding a letter addressed to Shio Aragvispireli by Grigol Kipshidze, Aleksandre Mikaberidze notes that the correspondence clearly reflects Ilia Chavchavadze's attitude toward the young writer. The content of the letter indicates that Chavchavadze held high expectations for Aragvispireli's literary work (Mikaberidze, 1982).

Shio Aragvispireli's works were also published as standalone volumes during his lifetime. A collection of his writings first appeared in print between 1900 and 1914, attracting significant reader interest. The positive reception prompted the author to reissue the collection in 1919.

In 1901, Kita Abashidze commented on the publication of the first volume of Aragvispireli's five-volume collected works, observing that while the writer's skeptical nature might not have appreciated this achievement, it nevertheless represented both a worthy recognition of the young writer and a reflection of society's intellectual growth (Abashidze, 1970).

Although the publication of his writings continued posthumously, some completed texts remained unpublished. These works have survived as "draft autograph manuscripts" and are currently preserved at the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature and Ilia Chavchavadze House-Museum in Kvareli. The present study examines the writer's archive preserved at the Ilia Chavchavadze House-Museum in Kvareli providing insights into both his literary output and creative process.

In her memoirs, the writer's daughter, Natela Dedabrishvili, recounts with sorrow the fate of Shio Aragvispireli's unpublished writings. She recalled the 1937 visit of the University rector Levan Agniashvili, who took the autograph manuscripts of the writer's unpublished stories from the Aragvispireli family with the intention of preparing them for publication. Regrettably, later that same year Agniashvili was arrested and the manuscripts were lost. Nevertheless, Natela Dedabrishvili maintained hope that the manuscripts might eventually be recovered (Dedabrishvili, 1993).

Based on their content, it is quite possible that the unpublished writings of Shio Aragvispireli preserved at the Ilia Chavchavadze House-Museum in Kvareli, are the very manuscripts long believed to have been lost. These are the manuscripts that Platon Keshelava brought to the Museum and from which he gathered Aragvispireli's collection. According to former museum employee Liana Avazashvili, the writer's autographs were acquired by Platon Keshelava from the Writers' Union, where he rescued them from destruction.

Among the unpublished works of Shio Aragvispireli preserved at the Ilia Chavchavadze House-Museum in Kvareli, novellas depicting contemporary reality are of particular interest, as they directly reveal the writer's attitude toward the historical and political events that shaped Georgian life in the first half of the twentieth century. The literary legacy of this widely recognized author is known for a certain reticence in this regard.

In the novella *To the Sun of My Homeland*, dated 1919, the writer perceives and celebrates the sun of his native country as a national symbol (Aragvispireli, N448/14). Shio Aragvispireli's perception of the sun as a national symbol was shaped by the historical events that transformed Georgian life in 1918.

Reflecting on Shio Aragvispireli's character described as "always gloomy, unsmiling, reserved, modest or timid," – Otar Chkheidze wrote: "Shio Aragvispireli loved the sun; he was fond of the powerful manifestations of nature... The sun was transformed into a deity of great exaltation for him. If faith is the homeland, it needs its own shrine and the sun became his place of worship" (Chkheidze, 1967).

The writer's contemporary concerns are reflected in the unpublished novella *Post-Easter Etude* preserved in his archive as an autograph draft. Though undated, the work's content clearly evokes the historical events that occurred in Georgia in 1921.

The protagonist acutely feels his incompatibility with the city, particularly during festive days, observing that national customs and celebrations have been appropriated by those who have taken refuge among them, while the creators of these traditions have been rendered nameless and without identity (Aragvispireli, N 259/16).

The previously unknown novella *Various Voices* (Aragvispireli, N 259/15a) addresses a similar issue. Its protagonist laments that the joy once awakened in him by Easter, the greatest of Christian holidays, has faded and vanished altogether. The exaltation inspired by the Resurrection is drowned out by the strange clanking of shackles, the harsh shout “close the window” and the flashing gleam of a bayonet before his eyes.

Shio Aragvispireli’s work, with its rich use of fantastic and folkloric elements, duly attracted the attention of Georgian literary criticism in its time. The writer’s examples of the literary fairy tale are likewise noteworthy as compellingly reflect the contemporary reality in which he wrote.

The literary fairy tale as an emerging genre developed in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century. In Georgia, the literary fairy tale began to develop in a particularly distinctive manner from the second half of the nineteenth century. As researcher Nestan Kutivadze observes, one of the earliest creators of the Georgian literary fairy tale was Akaki Tsereteli who published fairy tales both as complete works and as metatextual elements within other writings.

“The fairy tale in literature is a genre derived from folklore and naturally carries many features of the folk tale” (Bregadze, 1982). Shio Aragvispireli’s unpublished literary fairy tales *The Complaint*, *The Mad Queen*, *The Old Man and the Saltstone* and *The Wise Vizier* are distinguished by their abundance of folkloric elements.

Through the artistic features characteristic of the fairy tale genre, these works vividly portray the writer’s contemporary era, which can plausibly be

attributed to the literary influence of Akaki Tsereteli.

In 1921, Shio Aragvispireli wrote in his notebook: “If I did not tell fables today, if it were impossible to tell stories through fables today, what would become of tormented, heartbroken people? In fables, one finds a respite from the present, and the soul rests, even if only a little” (Aragvispireli, N 259/27x). For Aragvispireli, fable storytelling served as a means of temporarily escaping the national tragedy that had befallen Georgia in the first half of the twentieth century.

Shio Dedabrishvili adopted the pseudonym “Aragvispireli” at the start of his literary career. As Levan Tchrelashvili notes, several of his works appeared under other, less familiar pseudonyms: “Zeganeli,” “Kodmaneli,” and three stars (***)

This naturally raises questions about what prompted Aragvispireli, the father of the Georgian classical novella, to use multiple pseudonyms.

Examination of both manuscript and published works has not only shed light on this question but also clarified several textological issues.

The concealment of the author’s identity appears to have been motivated by various factors. In some cases, Aragvispireli was prohibited from publishing more than one work simultaneously in the same publishing house, prompting him to adopt different pseudonyms. In other instances, the choice seems to have been driven by the strongly critical and revealing nature of the work. A clear example is the unpublished novella *Danduriada*, preserved as a draft autograph manuscript in the writer’s archive, which critiques the deficiencies of urban life.

In conclusion, Shio Aragvispireli’s unpublished writings and thematically diverse completed works preserved at the Ilia Chavchavadze House-Museum in Kvareli stand out for their particular scholarly attention. Equally significant are his unfinished texts, sketches, outlines, and compelling notebook entries.

The publication of these materials and their introduction into scholarly discourse will enable renewed study and a more precise understanding of Shio Aragvispireli's literary legacy, while also shedding light on the distinctive features of his creative process.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported as part of the research project "Academic Edition of the Complete Collection of Shio Aragvispireli's Novellas" (FR 24-22723), funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia.

ფილოლოგია

შიო არაგვისპირელის გამოუქვეყნებელი ნაწერები

ნ. კოჭლოშვილი*, ე. ზარდიაშვილი**, მ. კობიაშვილი*

* იაკობ გოგებაშვილის სახელობის თელავის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, განათლებისა და ჰუმანიტარულ მეცნიერებათა დეპარტამენტი, საქართველო

** შოთა რუსთაველის სახ. ქართული ლიტერატურის ინსტიტუტი, ტექსტოლოგიის განყოფილება, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ე. ჯაველიძის მიერ)

შიო არაგვისპირელი იმ იშვიათ კალმოსნებს განეკუთვნება, რომელთა შემოქმედების ნიმუშები მწერლის სიცოცხლეში ავტორის უშუალო მეთვალყურეობით სისტემატურად ქვეყნდებოდა. მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ შიო არაგვისპირელის ნაწარმოებების პუბლიკაცია მწერლის გარდაცვალების შემდეგაც გრძელდებოდა, გამოუქვეყნებელი დარჩა არაერთი დასრულებული ნაწარმოები, რომლებიც შავი ავტოგრაფების სახითაა დაცული გიორგი ლეონიძის სახელობის ქართული ლიტერატურის სახელმწიფო მუზეუმსა და ყვარლის ილია ჭავჭავაძის სახლ-მუზეუმში. ილია ჭავჭავაძის სახლ-მუზეუმში დაცული შიო არაგვისპირელის არქივი მრავალმხრივ იპყრობს ყურადღებას. განსაკუთრებულ ინტერესს იწვევს მწერლის თანადროული ყოფის ამსახველი ნაწარმოებები, რომლებიც უშუალოდ ავლენს მის დამოკიდებულებას მეოცე საუკუნის პირველი ნახევრის ქართველთა ცხოვრებაში მომხდარი ისტორიულ-პოლიტიკური მოვლენების მიმართ. საყოველთაოდ ცნობილია, რომ ფართო მკითხველი საზოგადოებისთვის კარგად ნაცნობი მწერლის ლიტერატურული მემკვიდრეობა ამ მხრივ სიტყვაძვირებით გამოირჩევა. ვფიქრობთ, აღნიშნული მასალების გამოქვეყნება და სამეცნიერო მიმოქცევაში შეტანა ხელს შეუწყობს როგორც შიო არაგვისპირელის ლიტერატურული მემკვიდრეობის ახლებურად შესწავლასა და სწორად გააზრებას, ისე მწერლის შემოქმედებითი პროცესისათვის დამახასიათებელი არაერთი ნიშანდობლიობის გამოვლენას.

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Received December, 2025