

History of Literature

The Trace of Rustaveli's *The Man in the Panther's Skin* in Shakespeare's Theatre (Early 17th century)

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ABSTRACT. The paper deals with the striking coincidence of the plots of Shota Rustaveli's *The Man in the Panther's Skin* and "A King and No King" by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. If the view presented in the paper is accepted, the knowledge of Rustaveli's poem in Europe shifts by two centuries back (early 17th century) from the generally current view (early 19th century). On the other hand, Rustaveli's *The Man in the Panther's Skin* will be considered the source of the plot of F. Beaumont and J. Fletcher's place "A King and No King", believed to be unknown in English literary criticism to the present day. © 2007 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: F. Beaumont and J. Fletcher, Shota Rustaveli, *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, *A King and No King*.

In 1611 a license was granted in England to the Theatre Royal for the play "A King and No King" by Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. Meeting with great success, the play remained on the English stage for one hundred years – till the 1720s. Contemporaries placed the dramaturgy of Beaumont and Fletcher, including "A King and No King", on a par with Shakespeare's works.

In English literary criticism this play is the subject of versatile study. One principal aspect of this research is the question of ascertaining, if not the direct source of the work, at least of the main plot of its immediate source. The point is that, according to the play, the action in it takes place in Iberia. However, the story told in it is not related either to the authors' contemporary Iberia or to its historical counterpart. On the other hand, the introduction of the Iberian theme into European, and English proper, literature of the period was by no means unexpected. On the contrary, Iberia began to appear in English literature precisely from this period, i.e. the early 17th century; soon Georgia – known at the time under the name of Iberia – became an attractive corner of oriental exotic character. It is generally assumed that the authors of "A King and No King" had knowledge of some Greek and Roman historical sources on Iberia and Armenia, using them in a couple of cases in giving the names

to the characters of the work, as well as in reference to the fact of military confrontation of these two countries[1-3]. At the same time, it became clear that the direct source of the plot of Beaumont and Fletcher's play on the Iberian theme remains unknown, hence the belief that it was *probably* devised entirely by the authors[1,4]. At the same time, we are dealing with European literary style of the close of the 16th century: an author of the period looks for a plot for his literary piece, reworks it by transferring the story to another country, altering the names of the characters, changes the line of development of the plot, alters the end, and so on. However, the plot of his work has some source: nearly always it proceeds from some story. This is often the case with Shakespeare's plays as well. In the case of "A King and No King", action specifically takes place in Iberia, with no indication of the source of the plot, which is generally unexpected in the works of Beaumont and Fletcher. It is generally believed that the stories used by them in their plays were never the fruit of their fancy, i. e. thought up by them [4].

Why did Beaumont and Fletcher act out the story of their play in Iberia? What has the extraordinary love of the prince and princess, told in the play "A King and No King", to do with Georgia? My observations have led me to the belief that the main plot of Beaumont and Fletcher's play was suggested by *The Man in the*

Panther's Skin (MPS) – the greatest monument of Georgian literary tradition of the end of the 12th century, authored by the Georgian writer Shota Rustaveli. The intrigue of the plot of “A King and No King” – the love plot of the prince (king) and the princess – receives an impulse from the love story of Tariel and Nestan. The authors seem to have adapted the basic outline stemming from the Indian subject of the MPS altering it according to their own literary principles. Now, according to Rustavelological literature, the translation of the first stanza of Rustaveli's poem and the narration of the content of the poem by the Metropolitan of Kiev Evgeni Bolkhovitinov in his book on Georgia (*Historical Description of Georgia in Her Political, Church and Educational State, St. Petersburg, 1802*) is considered to have been the earliest fact of the penetration of the MPS into the European world[5]. Hence, the view presented by me in the present paper shifts the entry of the MPS into Europe two centuries backward. Bearing in mind the responsibility devolving on me, I wish to consider the present study as a statement of the problem and to continue research towards its substantiation.

The following are my arguments in support of the relationship of the plot of Beaumont and Fletcher's play “A King and No King” and the basic plot of the MPS.

1. The basic facts of the romantic intrigue of the pair of lovers in the play by Beaumont and Fletcher, the temporal and spatial coordinates or the framework coincide with the Indian story of the MPS: The Iberian Prince (young king) Arbaces of the play is actually not the son of the king and the queen – he was adopted in order for the kingdom to have an heir. A real daughter, called Panthea, was later born to the king and the queen. The son or prince adopted as heir to the Iberian Kingdom, and the real princess fall madly in love. Beaumont and Fletcher turn this plot into the basis or framework of their tragicomedy. They build the subject of the play on it, using their own literary principles – rapid change of situations, swift difusing of situations and new dramatism; contrasts and surprises, and happy end. These three basic subject facts of Beaumont and Fletcher's play – the temporal and spacial coordinates – coincide exactly with the three basic subject facts of the dramatic story of the Indian royal court of the MPS: adoption of the newborn Tariel as heir to the throne; birth later of a daughter, Nestan, at the royal court; the madly falling in love of the heir and the princess.

2. The overlapping of the basic subject facts of the plot of “A King and No King” with the temporal and spatial coordinates of the Indian story of the MPS is followed by further likeness – already in the subject of the play. In the English play the same amount of time passes between the adoption of the prince Arbaces at the Iberian court and the birth of the princess as between the adoption at the Indian royal court of the prince Tariel and the birth of Nestan. Significantly enough, the

length of this time is pointed out in both works, and in the same way: the age of the adopted prince is stated, as well as the time when the queen became pregnant. Arbaces is told of his childhood:

“... You grew up,
As the king's son, till you were six years old;
Then did the King die, and did leave to me
Protection of the realm; and, contrary
To his own expectation, left this queen
Truly with child, indeed, of the fair princess...”[6, 83].

The same happened in the Indian royal court of the MPS: Tariel aged five was still the only son of King Parsadan of India. Tariel relates:

“When I was five years old I was like an opened rosebud;...

P'harsadan cared not that he had no son” (310 - M. Wardrop's translation [7]).

After a short while the queen of India became pregnant. Tariel continues:

“I was five years old when the queen became with child” (312)

3. The Iberian prince and princess were separated already in childhood and, similarly to Tariel and Nestan in the India of the MPS, saw each other only after a long time of separation, and again, like Tariel and Nestan in the India of the MPS, the dramatic knot of the Iberian story was tied in the English play: Tariel fell head over heels in love with Nestan. The same happens in the play of Beaumont and Fletcher. The Iberian king was disconsolately charmed with the sight of the princess – a tragic knot was tied.

4. The likeness goes deeper. The quick and inordinate emotion of the sudden love is followed by the physical enfeeblement and mental confusion of the Iberian prince – described in detail by Beaumont and Fletcher. He seemed to be deprived of the faculty of speech. The princess implores him, “Do not stand as if you were dumb; say something” (p. 31). The closest adviser and commander says to him: Answer her something: “A tree would find a tongue to answer her” (p. 31). Arbaces' conduct, questions and demands became irrelevant to the situation. His attendants and friends ask, “What, is he mad?” (p. 32). Upon recovery, Arbaces himself says. “I pray thee, hear me, if thou canst. Am I not a strange weight?” “Why, my legs refuse to bear my body!” (p.39). His closest adviser begs him “Pray you, go rest yourself”(p.39). The same happens in the MPS. The quick emotion of love deprived Tariel of bodily strength and mind:

“I fell, I fainted, force was fled from mine arms
and shoulder. When I came back to life...

I lay in a fair bed in a great chamber” (336; 337).

Thus, not only do the principal temporal and spatial coordinates of the frame of the romantic intrigue of the English play coincide with the frame of the love intrigue of the Indian story of the MPS but the tying of the knot of both dramatic works takes place almost identically.

Hence the argumentation of the relation of Beaumont and Fletcher's “A King and No King” to the plot of

Rustaveli's *MPS* may be considered completed.

It is this central plot of the *MPS*, and the dramatic knot tied like this story that Beaumont and Fletcher turned into an absolutely independent tragicomedy of a different idea, problems and interest, and which is considered one of their classic examples in this genre[2;8;3]. A subject built on temporal and spatial coordinates similar to those of the Indian plot of the *MPS* turned into a typical Beaumont and Fletcher tragicomedy. I should note also that in this already independent subject of tragicomedy occasional facts of the literary subject of the *MPS* seem to occur. Further reminiscences from Rustaveli's Indian literary space seem to be obvious, making me persistently wonder whether they are all casual.

Thus, the statement of love of the young king and the princess comes from the latter. The king, gone to war for a long time, is repeatedly informed from home about the beauty of his sister and her favourable attitude to him. At their first meeting the princess declares to Arbaces her great loyalty and love for him, asking for a response, as it were. The initiative of the declaration of love between Nestan and Tariel also comes from Nestan. This is a regularity of Rustaveli's romance: the love of the other pair in his poem develops in the same way.

A woman's letter figures in the love between Arbaces and Panthea. Gobrias (who turns out to be the king's real father) – the adviser of Arbaces and temporary ruler of the country, who is entrusted with the protection of the princess – advises the lady to write a letter to Arbaces and personally hands the letter to the king. The woman's letter in the love of the Indian pair in the *MPS* – and here too, at the start of the love intrigue – is of essential significance.

According to Beaumont and Fletcher's play, it is Arbaces who introduces the young king of a neighbouring country – the would-be future husband of the princess – to the Iberian court; he starts preparations for the wedding, informing the palace about this. But he is immediately forced to remove this lover by sending him to prison. The situation – albeit specific – is analogous in the India of the *MPS*: Tariel is charged with according a royal reception to the prince of a neighbouring country, invited to be Nestan's bridegroom. He, too, is forced to rid himself of a rival by killing him.

When one familiar with the subject of Rustaveli's poem reads "A King and No King", some episodes of the fighting valour of the king in the play evoke reminiscences of Tariel's heroic deeds in the *MPS*, in particular, the return of Arbaces to Iberia after a brilliant victory over Armenia, bringing the defeated king with him, will doubtless recall the triumphant return of Tariel to India with the captured king of the Khatavians, following his rout of the latter.

A closest friend of Arbaces, and a commander, gazing at the king whose mind is dimmed with love and is enfeebled bodily, recalls this king's entry into an unequal war a few days earlier thus: "He, that had seen this brave fellow charge through a grove of pikes but t'other day,

and look upon him now, will ne'er believe his eyes again"(p.56). The reader familiar with the *MPS*, will, without fail, recall Tariel's unequal war against the Khatavian army: "When I came near they looked at me: 'He is a madman,' said they. I, strong-armed, made my way thither where the main body of the army stood; I pierced a man with my lance, his horse I overturned, they both departed from the sun (i.e.; life), the lance broke, my hand seized (the sword); I praise, O sword, him who whetted thee (431). "I swooped in like a falcon among a covey of grey partridges, I threw man upon man, I made a hill of men and horses, the man thrown down by me spins like a dragon-fly; I completely destroyed at one onslaught the two front squadrons" (432).

The finale of "A King and No King" – conformably to Beaumont and Fletcher's usual style – is happy, yet it has its specificity: two happy pairs leave the scene hand-in-hand – ready for the wedding: Arbaces, reared to be king of Iberia, and the real princess, and the King of Armenia Tigranes and his faithful bride Spakonia sent by Tigranes to the Iberian royal court to thwart his wedding the princess. Let me remind the reader who is little versed in Rustaveli's work that in the finale of the *MPS*, too, we have two weddings of happy pairs: the person reared to be king of India and the real princess, and that of the Arabian royal pair.

The experience of comparative literary studies shows that it is not only the principal plots of literary subjects that are migratory but individual subject episodes as well. They easily become migratory both by written and oral means – often without a definite address. Hence, some of the coincidences, attested in the foregoing, between the subject episodes of the *MPS* and "King and No King" may be accidental. But is all this taken together, accidental? In my view, it is more important to give a thought to the ideal impulses of tragism and comism of Beaumont and Fletcher's play. Did the Indian romantic story of the *MPS* provide impulses for the tragism and comism of the theme embodied in "A King and No King"?

The main axis of tragism in this play by Beaumont and Fletcher rests on the psychological burden of the sin of incest. Could the love of Tariel and Nestan serve as an impulse to the foreign reader to recall or pose this theme or problem? I think, it could. The love between Tariel, the adopted son of the king and queen, and their real offspring Nestan may have given an impulse to a foreign mind to invent the theme of incest: Tariel – like Arbaces of the English play – was being reared as prince from his childhood. Tariel and Nestan were being reared for seven years as siblings at the royal court; they ostensibly belonged to a single royal house. However, there indeed is an impulse in it for an outsider's eye to remember incest. And the sin of incest did cross the minds of Beaumont and Fletcher. But, noticing that it is not clearly defined in this subject plot, the authors "corrected" the frame of the Indian history of the *MPS* towards adding

elements of tragism in the psychological interpretation of this sin. They concealed to the prince and princess that they were not siblings and by demonstrating their not being siblings, they allowed their marriage.

The very title of Beaumont and Fletcher's play contains the idea of comism: "A King and No King". Did the Indian story of the *MPS* give any ground for putting this theme forth? I believe, it did. The point is that Tariel is not king of India. (Whether he was entitled to kingship is another matter). To be sure, he was adopted by the king and the queen but when a daughter was born to them, the latter revealing her high capacities, they returned the adopted son to his father. Furthermore, following the demise of his father, Tariel was appointed commander-in-chief of the country and he acquitted himself well in the new duty. Nevertheless, according to the poem, Tariel reveals his claim to the Indian throne. This dilemma is intensified further by the stand of Rustaveli himself: he repeatedly refers to Tariel as king of India. This is done not only by the characters of the poem but the author as well. Thus, "The King of the Indians merrily spoke somewhat with Asmat'h"(1338). "The King of the Indians, with uplifted hand, joyously shouted this" (1339). Herein lies the impulse for the comic theme, which may take the following shape: a King and no King. In order for the impulse stemming from calling the commander-in-chief of India a king should really turn into a theme of comism: a king and no king, Beaumont and Fletcher will give the subject of the play a different development: they indeed make the adopted Iberian prince king, have him fight a war under the king's title, then let it be known that he is not the true successor to the throne, making him utter these words as a finale: "I am proved No King"(p.87).

Finally, about the names of the characters of Beaumont and Fletcher's play. It is generally believed that the English authors of "A King and No King" borrow the personal names from the works of Greek and Roman chronographers and historians[2;3]. The principal of these historical sources are: Xenophon's *Cyropoedia* or the history of the structure of the state of Cyrus, Tacitus' *Annals*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and the descriptions of the campaigns of Alexander the Great. However, the play's characters bearing names stemming from these sources (Gobrias, Tigranes, Mardonius, Bessus ...) in no way resemble their prototypes, or their adventures and geographical area of action. At the same time, Beaumont and Fletcher clearly endeavour to bring the history acted out at the Iberian royal court in some way close to historical Iberia. From this point of view, the fact of a war Between Iberia and Armenia, which did take place in the 1st cent. A.D. and is described in Tacitus' *Annals*, is striking. However, the victory of the Iberians over the Armenians, as given in the play, does not resemble in any way the facts of historical sources – neither by the names of the kings of the belligerent sides nor by the stories of the hostilities. Yet the

desire of the English playwrights to get close to Iberia is obvious: the name of one of the nobles at the Iberian royal court is Bacurius or Bacurias. This name is also borrowed from historical sources, being obviously the name of an Iberian king or his descendant, a Roman commander at the confines of Palestine. It is referred to in Tyrranius Rufinus' *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Lib. I, cap X), as well as in the "Ecclesiastical History" of Gelasius of Caesarea. This Bacurius is credited with telling the story of the Christianization of the Iberians. The choice of the name of the Armenian king Tigranes by the English playwrights is also significant. Several Armenian kings of various epochs are referred to by this name in Greek and Roman historical sources. In this case Beaumont and Fletcher must have been more familiar with the Armenian Prince Tigranes mentioned in Xenophon's *Cyropoedia*.

Thus, two trends are noticeable in the choice of the names of the characters of "A King and No King": the names are borrowed from historical sources and – wherever possible – adapted to the realities of Iberia and Armenia. From this standpoint, the names of the principal pair in love – the prince and the princess – are important: Arbaces and Panthea. English researchers again find the latter name (Panthea) in Xenophon's *Cyropoedia*. She is the most devoted wife of one of Cyrus' comrades-in-arms, committing suicide over the body of her husband who dies a hero's death in battle (*Institutio Cyri*, VII, 3)[9]. Why should have Beaumont and Fletcher chosen the name of the spouse of the petty king of a region allied to the Persian King Cyrus, who lost his life in the war with the Egyptians, as the name of the happy princess of their play who was about to marry? I believe, this choice was due to the name *Panthea* itself. If – as I contend – the plot of "A King and No King" was suggested by the love of Nestan and Tariel of the Indian story of the *MPS*, then it cannot be surprising that *the panther* – symbolic name of Nestan, in whom Rustaveli sees an embodiment of panther, cladding the enamoured Tariel in a panther's skin to symbolize this, and calling the poem *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, be given to a character of the English play – inspired by Nestan's romantic story. The *vepkhvi* of Rustaveli's poem is associated with panther in an English reader's mind. *Panther* may be the name of that beautiful princess, deriving from the romantic story of Nestan, conceptualized in the image of a panther. Here I wish to remind the English reader of Tariel's words: "Since a beautiful panther is portrayed to me as her image, for this I love its skin, I keep it as a coat for myself"(639). Beaumont and Fletcher's choice of Panthea from Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* as a name for the princess explains their choice of Arbaces as the name of the enamoured Iberian king. Now, the heroically dying husband over whose corpse the Panthea of the *Cyropoedia* committed suicide, was called Abradatas. This name served as an impulse for choosing the name of the prince enamoured of Panthea in the English play. But, naturally enough, the playwrights don't wish to transfer the pair of

characters of the tragedy taking place at Cyrus' court to their own work of an absolutely different design and, in order to link it with Georgia they modify it according to the Iberian King *Artag's* name, attested in historical sources but in an absolutely different period. Researchers point to the resemblance of the name of the Iberian King Artag (1st cent. A.D.) with Arbaces of Beaumont and Fletcher, largely because the historical source in which this name is mentioned, viz. Eutropius Flavius' descriptions of the campaigns of Lucullus and Pompey, were already translated into English in the 16th century, the name of the Iberian King appearing in it as *Arthaces* [2].

The doubt that may arise in an English researcher of "A King and No King" in connection with the suggestion of a link between the name Panthea and panther and via this with the *MPS* may be connected with the originality of the title of Rustaveli's poem and in general the attachment of such essential importance to the simile of Nestan and the panther. In my view, the title of Rustaveli's poem – *Vepkhistqaosani* ("The Man in the Panther's Skin") – must have been given by the author. However, the main thing is that from the early 17th century, when Beaumont and Fletcher were writing their play, manuscripts of Rustaveli's poem were extant in Georgia, in which we find unequivocal indication to its title, *Vepkhistqaosani* ("The Man in the Panther's Skin"). On the other hand, the conceptualization of the panther as Nestan's image and symbol is one of the principal and essential axes of Rustaveli's imagery. This symbolism is not only directly indicated in Tariel's words quoted above but in a number of other passages of the poem: Rustaveli's comparison of the wrathful Nestan with a panther; the capture of a panther by Tariel to kiss it, and so on.

Georgian literary critics may question the doubtlessness of taking Rustaveli's *vepkhi* for 'panther' by the English playwrights. Why should Beaumont and Fletcher translate Rustaveli's *vepkhi* as 'panther' rather than 'tiger' (as established in Georgia, largely through Russian translations)? As is known, the *MPS* had not been translated into English by that time. Yes, in Beaumont and Fletcher's time the *MPS* had not been translated into English. But when it was translated – three centuries later – it was called "The Man in the Panther's Skin". Rustaveli's *vepkhi* was translated as 'panther' by all English translators of the *MPS*: of these three were English by birth: Marjory Wardrop, Katharine Vivian and Robert Stevenson. The latter even devoted a special commentary to this question [10]. Thus, it may be assumed that at the beginning of the 17th century English playwrights could have understood Rustaveli's *vepkhi* in the same way as English translators did three centuries later. Judging by facts, we may be positive in stating that Beaumont and Fletcher must have understood Rustaveli's *vepkhi* as denoting 'panther'. The point is that if we take the fact for granted that the English playwrights were aware of the *MPS*, it should also be assumed that they

had a Georgian translator, consultant or narrator of the story. Therefore, they must have had the same idea of Rustaveli's *vepkhi* as in old Georgia, to be more precise, in 16th-century Georgia. Now, old Georgian sources point out that *vepkhi* denoted 'leopard' or panther. This is the situation in the Georgian translations of the biblical books – in the texts of the Old Testament (e.g. *Isaiah 11.6*) as well as the New Testament (e.g. *The Revelation 13,2*). The same is the case with the Georgian translations of other monuments of ecclesiastical literature (e.g. of Basil the Great's *Hexaameron*). The same situation is attested in works translated from the Persian ("Visramiani", "Kilila and Damana"). The tiger of foreign languages was translated into Georgian as *jiki*. The interchange of the meaning of these names (*vepkhi* and *jiki*) should be presumed from the 19th century. To revert to the time of Beaumont and Fletcher. Some 17th century Georgian manuscripts of the *MPS* are illumined with miniatures. In all of them (e.g. H-599; S-5006) *vepkhi* (and Tariel's panther skin) is depicted as an animal with spots (and not stripes), pointing to a leopard or panther. Thus, including the early 17th century, Rustaveli's *vepkhi*, implies the predatory animal that was called panther or leopard in English.

My suggestion of a possible hint at panther in Beaumont and Fletcher's Panthea as a symbolic image of her prototype Nestan rests on one more circumstance. Of course, Beaumont and Fletcher almost never give a direct indication of the source of the plots of their plays, yet they do not eschew intimating it. For example, one play by John Fletcher, whose source of its subject is a novel by a Spanish writer "The Tragic Poem of the Spanish Woman Gerardo", is addressed by the authors to Spain, and its title is "A Spanish Priest". There are many more such examples. Furthermore, it is not alien for John Fletcher to name his characters by the semantic principle, or selection of personal names according to meaning. Thus, e.g. the characters of his play "Wit Without Money" bear such names as Lovegood, Heartweal, and many others. Thus, in my opinion, when Beaumont and Fletcher chose *Panthea*, a well-known name in Classical onomasties, as the name for the Iberian princess, they must have borne in mind the outward resemblance, or its near identicalness, with the English word 'panther', for the name is given to a princess whose prototype is her counterpart of the Iberian poem "The Man in the Panther's Skin", panther being a symbolic image of that princess.

Thus, the plot framework of the celebrated play by Beaumont and Fletcher, "A King and No King" is based on the love story of Nestan and Tariel of Rustaveli's *MPS*. It also appears that the story did not come to the attention of the English playwrights as some remote, migratory hearsay story. The authors seem to have been more or less acquainted with the *MPS*. But from where and how? The present level of study of the life and activities of Beaumont and Fletcher does not allow to make any significant suggestion.

To return again to the resemblance of the frame of the plot of “A King and No King” and its temporal and spatial coordinates with the *MPS*. The relations I have pointed out remain within the boundaries that existed in works of European literature of the period, in particular those of Beaumont and Fletcher, between the plot frame and its source. Hence, the assertion of the existence of the relation should not develop into discussion of liter-

ary influence. We are dealing with a typical phenomenon of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher: some story, the relation with which will become apparent with more or less intensity, gives impulse to the subject scheme or subject facts on which the plot is based. But in every case a new work is created, with a new subject, different ideal purpose, and reflecting different problems with a different genre.

ლიტერატურის ისტორია

რუსთველის ვეფხისტყაოსნის კვალი შექსპირის თეატრში (მე-17 საუკუნის დასაწყისი)

ე. ხინთიბიძე

აკადემიის წევრი, ივანე ჯავახიშვილის თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის ქართული ლიტერატურის ინსტიტუტი

ინგლისურ ლიტერატურათმცოდნეობაში უცნობადაა მიჩნეული ფაბულის წყარო შექსპირის მემკვიდრეების ფ. ბომონტისა და ჯ. ფლეტჩერის პიესისა „მეფე და არა მეფე“, რომლის მოქმედება იბერიაში ანუ საქართველოში მიმდინარეობს.

სტატიამში წარმოდგენილია ახალი თვალსაზრისი და არგუმენტირება იმისა, რომ „მეფე და არა მეფის“ ფაბულა ემყარება რუსთველის ვეფხისტყაოსანს. ეს თვალსაზრისი – რუსთველის ვეფხისტყაოსნის ვეროპულ სამყაროში შეღწევისა, დღეისათვის გამოვლენილი ფაქტებით დამკვიდრებულ თარიღს ორი საუკუნით უკან გადასწევს – მე-17 საუკუნის დასაწყისში. მეორე მხრივ, დადგინდება ინგლისურ ლიტერატურათმცოდნეობაში დღემდე ამოუცნობად მიჩნეული ფ. ბომონტისა და ჯ. ფლეტჩერის პიესის „მეფე და არა მეფის“ ფაბულის წყარო – რუსთველის ვეფხისტყაოსანი.

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