

Chapter 4

Beer

“It’s good beer -- Lomisi”

-- Slogan, Lomisi Beer (2001-7)

“Aluda -- Our Beer”

-- Slogan for Castel-Sakartvelo’s beer Aluda (2004-7)

“Kazbegi – Georgian beer”

-- Slogan for Kazbegi beers (2007)

“Natakhtari -- The Georgian beer of Tomorrow”

-- Slogan for Natakhtari Beer (2007)\

“Aluda is better than Luda”

-- Slogan for Castel-Sakartvelo’s beer Aluda (2005)

As we saw in chapter 2, Georgia is the land of wine. In fact, many Georgians believe, and it is not an outlandish claim, that viniculture may have originated on Georgian soil. The question I want to ask in this final chapter builds off the general association of ‘Georgia’ with ‘Wine’: If Georgia is known most of all for its wines, why, under post-socialism, are Georgian beer brand names more salient than wine brand names in public discourse and public consumption? Why, in general, has the marketing of Georgian beers, and not wines, become the central emblem of resurgent Georgian national industries after socialism? The second question addressed in this chapter builds instead

off the discussion of ‘socialist’ and ‘western’ brands in Chapter 3: How have Georgian marketers of beer responded to the influx of foreign brands, and especially to a stereotypical association of the very concept of ‘brand’ to western (capitalist) as opposed to Georgian (socialist) goods? The problem for marketing Georgian brands of beer is twofold. On the one hand, the Georgian ‘traditional’ drink is wine, not beer. On the other hand, the concept of brand itself under socialism seems to be ‘Western’, so that ‘Domestic brands’ of anything, let alone beer, would appear to be a contradiction in terms. What I will explore in this chapter is the way Georgian beer marketers have domesticated and ‘traditionalized’ both ‘beer’ and ‘brand’, grounding their domestic brands of beer in ethnographic images of the Georgian nation inherited from socialist and pre-socialist ethnography, using ethnographic images of Georgian tradition, particularly the ethnographic image of Pshav-Khevsur beer production and consumption discussed in chapter 1, to build national brands. This chapter, which concerns itself with beer marketing in contemporary post-socialist Georgia, then, will serve as a conclusion, because in one form or another, all of the different ‘fluid modernities’, the categories of modernity and the fluids that mediates them that I have discussed in the first three chapters, figure as a context for contemporary beer production.

Cultures of drink, an overview. First of all, why beer, and not wine? In order to understand beer marketing in Georgia, we need to recall the field of practices of consumption and distribution in which beer is located. First of all, consumption. Wine, for Georgians, is tied up with specific ritual contexts of consumption, called *supras* (chapter 2). The important thing to note is Georgian consumption, and, indeed, notions

of space and kinds of sociability more generally, is organized into distinct spheres organized in the main by the kind of drink, in which wine is the central organizing node, and all other drinks, especially beer, can be identified by opposition to wine. Hence, wine is a drink linked to ritual contexts of consumption, which are obligatory, which usually are private events, even if held in restaurants (which is not preferred), which constitute and reinforce private social relationships, in the main, through the coupling of acts of drinking wine with acts of speaking toasts. The 'private' world of socialism and post-socialism, opposed to public life, can be viewed as a series of supras (chapter 2).

Beer drinking has a problematic set of relations to the supra. First of all, in some parts of Georgia, beer is a ritual drink at the supra, mostly in the mountains of Georgia. Many plains Georgians find this incomprehensible. For plains Georgians, beer is often simply an unmarked drink with respect to the supra, one could serve beer as one would serve a soft drink, and if one wishes to toast one another while drinking beer, one need only buy a bottle of vodka to serve as a liquid powerful enough to carry the weighty sentiments of the toasting. In fact, most Georgian beer drinkers will eventually do this, because the sociability of beer seems somehow empty without adding the formal, ritual element of recognizing these social relationships in toasting. But if beer drinking can always be brought into the fold of the supra by using vodka, beer is also the opposite of wine in toasting, beer can express an 'anti-toast'. By urban custom, toasts said to beer are 'anti-toasts', usually humorous, joking toasts that are always insincere, usually the opposite of what is said is meant if the toast is drunk to beer. (Various reasons are given for this inversion, the most common being that socialist era beer was awful, but one notes, too, that traditional urban toasting traditions often involved joking inversions of

serious toasts). Most often, these will simply be toasts to whoever is current in power in the government.

Turning now to 'public' contexts of consumption, alongside the 'cultured' sphere of socialist fast food, the tea, coffee and flavored waters establishments, open to women and children (chapter 3), was a much more plebeian, uncultured, masculine, one, serving various kinds of food, ranging from relatively good, such as meat dumplings called Khinkali, to indifferent socialist fare such as sausages. These establishments were also watering holes, defined by the fact that they served (really pretty awful) beer. In the socialist period, it is doubtful that any woman would have entered such an establishment, though nowadays, particularly in the higher end establishments with wider menus, groups of men, groups of women, and cross-sex gatherings can be found in abundance. Such establishments, of course, serve a wide variety of beverages as well, beer and soft drinks alike. This is not usually the case with the lower end, more plebeian, versions of the same establishments. What all these establishments share, however, is their generally informal, non-ritual oriented, atmosphere of consumption. Perhaps most symbolic of this was the fact that in many such restaurants, though not all, the tables provided were tall, without the seats needed for a supra, so that one stood while drinking beer (informal), and sat while drinking wine (formal). Under socialism, if the ritual sphere is defined by wine and associated festive foods in proliferation, and the cultured fast food sphere defined by indigenous soft drinks and cheese-bread, the plebeian masculine sphere was defined by extraordinarily horrid beer (as virtually everyone remembers it) and somewhat indifferent fast-foods, all of which, however, seemed to involve meat or fish,

unlike Laghidze's and such like places, in which the offering was either cheese-breads or some sort of pastry item.

Not only, then, did these two forms of public consumption (beer and soft drinks) stand in opposition under socialism to the private form typified by the *supra*, but also to each other, standing as feminized images of cultured consumption to masculine images of plebeian consumption: savoury to sweet, meat to cheese or pastry, sweet soft drink to quasi-alcoholic putrid nastiness. If Laghidze's expresses in ideal form the desirable (latently feminine) personal property of being 'cultured', *kulturuli*, then beer expresses the desirable (latently masculine) property of being *ubralo*, Russian *prosto*, 'simple, without airs'. Both are egalitarian public properties, but they stand opposed as overt prestige to covert prestige in forming a distinct set of ways of expressing a public self, only one of which is open to women, of course. Beer drinking then, was under socialism, and remains to a certain extent under post-socialism, stereotypically linked to plebeian public expressions of masculine sociability.

Turning now to distribution, under post-socialism the phenomenon of brand and consumption of brands has developed highly unevenly in Georgia with respect to these beverages. In the field of soft drinks, the pairing of indigenous fast foods like khachapuri with soft drinks like Laghidze's or Coca-Cola continues (chapter 3), but there has been a general disappearance of all locales which might have been described as domains expressing socialist norms of 'cultured consumption'. One of the great changes with the end of socialism has been the re-masculinizing of public consumption, at least for the vast majority of the population, a vast sea change in architectures of sociability. Feminine cafes have by and large been replaced by masculine beer bars. That is not to

say that cafes (and restaurants) hospitable to both genders have not also reappeared, but generally speaking, these are out of the price range of the average Georgian, quite unlike the cafes of the socialist period.

A post-socialist miracle: Contemporary beer marketing in Georgia. There is no question, however, that beer consumption in branded form has proliferated everywhere, eating at restaurants with beer has become a commonplace, beer gardens with ostentatious marketing of local brands are everywhere, and almost all beer that is consumed is consumed under the aegis of some brand name. In one of the few economic miracles of post-socialism, in the last 10 years or so Georgian companies have cornered the market on beer consumption almost entirely. By contrast, domestic wine brands suffer not only from rampant falsification and Russian embargos, but they also suffer from the fact that most wine that is consumed at supras is private or peasant production, brandless wine sold in jugs, and not European style table wine. There is no comparable phenomenon of brandless beer, at least in urban markets, though I add parenthetically that when we talk of brands in post-socialist Georgia, we are talking about urban consumption practices. When I asked a rural Georgian man who was an avid consumer of beer what his favourite brand was, he became uncomfortable, and replied that since he was just a simple, ordinary (Georgian *ubralo* Russian *prosto*) man, he did not pay attention to such things. So when we talk about brand in Georgia we are largely talking about an urban phenomenon. While beer brands are for domestic consumption, wine brands are for the export market, by and large. Partly this is because of price, taste, but also because wine consumption in Georgia is driven first and foremost by a quantitative principle based on ritual practice and not a qualitative set of discourses of distinction. At

a supra, one needs a minimum of one liter of wine for each man present. Whether the wine is good or not is strictly speaking, secondary, though certainly important. People seldom talk about wine brands, viewing money spent on bottled branded wine as money thrown away in an inscrutable fashion, most urban men I know are quite avidly able to discourse about beer brands (unlike wine), and seem to enjoy talking about the relative merits of beer brands in this way.

The important point, then, is that beer is centrally linked to expression of informal masculine solidary sociability in contexts that are not strictly speaking domestic. Beer consumption can take place in the courtyard or the garden, in the space of neighbors, it can take place in establishments, ranging from ramshackle ones to permanent beer gardens, devoted to that purpose, or it can take place on the curb, by the riverbank, or in any abandoned spot in the cityscape. Beer is stereotypically associated with a domain of **plebeian, informal, non-ritual, non-domestic masculine sociability**. Opposed at every point to wine in consumption, Georgians nevertheless do not see the proliferation of beer consumption as representing a novel phenomenon, but an extension of indigenous traditions. It follows that Georgian beer manufacturers will want to portray their products as being consumed in recognizably Georgian traditional fashion. This will involve ethnographic appeals to Georgian traditions, especially of consumption, and also appeals to Georgian models of masculinity. But as I want to show, this grounding of Georgian beers in Georgian notions of ethnographic tradition and notions of masculinity takes two different forms, sometimes commingled. On the one hand, there is a gesture to an ideal of Georgian masculinity and tradition that is largely ethnographic, grounded in the ethnographic representation of idealized ethnographic groupings like the Pshavs and

Khevsurs, discussed in chapter one, for whom beer is a ritual drink. On the other hand, there is a grounding of products in actual masculine practices of sociability involving beer in modern urban contexts, such as drinking beer in informal settings with friends, accompanied by a simple meal of fish, a grounding of beer in the informal practices of actually experienced everyday life (*qopa*, Russian *byt*), discussed in chapter 2. (This in addition to beer consumption in public café-like establishments, Beer gardens, durable ‘architectures of sociability, like those discussed in chapter 3). This whole constellation of features of Georgian beer marketing, in which national brands are founded utilizing fundamentally ethnographic images (whether idealized ethnographic images such as found in chapter 1, or prosaic images of everyday life (*qopa*, *byt*) discussed in chapter 2) from the national imagination, we could call, in general, ethnographic branding.

As an illustration of these opposed tendencies (which I will exemplify in greater detail below), which on the one hand associate beer with idealized timeless ethnographic traditions of groups felt to incarnate the national essence (the Khevsurs and Pshavs), and on the other hand link them to much more profane and experienceable masculine plebeian urban traditions of consumption, give Georgian brand-makers two ways to ‘traditionalize’ their product, by conjuring a linkage of the product to idealized Georgian traditions (by a brand name, for example), even as it links the product to completely opposed urban practices of consumption.

One simple method, which we have already seen in Coca-Cola advertising in chapter 3, is to link the drink-as-novelty (Coca-Cola, Beer) to food-as-tradition.

Georgians seem to be more open to novel drinks than they are novel foods, probably because Georgian food is quite good, though it is a variety assembled out of a factually

very limited repertoire (Nizharadze 2000). But grounding the novel drink in a stable traditional base of Georgian food seems to be a standard marketing strategy. Beer, in particular, is stereotypically linked to certain kinds of food, especially fish, often dried, which can be served in fast food format, or, most importantly, can be prepared and served easily without female labor. The linkage between beer and fish consumption is so stereotypical that portraying Georgian beer brands alongside their ‘traditional’ food accompaniments was one obvious way to give these beers themselves this property of ‘traditionalness’. Just one example is this ad by the now-defunct company Tbilludi (a socialist company that languished its way into the post-socialist period, until disappearing off the face of the earth without a forwarding address in 2006), which at one point (2005) was advertising its ‘traditional’ Khevsuruli (‘Khevsurian’) and Shatili (named after a famous and picturesque Khevsur mountaineer fortress) beer lines by the relatively simple mechanism of associating the product with the sorts of food products men traditionally consume with beer, particularly seafood, without any commentary:



Excerpted images from Tbilludi commercial for Khevsuruli and Shatili brands, with images of the product montaged onto images of foods traditionally associated with beer.

Dual lineages: Georgian tradition and European technology in beer marketing.

Inasmuch as the very *idea* of brand is closely linked to the idea of ‘the west’ from the socialist period (that is, in one sense, there were socialist brands, but in quite another sense, the term *pirmis* ‘firm, branded’ tended under socialism to mean that the product was ‘western’), Georgian brand makers not only want to fill their brands with national iconography (ethnographic branding), they also want to indigenize the notion of brand itself. Part of the process of creating national brands is making the concept of brand itself national. That is, if under socialism there was a sense that branded (*pirmis*) products were *by definition* western, not Georgian or Russian, the very collocation ‘Georgian brand’ would appear to be a contradiction in terms. The other problem is related to the first, while Georgians prefer to eat and drink locally produced goods, they are also convinced that European goods (if they are real, that is, and not falsified!) are produced by obviously superior standards and technology. In the domain of food and drink, if not, for example, cars, Georgian brand makers must gesture not only to the indigenous quality of their goods (summed up under the category of ‘tradition’) but also the European quality of their goods (captured under the rubric of ‘quality’ or ‘technology’). To address this problem, Georgian brand makers in the arena of beer have provided their products with a ‘dual lineage’, gesturing both to timeless Georgian traditions (and also Georgian raw materials, especially water) and at the same time to European technological modernity. This ‘dual lineage’ is something that Georgians like to imagine themselves as having with respect to Europe in general. Georgia, a country

on the uncomfortable shifting border of an imagined geographic opposition between Europe and Asia, does not like to emphasize the alterity of Europe to Georgianness as modernity to tradition, for that would consign them to be forever in the ‘backwards’ status of being traditional, and therefore non-European, non-modern (for a more general discussion of Georgia’s recent history see Pelkmans 2006, Manning 2007a). Such an untroubled nostalgia for tradition is, perhaps, diagnostic of those who feel that their claim to modernity is unchallengeable. Unlike other colonial situations, such as the situation described by Chatterjee (1992), Georgians do not oppose European technical modernity to indigenous Georgian tradition, they treat them as being variations of the same thing. Georgians like to say that they were European and modern before Europe, they experienced a humanistic renaissance before Dante, and yet, they also sense that their country is not yet, in fact, European and modern (Manning 2007a). The same ambivalence attends the marketing of indigenous production, hence Georgian producers suture together these uneasy discourses of opposition and assimilation in a dual lineage, ambivalently ground their products both in European technical modernity and Georgian tradition.

In some cases, this dual lineage can be as simple as reducing the opposition between Georgia and Europe to ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, that is, Georgian ‘mountain’ tradition appears in the form Georgian raw materials (particularly mountain water), and European technology. Such a ‘dual’ branding strategy is typical of this commercial by the now-defunct Tbilludi for their mountain beer ‘Tushuri’. The Tbilludi beer Tushuri is a late-comer to the ethnographic beer game, and hence, they chose a neglected mountaineer group, the Tush, who, while beer consumers, otherwise remain somewhat

obscure and peripheral to the national imaginary of the mountaineer, lacking the Pshavian love of poetry and the dashing, macho gallantry of the Khevsurs. Hence, Tbilludi (a socialist period company, defunct as of 2007) ad chose to associate their Tushuri product with the fresh and clean mountain water of Tusheti: *'Pure as a mountain waterfall, Pleasant as spring water, As good for you as mountain air, Yet another surprise for beer lovers from the firm "Tbilludi"-- Tushian Beer. Trust in the rich traditions of the mountains and discover real Georgian flavor all over again.*

Tushuri (2005 TbilLudi)



The newest Georgian beer company, Natakhtari (2005-7), which generally eschews any appeals to Georgian traditional *past* at all, it being ‘the Georgian beer of Tomorrow’, is quite aggressive in claiming the newest German and Czech technologies (one of its beers is called Kubichek, named after the Czech technologist (*pivovar*) who is in charge of the factory), claiming only the pure Georgian water of the village of Natakhtari (from which it takes its name, in the same way that bottled mineral waters in Georgia (Borjomi, Nabeghlavi) are named after the villages in which that water is found) as its claim to indigeneity:

Natakhtari beer represents a product of the highest quality prepared from the best German raw materials using the newest brewing technologies. The unique water of Naktari used during the brewing [process] gives the beer its unique properties

of flavor. The beer brewery Natakhtari represents the newest and most modern beer factory not only in Georgia, but in the entire region. This is represented also in the quality of its products (2007)

These are the simplest versions of the ‘dual lineage’ solution, by which Georgian tradition is reduced to the natural order (water, raw materials), the latest German or Czech technology standing in for the cultural order (for parallels in Western bottled water marketing see Wilk 2006). Other, more complex articulations are possible, as we will see below, which ambiguously combine European modernity and Georgian ethnographic traditions of beer brewing in their brands. Regardless of the specific form of articulation, the problem such a strategy addresses is how to incorporate Georgian goods into the evaluative hierarchy that confers prestige *uniquely* on foreign ‘firm goods’ (goods emanating from the ‘Imaginary West’ [Yurchak 2006: chapter 5]). Yurchak has persuasively shown how under late Soviet socialism Western ‘firm’ goods, often stripped down merely to the *leibl* ‘label’ without the associated use-value (according to some it was precisely the possession of a *leibl* that made a thing *firmennye*, hence it is not surprising that the ‘use value’ of a *firmennyei* good would be, in essence, the label) served primarily as physical indexical incarnations of the ‘imaginary West’ and resources for constructing imaginary worlds, rather than guarantors of the value of the associated product (often no longer present in any case), a token-mediated semiotics of presentification opposed to the type-level semiotics of authentication and goodwill (Yurchak 2006: 195-197). Under such circumstances, there is a *poeticization* of the semiotic apparatus of brand, wherein (the fantasy of all brand theorists!) the material

signifier of brand (*leibl*) becomes detachable from its putative object, self-referential and self-valuable. The function of brand here is displaced from a productivist or consumerist semiotic orientation that locates goods in relation to producers or consumers to one that indexes the imaginative geography within which the goods circulate, often with what Mazarella calls an ‘aspirational’ aspect, indexing a kind of unrealized desire or yearning for the elsewhere from which the branded good comes (2003: 102). Under such circumstances, the brand can become the tail that wags the commodity dog. Mazarella has argued that Western brands in India have a similar aspirational Occidental content in incarnating categories of imaginative geographies like ‘the imaginary West’, so similar that the following could just as well be a description of the semiotics of *firmennye* goods under socialism and post-socialism (compare Feverhary 2005: chapter 6; Yurchak 2006: chapter 5):

[M]ajor Western brands became important markers of social distinction for a small elite. ...[M]uch of the mystique associated with these goods depended on their capacity to serve as physical embodiments of a source of value that was understood to reside *elsewhere*. This elsewhere might in shorthand be called ‘the West’, but in fact it was conceived as at once concrete and abstract, as a real place and as a mythical location. The de facto magic of the goods was that they provided concrete, *present* evidence of this absent source, as conjured in advertising. Auratic in Walter Benjamin’s sense, at hand, tactile, yet transcendently irradiated, these brands reverberated with what one might call a kind of ‘close distance’. (Mazarella 2003: 256)

The evaluative hierarchy of concrete goods followed the outlines of the socialist period imaginative geography into the post-socialist period. Prior to the elaboration of post-socialist Georgian production, Pelkmans has shown how foreign ‘firm’ (*sapirmo*) goods and their typifying material qualities were articulated into complex hierarchies of value that in a sense reflect an orientalist imaginary of alterity (which privileges European foreign goods over Asian ones), but also a socialist one (which privileges quality [essence] over packaging [appearance]), so that European goods (expensive, beautiful, good quality) outrank Russian goods (cheap, good quality, but ugly), and these in turn outrank goods from Turkey (cheap, relatively good looking, but poor quality) (Pelkmans 2006: 184-188). The strategy of ‘dual lineage’ seeks to overcome the inherited opposition between Western ‘firm’ goods and local goods, by representing goods as having a ‘dual lineage’. All sorts of products (beer, soft drinks, even bread) are advertised as incorporating European technology with Georgian traditions (bread companies that now insist that their traditional breads are cooked on Italian stone ovens!), even *European style* beers marketed by Georgian companies (with German or Czech brand names) insist that they are marriages of German or Czech technology and Georgian traditions. Georgian brands, then depict Georgia as affinal, rather than consanguineal, kin of Europe.

‘Industry will save Georgia’: The Topadze ideology and Georgian beer. After the fall of socialism, in the Republic of Georgia, virtually all industrial production of food commodities disappeared. Now unemployed urban and rural Georgians have retreated to

'peasant' subsistence strategies and petty commodity production and transaction. Many foodstuffs consumed in Georgia are now produced 'traditionally,' that is, on private peasant plots. The withdrawal of the state from production has left 'The Nation' as the only alternative model in which the disassociated moments of production and consumption can be reunited within a comprehensive social imaginary. In this context, new Georgian industrial firms seek to ground their own lines of consumer products, primarily beers and soft drinks, in 'the Nation,' catering not only to distinctive Georgian consumer tastes (for example, the ever-popular tarragon-flavored soft drinks), but also making reference in marketing to the use of 'traditional Georgian methods' in production. As I have noted, although Georgia is known for its wines, wine consumption occurs in ritual contexts where 'new wine', typically purchased from peasant producers, is preferred; bottled aged wines are primarily for exports. Beer and soft drinks, in contrast, are a key area in which industrial production for indigenous consumers has been elaborated, and it is in this area of the economy where branding has been most successfully elaborated.

The greatest single exception to the generally dire situation of Georgian industry is the beer industry. In recent years Georgia beer producers have aggressively carved out a dominant market share for products produced in Georgia. The frequently quoted statistic is that something like 94% of beer products consumed in Georgia were manufactured in Georgia in 2004, effectively driving out much of the foreign competition in just a few short years (Lomidze 2003). The most successful of these new companies is the Kazbegi company, a company equally well known for its soft drinks and ice tea production as it is for beer production. Kazbegi is the first company in Georgia to have

developed a successful and recognizable logo, a picture of one of the national icons of Georgia, Mt. Kazbek (Georgian Kazbegi), from which the company takes its name, that in turn adorns all of its products in different lines (see for example figure 7, top and center, on the significance of Mt. Kazbegi see Manning 2004). Moreover, Gogi Topadze, founder of the Kazbegi company, is frequently credited with this somewhat miraculous transformation of this sector of the Georgian economy in the late nineties into one that is now virtually completely dominated by Georgian products. In fact, many have seen the Kazbegi company in particular and the beer market in general as a model for others, especially the wine market, since Georgia is particularly well known for wines, and not beer, and yet the indigenous beer market is prospering, the wine market is not. As an example of this, one interviewer in the Georgian press (the same one who discussed the prospects of privatizing Laghidze's in the late communist period in chapter 3), interviewing a wine producer about the difficulties experienced in the wine industry from taxes and falsification, abruptly changed the course of the interview, and began to berate the wine-producer to follow Gogi Topadze's example. The increasingly frustrated the wine-producer offered various cogent reasons why the Topadze model could not so easily be transferred, to no avail:

Interviewer: I don't know Gogi Topadze personally, but I respect him a great deal. Do you know why? He saturated the market with national (erovnuli) production. People are not longer attracted to foreign beers, with pleasure they drink 'Kazbegi', 'Argo', why can't our wines do that?

Interviewee: Wine has different problems. Gogi Topadze's products are of high quality. But still he won against imported products by price. Our products are also of high quality. But as a result of taxation our price becomes unable to compete. I don't have the means, to sell my wine for less than 2.5 Lari [a little more than a dollar].

Interviewer: That is, you wine-makers should have stood firm like Gogi Topadze and not paid artificially raised excise taxes....

Interviewee: It's not just a matter of being firm. Vodka, beer, whisky all compete with wine...

Interviewer: Understandable, but what about the fact that 'Kazbegi' and 'Argo' were able to compete with wine and vodka, aside from that, were able to compete with many foreign beers?

Interviewee: As a result of low prices! Then, because falsified production does not represent a hindrance for them. Get rid of falsifiers and we will be able to restore the name and dignity that Georgian wines once had!

(Aslanishvili 1999: 5)

Topadze's example has had many imitators. Following the lead of what the founder of Kazbegi, Gogi Topadze, calls the 'Topadze ideology', many Georgian companies have emphasized a dual lineage for their products, emphasizing both the European technological modernity of their products, as well as the way their products embody in one way or another Georgian tradition. Billboards throughout Georgia for a range of consumer products often have the same rhetorical juxtaposition of, 'European

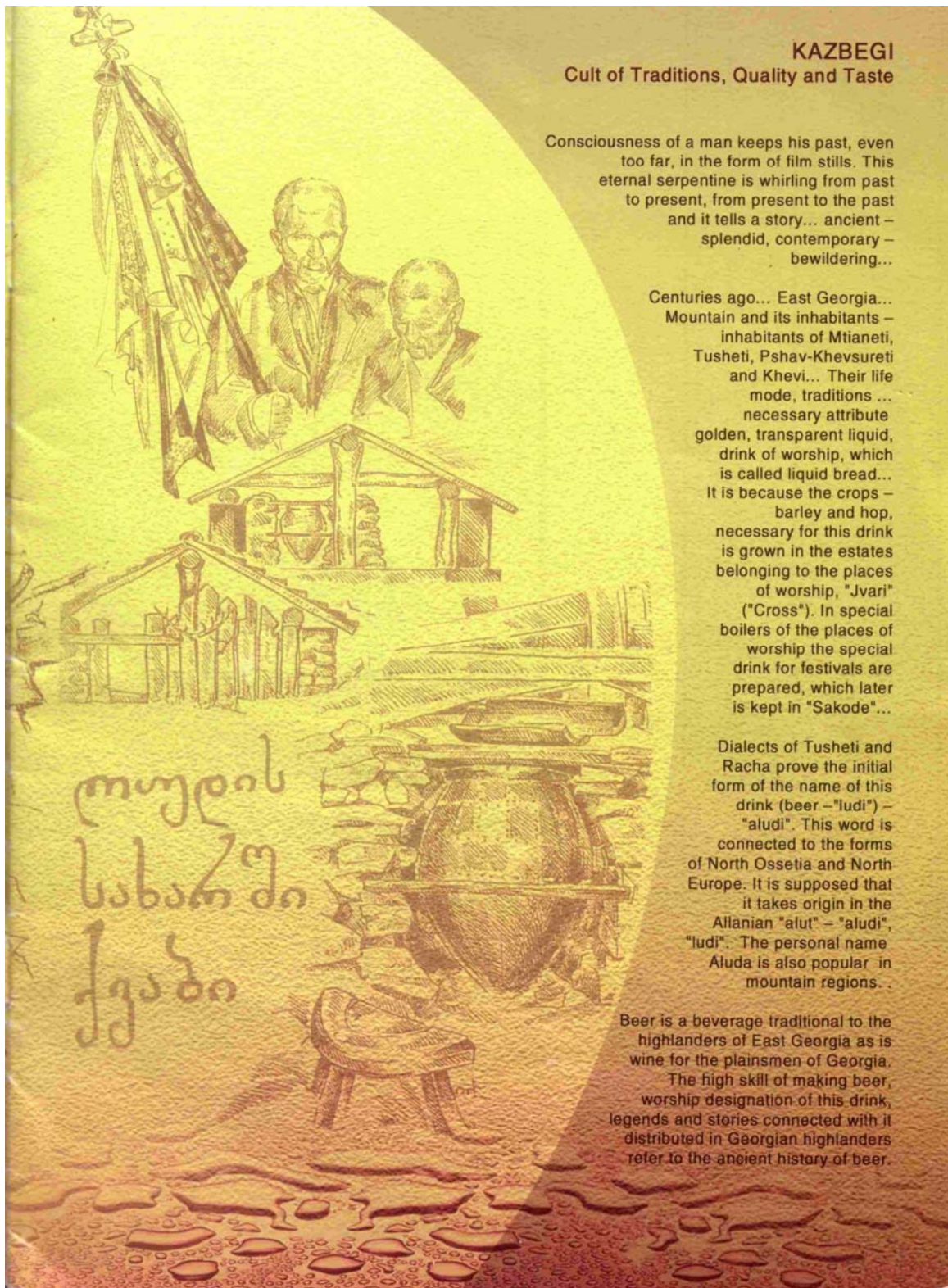
Technology’ and ‘Georgian tradition’. Of course, Georgian tradition and European technology are synthesized more at the level of marketing than at the level of production.

What then, is the ‘Topadze ideology’? Gogi Topadze, an easy-going, charismatic man, is quite up front about the linkage of politics and economics in his corporate ideology. After all, he is a (not particularly successful) political figure in Georgia, the head of a political party with the suggestive name ‘Industry will save Georgia’. The billboard of this party, found outside the Kazbegi headquarters, resembles a socialist era propaganda poster, showing in order all the separated moments of *industrial* production from the rows of tea bushes to the ships that carry the products overseas. Part of the Topadze ideology is attempting to create an autarchic link of national production to national consumption, one which mirrors in many respects the Laghidze ideology discussed in chapter 3. This happens both at the level of marketing (the use of a logo on all products that links the company to an important national landmark, to the specific brands which often index specific areas within the nation), but also in production itself (through the exclusive reliance on Georgian capital, labor, raw materials), and finally consumption (Kazbegi is noted for having attempted to make not only beers for Georgian consumption, but also soft drinks, cigarettes, and many other common consumer goods).

Not all of Kazbegi’s attempted ‘national’ brands were equally successful. The beer brand Gagra, named after a once famous tourist resort in Abkhazia lost during the war with that region (1992-3), was patently a failure because it conjured up a part of the national imaginary that everyone wanted to forget, a kind of negative nostalgia. Similar errors were made by other companies, notably the ill-fated ‘Darial’ brand Ossetian style beer put out by Lomisi in 2005, which followed the general discourse of branding beers

after traditional mountain groups. The problem here was that Georgians have an unsolved territorial dispute with South Ossetia, and this beer, again, points to a place that has been removed from the map of Georgia. This brand disappeared within a few months.

The Topadze ideology is, among other things, an excellent example of both ‘ethnographic branding’ and ‘dual lineages’ as discussed above. Kazbegi’s promotional literature reproduces images from traditional mountain techniques of beer production drawn from ethnographic works as part of a historical narrative that also connects up Kazbegi with German beer manufacturing in Georgia (the Kazbegi plant is on the site of the nineteenth century German beer plant, the Wenzel Brewery). The traditions of the mountain dwelling beer brewers are shown in illustrations drawn from classic Georgian ethnographies of their technical apparatus (a massive copper vat with the legend *ludis saxarshi kvabi* (‘Beer brewing vat’) is depicted) as well as the ritual apparatus to which beer production is linked in mountain communities (a Georgian mountain shrine priest carrying a sacred flag, (*drosha*) and various sacred shrine buildings including the beer brewing building, are depicted).. Opposite them are shown color photographs of the contemporary functionally equivalent structures in the modern Kazbegi factory (figure 4). This dual lineage of ‘tradition and technology’ allows Kazbegi to claim that they have ‘restored the traditions of the mountain-dwellers, thanks to ancient national methods of beer production enriched by new technology’.



KAZBEGI Cult of Traditions, Quality and Taste

Consciousness of a man keeps his past, even too far, in the form of film stills. This eternal serpentine is whirling from past to present, from present to the past and it tells a story... ancient – splendid, contemporary – bewildering...

Centuries ago... East Georgia... Mountain and its inhabitants – inhabitants of Mtianeti, Tusheti, Pshav-Khevsureti and Khevi... Their life mode, traditions ... necessary attribute golden, transparent liquid, drink of worship, which is called liquid bread... It is because the crops – barley and hop, necessary for this drink is grown in the estates belonging to the places of worship, "Jvari" ("Cross"). In special boilers of the places of worship the special drink for festivals are prepared, which later is kept in "Sakode"...

Dialects of Tusheti and Racha prove the initial form of the name of this drink (beer – "Iudi") – "aludi". This word is connected to the forms of North Ossetia and North Europe. It is supposed that it takes origin in the Allanian "alut" – "aludi", "Iudi". The personal name Aluda is also popular in mountain regions. .

Beer is a beverage traditional to the highlanders of East Georgia as is wine for the plainsmen of Georgia. The high skill of making beer, worship designation of this drink, legends and stories connected with it distributed in Georgian highlanders refer to the ancient history of beer.

The French company Castel, too, proclaims in its radio ads for its ‘Khevsur beer’ brand *Aluda* the traditionality of its beer production, ‘masculine traditions brought down from the mountains’, and the rest of its ads emphasize that *Aluda* is ‘Our Beer’, ‘prepared with traditional Khevsur methods’, although *Aluda* is produced in what may be the most modern European factory in Georgia by a European company. When asked how this particular beer, which tasted like any other lager, could be called ‘Khevsur beer’, the *Aluda* representative we met with smiled. It was in fact a stupid question. That was in 2004. And yet, paralleling the invocation of the Pshav-Khevsur *Ludis Saxarshvi kvabi* in the Kazbegi literature (see chapter one), a recent Castell Ad claims to make use of ‘traditional Khevsur methods of beer brewing’, by which specifically is meant ‘copper vats’. The vats shown (upper right, compare with the traditional vat shown above), however, are not the Khevsur copper vats shown in the Kazbegi commercial, but the copper vats that are typical of modern European beer brewing:



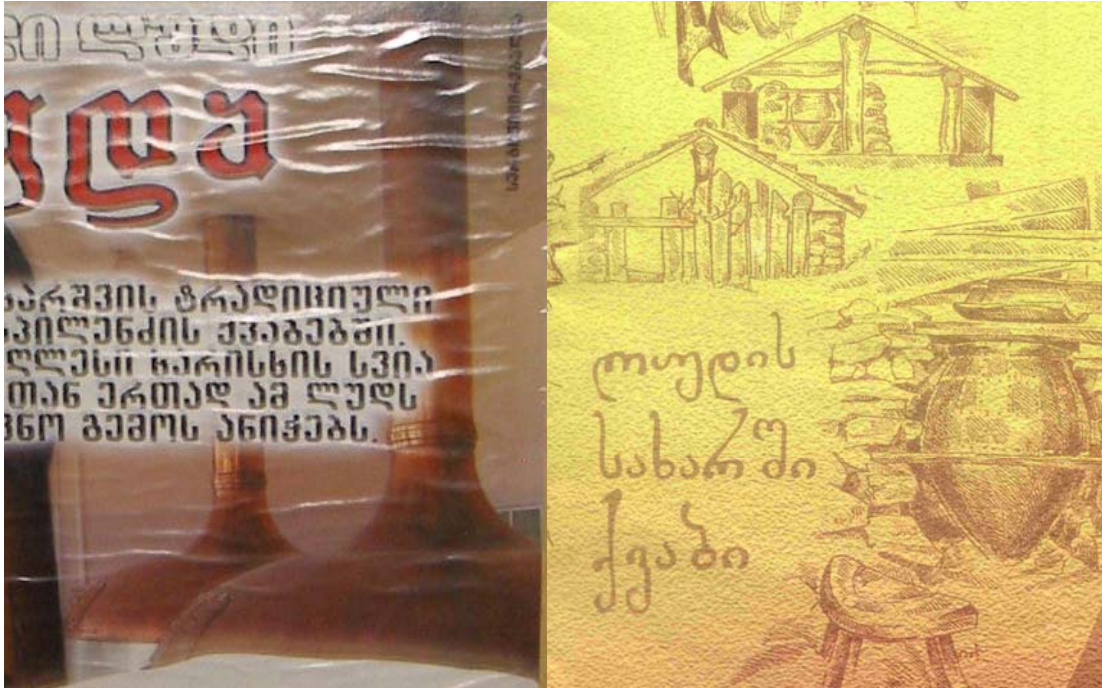
“The Khevsur beer

Aluda

is prepared with traditional Khevsur methods of beer brewing using copper vats.

The best barley malts and the highest quality hops together with flavorful Georgian water

gives this beer its refined and pleasant flavor.” (2007)



Detail: Copper ‘Beer brewing vats’ (ludis saxarshi kvabi): Aluda (left) and Kazbegi (right)

Here the Castel company has seized on a happenstance conversion of technological features, though according to Khevsurs, as we saw in chapter 1, it is not the copper *kvabi* (vat) that affects the outcomes in terms of taste, but the wooden *kodi*. In every other respect, these ‘Khevsur beers’ bear no resemblance in taste to the actual Khevsur beers. And, of course no one would actually attempt to produce authentic mountain style beer, because actual mountain beer is dark, thick, sweet and prone to giving powerful headaches, like an evil version of Guinness; a Georgian friend likened it memorably to

sweetened motor oil. What then is the point of appealing to these mountain traditions of brewing, if no one actually intends to use them?



Map Ethnic brands

Ethnographic branding. Kazbegi is not the only beer company in Georgia to market its products using traditional imagery from the Georgian mountains. Two other Georgian companies, Lomisi and Tbilludi, as well as the local branch of the French industrial giant Castel, have borrowed this aspect of the ‘Topadze ideology’ to market their products. In order to ground this new range of beer products in the ‘nation’, Georgian marketers for these companies have created an explosion of brands that harkened to Georgia’s imagined traditional exemplars: various groups of ethnic Georgians who inhabit the mountains of Georgia adjacent to Chechnya, mountain groups like the Khevsurs, the Pshavs, and the Tush who have, since the nineteenth century, been sacralized by generations of Georgian ethnographers as being the true bearers of the authentic Georgian way of life (Manning 2004, Manning 2007b). In Georgia, since the late nineteenth century, the mountains of Georgia, regions like Pshavi and Khevsureti, have been understood to represent the unchanging masculine traditional life of Georgia, the Georgian past in the present, just as the plains of Georgia, regions like Kartli where the capital city, Tbilisi, is located, represent the present and future life of the country:

Here [in the inaccessible mountains of Pshav-Khevsureti], in this homeland the Pshav-Khevsur have preserved unchanged until today their ancient, ancestral customs, life, past traditions. In this respect the Pshav-Khevsur is more Georgian [*kartveli*] (if it can be said so), than the Kartlian [*kartleli*, resident of Kartli, the central Georgian province] himself. The Kartlian lives more in the present, in the

future. If he had not turned his back on the past, still, he avoids facing it.

(Khizanashvili 1940 [1889]: 1)

These fierce and free, hospital and brave mountaineers, spouting poetry and avenging blood for blood, are felt to embody all that is best about Georgians in general (see chapter 1). Georgian advertisers have turned to this ready-made iconography of the 'nation' to articulate their claims to a national market, turning idealized figures of ethnographic and folkloric Others into images that could be used to organize an array of industrial products for a national market. In an interview as early as 1996 Topadze connected his choice of the name Kazbegi and familiar national symbol of Mount Kazbegi as the logo of his products to indigenous ethnographic traditions of beer brewing preserved by mountain dwellers:

You will remember, that the population of our mountainous regions, the Mokhevians [residents of the area around Mount Kazbegi] and Khevsurs since time immemorial pursued the brewing of beer with folk technology. In our own production are inserted nuances of precisely this technology and for that reason too these names were chosen. (Tbilisi 1996: 2-3)

Whatever these 'nuances of folk technology' might have been, by 2005 the tendency to use different ethnographic groups, the Khevsurs, the Pshavs, the Tush, from a small region of the Caucasus mountains bordering Chechnya, to categorize and differentiate what were essentially all the same Lagers ('ethnographic branding') had

reached a high point. In effect, the beer brands of Georgia today look just a little bit like the contents of the Georgian ethnographic museum, in bottled form.

Just as the plains dwellers of Georgia traditionally drink wine, for these mountain dwellers the traditional ritual drink is beer, allowing Beer to be identified as a traditional Georgian beverage alongside wine, a beverage associated with the timeless ethnographic traditions, rituals and general masculinity of the Georgian highlanders. The labels of the Castel company's Khevsurian Beer Aluda and the Kazbegi beer Pshavi both reproduce familiar ethnographic images of the typical Khevsur or typical Pshav man in traditional dress in a suggestive traditional landscape.



Aluda: A Khevsur Beer (Kastell)



Pshavi: a wheat beer (Kazbegi JSC)

This level of brand iconography, then, identifies beer brands with respect to significant portions of the social imaginary of the nation, what I am calling ‘ethnographic branding’. Such ads draw on figures of ethnographic alterity recognizable from the ethnographic imagining of the Georgian nation, including both men in traditional costume as well as typical architecture and even sometimes traditional beer brewing technology. Not merely figures of complete otherness, such ethnographic figures drawn from the imaginary of the Georgian nation serve as ‘surrogate identities’ (Coombe 1996:210), what Mazzarella calls ‘prosthetic personalities’ (Mazzarella 2003: 187-192), through which consumers can identify themselves and the product they are consuming as being part of a specifically Georgian tradition of beer consumption. Within this general process, I am concerned two different ways that masculinity and tradition are represented, one in which masculinity

and tradition is an idealized, nostalgic item located firmly in the past and in the mountains, the other in which Georgian masculinity and tradition is seen in terms that are more contemporary, realistic and urban. Next to an approach to masculinity and tradition we could call *mountaineer ethnographic sublime*, is one which we could call *contemporary urban grotesque*. The former strategy seems to be more characteristic of branding at the level of the iconography of labels, the latter seems to be more characteristic of beer ads which dramatize contexts of consumption.

Mountaineer Ethnographic sublime. I will begin looking at specific ads by first looking at one that seems to best encapsulate an kind of ‘ethnographic sublime’, followed by one which, at first glance, defines an end point in vulgarity. The first is a commercial for Kazbegi’s wheat beer Pshavi, which displays the entire traditional contexts of production and consumption of beer in an idyllic scene of traditional mountain life in the mountains of Pshavi.



‘Certified’

Figure 8a: Pshavi Commercial Opening scene: Traditional Pshavian context, locating beer production within traditions of mountain romance, poetry, and respect for tradition.

roca k'i gazapxuldeba, gamoighvidzebs kveqana,

When spring comes, the world awakens,

silaghe simxiarule, daseirnoben qvelgana.

Freedom, happiness, walk about everywhere,



Figure 8b: Traditions of Pshavian Beer Production and Consumption

shasvi pshavuri – et'qvian, xorblis ludia sviani,

Drink Pshavian, they say, it is a wheat beer with hops

gvitxari rame ghvtis madlsa, erti kartuli gziani.

Tell us something, by the grace of God, having a Georgian way.



(wheat beer 'Pshavi')

Figure 8c: Linking the Traditional Pshavian Beer to the Modern Brand 'Pshavi'

(Pshavi Commercial (Qazbegi JSC, 2005))

ludi pshavi – kartuli mtis istoria.

Pshavi Beer—the history of the Georgian mountains

The commercial opens with springtime flirtation between a Pshavian lad and lass otherwise engaged in traditional occupations, the Pshavians being as noted for traditions of romance as they are for poetry (chapter 1), moving on to an older man (respect for the elders and tradition), and then to a man engaged in brewing beer using traditional methods (figure 8a). The technical process of traditional beer production is followed in particular detail, with traditional implements, with the commercial noting that the craftsman making the beer pictured is ‘certified’. Thence the ad moves seamlessly from scenes of traditional beer production to traditional beer consumption (figure 8b), at last juxtaposing the traditional Pshavian beer poured from a traditional serving pitcher to the modern bottled beer brand ‘Pshavi’ (figure 8c).

Importantly, the ad narrative takes the form of a traditional Pshavian poem. The Pshavians are also noted as being poets, their poetic cycles are the focus of Georgian folklore (chapter 1). Kazbegi commercials are always clever, always tasteful, and Kazbegi is certainly the corporation that began this process of ethnographic branding. This particular commercial by Kazbegi is perhaps the most complete grounding of a beer in idyllic scenes of traditional beer production and consumption, appropriate for the Kazbegi product which is most directly linked to this project of ethnographic branding.

Tradition as ‘everyday life’ Having looked at a relatively tasteful ad, I want to look at an apparently extremely Vulgar ad that is secretly fairly clever. This second beer commercial I want to look at is a notorious, even shocking, commercial for the company Lomisi. The beer company Lomisi is one of the underdogs of the Georgian beer market, carving out a small share of the market. Most people now believe that their beer is fortified, so one might think of them as the ‘malt liquor’ of beers. Their ads are best known for their spokesman, an older man with a gravelly voice who pronounces their slogan “Kai Ludia—Lomisi” (It’s a good beer—Lomisi) who appears at the end of this commercial as well. Like all beer producers in the last few years, following the lead in general of the branding strategy of the Kazbegi company, they have occasionally put out ads that have ethnographic elements in them. One of these ads caused quite an uproar, an ad in which a man is portrayed flirting with a barmaid, ostensibly discussing the properties of the beer, Lomisi, in a thinly veiled sexual double entendre. On one viewing, without the text, the ad is brutally simple, they move quickly from thinly veiled sexual double entendres to having actual sex in the back room of the bar. The woman returns, clearly in some sort of post-coital bliss, announcing that thanks to Lomisi, she got all cooled off. The man returns, zipping up his fly, he picks up a glass of Lomisi and announces that everyone should drink Lomisi.

Lomisi (2003)



Man: *Ise lamazad kapdeba, veghar movtsqvite tvalio*

So beautifully does it foam, I could no longer tear my eyes away

Woman: *magas keba ar unda, Lomisi unda dalio!*

It does need such praise, You must drink Lomisi!

Men's Chorus: *Lomisi unda dalio! You must drink Lomisi!*



Man: *tsqurvili maklavs mitxari dzudzus kvesh tu gak xalio*

A thirst is killing me, tell me, whether you have a mole under your breasts

Woman: *tsqurvilma rom ar dagkhrchos, lomisi unda dalio*

So that your thirst doesn't strangle you, you must drink Lomisi!

Men's Chorus: *Lomisi unda dalio! You must drink Lomisi!*



Woman: *Lomisi madlma kargi(....) gavgrildi kalio*

Thanks to Lomisi, (...) I, a woman, got all cooled off!



Man: (.....) *Lomisi unda dalio*

Men's Chorus: *Lomisi unda dalio! You must drink Lomisi!*

Official Spokesman: *Kai ludia, Lomisi It's good beer, Lomisi.*

The most straightforward grotesque reading of this commercial needs no comment, surely, and contrasts rather obviously with the more tasteful Kazbegi commercial. The most obvious aspect of this commercial, then, is that it connects Lomisi beer with a kind of plebeian form of masculine sociability, involving fantastic worlds in which frankly very ugly men get to have sex with exceptionally well-endowed barmaids in the back of the bar. There are plenty of other commercials like this, forming the first set of intertexts for this ad, which I will discuss later. But one aspect of this commercial might escape notice, and it is this: that the lecherous man and the busty barmaid are engaging in a *poetic duel*, one in which joking, flirtation and double entendre play an important role.

This aspect of the commercial connects the verbal exchange in this commercial with a rather different set of intertexts, in particular a specific folkloric genre called *kapia/kapioba* associated with Georgian mountain groups, particularly the Pshavs and Khevsurs. Obviously Kazbegi commercial for the beer Pshavi and this commercial both link beer consumption to Pshav-Khevsur folk poetry.

So, let us go over the script of the commercial so we can attend to the largely overshadowed poetics of the commercial. In the first scene we are shown men eating a traditional food item, meat dumplings called khinkali, with beer, which immediately establishes the locale as being a Sakhinkle, a specific kind of restaurant catering largely to men, with a somewhat restricted menu. This is a restaurant for informal gatherings of men, not for ritual gatherings.

The man in the first scene goes up to the bar, with a lecherous grin addresses the busy bar maid with a line that is ostensibly about how the beer's foam caught his eye, but clearly, something else did. We know the line is poetry because of the way he declaims it, because it will rhyme with the next line, and because it ends in a meaningless rhyming vowel –*o* which marks the line as being a kind of folk poetry.

‘So beautifully does it foam, I could no longer tear my eyes away’

Her snappy comeback too, that with respect to beer, words of praise are not needed, but rather deeds of drinking, rhymes with the first line, and provides the men behind them with a choral refrain, which turns out to be ‘You must drink Lomisi!’. His next sally is more forthright, announcing that ‘A thirst is killing me, tell me, whether you have a mole

under your breasts?” to which her taunting reply is “So that your thirst doesn’t strangle you, you must drink Lomisi!” And so on. Their joking contrapuntal exchanges are clearly marked as a kind of Pshav-Khevsur poetry, Kapia, so this ad, like the Kazbegi ad, is also linking this beer to a sublime ethnographic image, by referencing traditional poetry.

Clearly, there are two very different visions of ‘tradition’ that are brought together in this ad. One is clearly recognizable to any Georgian man, it is a scene from a kind of Georgian restaurant, a *sakhinkle*, that almost anyone who had been to Georgia would be familiar with, it involves places where one drinks beer and eats *khinkali* (meat dumplings) and other semi-informal foods with male friends. The addition of casual sex with barmaids is, probably, more a matter of beer-fueled fantasy than ethnographic reality. The other dimension, the accordion music in the background, the verbal duels in poetic meter, and the male chorus, this is all a kind of idealization of mountain traditions that few Georgians will have ever witnessed in person. Where does it come from?

I would first suggest that the intertext for this commercial is not directly ethnographic, but comes from a romanticized vision of mountain life constructed by Georgian cinema in the sixties. The relevant film is a famous 1965 film called ‘ballad of the Khevsurs’ (on which see Manning 2007b), and the commercial here is, I believe, basically based on a feast scene from the movie, showing a traditional Khevsur feast.

As in the commercial, the feast scene begins by paying attention first and foremost to the food, a tray of *khinkali*, which is a form of food traditionally associated with mountain dweller feasts, just as beer is a ritual drink in the Georgian mountains. We are further shown a convivial scene, a *supra*. The men are seated, women are standing, some

of them playing instruments. A man and a woman are shown dancing in a traditional style. Next, we are shown a scene in which a traditional toast is drunk. It is unclear, to me at least, whether they are supposed to be drinking beer or vodka, either of which would be acceptable as a ritual drink. However, what is clear is that in the Georgian mountains, where beer is an indigenous drink, it is drunk in the ritual context of a supra, and not in semi informal contexts of beer gardens and beer halls. The toast is simple:



A traditional supra toast

Host: *Smena iqos xalxo! am sasmisit chemi dzma xvtiso minda movixsenio*

Give me your ear, people! With this drink I want to remember my brother Xvtiso

k'argi vazhk'aci iqo imedav c'q'onebuli mamasheni

He was a good man, Imeda, your deceased father

p'uradi, guladi m'ters m'trulad damtxuri! mok'etes mok'etrada,

Hospitable, Valiant He met his enemy as an enemy! His kinsman as a kinsman,

shenc egeti iq'o, shvilo, ghmertma k'etil sakmeshi xeli mogvmartos

May you also be like that, child, May God direct our hands in good things.

After the 'serious' work of toasting is done, associated with elder men and drinking beer (the *jari*, chapter 1), the rather more playful aspects of a traditional mountain ritual can be attended to (the *axaluxali*, chapter 1), specifically, we move from serious ritual acts of commemorating the communal dead with toasting to unserious and playful interpersonal sociability, expressed in poetic duels called *kapia*. A man who was earlier represented marveling at the cigarette lighter, Aparek, demands the traditional guitar, the *panduri*, and begins to sing. What follows is an extemporaneous exchange of joking/flirting poetry between a man and a woman, and is specifically labeled as 'Kapia' poetry. This exchange manages to offend the first man, Torghva, who was dancing with this woman, leading to him to challenge Aparek to a dueling competition.

The man Aparek begins his poem with a traditional invocation, making the *Panduri* 'sing' a specific genre of poem, which he calls a *shair-kapia*, that is, a poem we expect to be joking and flirtatious (*shairi*) (see chapter 1), but also one which is extemporaneous and dialogic (*kapia*). He begins by praising her beauty.

Aparek:

xma amaighe panduro,
amomavali mzistvina,
shair-kapia amovt'qo,
pirimze lamazistvina.

Oh Panduri, raise your voice
For the rising sun,
That I might compose a poem (*shair-kapia*)
For the sun-faced beautiful one.

Men's chorus :

Pirimze, pirimze
pirimze lamazistvina.

Sun-faced, Sun-faced
For the sun-faced beautiful one.

Apareka throws the panduri to the woman, Mzekala, who criticizes both his singing and his skill at playing the panduri:

Mzekala

vis rad ch'irdeba net'avi,
e mag panduris zhghriali,
k'lde-ch'iuxebshi jixvebsa,
daaprtxob sheni ghriali.

Who would want I wonder, and why,
The clatter of that panduri of yours
Your roaring is frightening
The ibexes on the cliffs and craigs.

Men's chorus: he he he, he he he he he he he

Note that the chorus does not repeat her words, only gives a series of meaningless syllables to measure the beat, they only repeat Apareka's words. Undeterred, Apareka wants to know whether she has a soft spot in her heart for him:

Aparek :

<i>tvali mich'iras shenzeda,</i>	I have my eye on you
<i>rogorc miminos mts'qerzeda,</i>	Like a hawk on a quail,
<i>net'avi gamagebina,</i>	I wish you would let me know
<i>shen ra guli gaqvs chemzeda.</i>	What do you feel about me.

Men's chorus:

<i>Chemzeda, chemzeda.</i>	About me, about me
<i>shen ra guli gaqvs chemzeda.</i>	What do you feel about me.

Mzekala indicates is that she not going to flirt any longer, in her reply she notes that she indeed likes someone, just not him, *he* can go pound sand:



Mzekala



Aparek

Mzekala

am mk'erdshi ori gul midevs, In this breast I have two hearts
ertshi ts'vims ertshi daria, In one it rains, in the other it is fair weather,
shentvisa shavqri ghrublebsa, For you I have gathered clouds,
sxvas gavughimeb daria. For another I make fair weather smile.

Men's chorus: he he he, he he he, he he he he

Aparek responds by upping the ante with praise, the last two lines of this stanza I found in an ethnographic report from the turn of the century, they are authentic:

Aparek:

kalav sul tvalts'in midgexar, Woman, you always stand before my eyes
ghvidzilshia da dzilshia, When I am awake or in my sleep,
daimaleba xoxobi A quail could hide
sheni tval-ts'arbis chrdilshia. In the shadows of your eyes and eyebrows

Men's Chorus : *chrdilshia, chrdilshia.* In the shadows, In the shadows

sheni tval-ts'arbis chrdilshia. In the shadows of your eyes and eyebrows

Mzekala refuses the guitar, Aparek throws it to Torghva, the man who was dancing, who throws it back angrily, Aparek continues by announcing his frustration with her obstinancy.

Net'ai ristvis gakebdi, I wonder why I praised you

ristvis davxarje dzalao,

Why I wasted the effort,

egeti enis p'at'ronsa,

The owner of such a tongue,

ra gagatxovebs kalao.

What will make you marry, woman.

Men's Chorus :

kalao, kalao, ra gagatxovebs kalao.

Woman, woman, what will make you marry, woman.

There is, then, a strong parallelism between the two commercials, a traditional mountain drink, beer, is linked to Georgian ethnographic traditions, and the vehicle chosen to do this is poetry. The main difference between the Lomisi ad and the scene from Khevsur Ballad is, of course, that in the former the sublime traditional element, flirtation, poetry, dueling, is coupled with a grotesque contemporary element, sex in the back and zipping up his fly upon his return. Georgian mountain traditions of love (chapter 1) are here interpreted as being primarily about having casual extra-marital sex. The commercial brings together two very different visions of Georgian tradition, Georgian romance and Georgian masculinity, one sublime, one grotesque.

Urban traditions of beer drinking. I will conclude by taking a look at two ads for another brand Aluda, which is produced by Castel-Sakartvelo, a French industrial giant that is trying to ground its products in traditional Georgian imaginaries of the nation. As pointed out above, certainly the name and trademark are versions of the ethnographic branding strategy. Both of the commercials seek to ground beer consumption in a specific milieu of masculine sociability. The brand name and label design for Aluda

references a specific Georgian traditional image of the masculine highlander, in this case the Khevsur hero Aluda, whose name rhymes with the word for beer (*ludi*). But in terms of concrete images of consumption in ads, Kastell, decided to advertise its Khevsur beer Aluda by referencing not images of lost Georgian mountain traditions, but referencing the easy-going urban traditions of male sociability in a traditional Tbilisi courtyard.

The architectural unity of the urban courtyard (*ezo*) and the associated balconies (*aivani*) typical of traditional Tbilisi architecture has a particular significance (Manning forthcoming). For one, balconies and courtyards form an easily recognizable figure for the traditional life of the city, a life understood to be typified by a kind of bohemian, happy go lucky (*dardimandi*) form of sociability involving, again, drinking. Hence, it is not surprising that, alongside mountain beers, there have appeared ‘Tbilisi beers’, such as the Qazbegi brand Tbilisi whose ad does nothing more than represent the stereotypical, nostalgic cityscape of Old Tbilisi, replete with balconies, in the manner of an old, grainy, black and white film.



Alongside the ‘ethnographic branding’ style that focuses on a nostalgic image of Georgian tradition in the mountains, naming brands after ethnographic groups like the Khevsurs, the Pshavs, the Tush, there is also a more weakly developed one typified by beers like ‘Tbilisi’ which grounds brands in the ‘traditional’ nostalgic image of the urban bohemia of ‘Old Tbilisi’, an idealizing view of the city typified architecturally as a ‘city of balconies’, and typified by a ‘happy-go-lucky’ bohemia in which drinking plays a major role.

The architectural unity of balcony plus courtyard is not only emblematic of the nostalgic urban bohemia of ‘Old Tbilisi’, it also is symbolic of a kind of ‘architecture of sociability’ that typifies what is sometimes called ‘the City of Balconies’ (Manning

2008a): a space outside the domestic sphere of the family, but yet interior, away from the public space of the street. The recursive properties of public and private with respect to spaces (Gal 2002) are exhibited here: the balcony represents the exterior of the interior space, the public aspect of the private household, so the courtyard differs from the street by being the interior, private aspect of the absolute public, exterior, represented by the street. Some Georgian commentators will claim, thus, that the balcony and courtyard architecture characteristic of Tbilisi presents a set of medial spaces, partially open, partially closed, compared to the relatively absolute oppositions between interior/exterior, private and public exhibited in 'western' domestic architecture: 'The Tbilisian balconied house, often with one face looking from the courtyard to the street, indicates openness, open relationships; on the other hand, the facades (*pasadi*) and the principals of internal planning and organization of space also attests that the openness is not absolute.'

(Qipiani 2003: 10)

This typical urban form of balcony plus courtyard is a medial 'third space' between the domestic sphere and the public sphere (on 'third spaces' see Oldenberg 1989). It is the space of neighborly sociability, between coresident kin associated with the household and the complete strangers on the street. In fact, the word Georgian word for 'neighbor' (*mezobeli*) etymologically means 'one who shares the same courtyard (*ezo*)'. It expresses therefore, an idealized kind of masculine solidarity, that of companionate but elective friendship between neighbors. In the following Aluda ad, two older men in the courtyard are completing a game of backgammon, and they recruit from their neighbors on the surrounding balconies the means for an informal beer drinking

session. Particularly emblematic here is fish, which is a food traditionally consumed with beer and many ads accompany images of beer being consumed in tandem with seafood.

Aluda Ads First Ad: Traditional Tbilisi Courtyard.

A man appears above on a balcony:



First Man: *besos gaumarjos!*

Hey Beso!

2nd Man: *bich'o, ro gamogipenia, eg tevzi, erti-ori chamokseni da chamodi!*

**Hey man, the fish that you have hanging there, cut down one or two
and come on down!**

Another man appears in his window:



2nd Man: *Garcho! Garcho, ager tevzi gvak....*

Garcho! Garcho, we have fish....

Garcho: *Gasagebia.*

Understood.



(they begin to sing a traditional Georgian song)

Aluda, Chveni Ludi

Aluda, Our Beer.

This might be called a kind of ‘sublime’ presentation of one kind of typical urban space which is imagined nostalgically as being characteristic of a lost world of urbane sociability between neighbors (contemporary actual relations between urban neighbors being considered as being other than idyllic). In contrast, a second Aluda ad highlights another kind of urban ‘architecture of sociability’, one characteristic of some sorts of restaurants (especially eateries like sakhinkles and dukans) and also bath-houses. One notes, for example, while certain kinds of Georgian restaurants have large open interior spaces with tables situated so that the guests at private tables can still see one another, at other, more plebeian versions of the same type, each table is sequestered by containing

walls so that the table verges on being a separate room, and in some cases, is a separate room. Such places, including certain kinds of restaurants and still more so, bath houses, offer a kind of private space within a public establishment, the converse of the Tbilisi balcony and courtyard.

Such places offer a space for a rather different quality of male camaraderie. The second Aluda ad represents another set of informal occasions of exclusively male sociability that might also be taken as the referent of tradition, with a certain sideward glance at some of the more unsavory aspects of these actual masculine traditions in bath-houses. The Russian Guest mistakes the word *Aluda*-- the name of the product-- for *Luda*, a Russian proper name, which he assumes is the name of the prostitute he is briefly shown imagining in a cartoon bubble.



Unlike the Lomisi commercial, these unsavoury elements are effectively displaced onto an ethnic surrogate, the filthy filthy mind of the Russian guest Evgenii.

Second Ad: two Georgian men are entertaining a Russian man in a bath-house

Aluda Sjobs Ludas (Kastell, 2005)



In Georgian:

rit vasiamovnot st'umars?

t'radiciulad!

“How will we entertain our guest? “The traditional way!”



Russian:

Evgenii, Luda budish?

Evgenii, Do you want Luda (a Russian woman's name)

Georgian subtitles:

Evgeni, aluda ginda?

Evgenii, Do you want Aluda (A Georgian beer brand)



Russian:

Ludu budu!

Georgian subtitles:

Luda? minda!

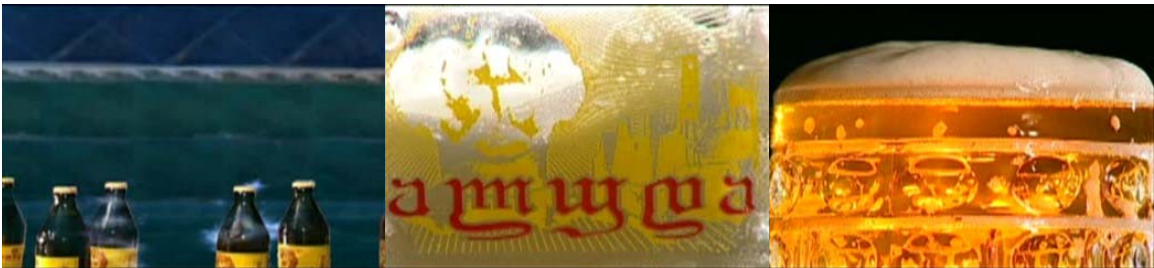
I want Luda!

imagining

(“Luda” is a Russian woman’s name, he is

that this “Luda” will be a beautiful

prostitute)



Beer magically appears, close up of Aluda logo on glass, frothing beer



Russian: *Luda gde ti?*

Georgian subtitles: *Luda sadghaa?*

“Where in the world is Luda?”



Russian: *vot aluda*

Georgian: *-ai- Aluda ludasac sjobs ALUDA SJOBS...*

.“Here is Aluda” “Aluda is better than even Luda” “Aluda is Better than....”

This commercial, vulgar though it is, succeeds where the Lomisi commercial we started with fails. Why? One thing about the Lomisi commercial is that it links together two strands of imagining Georgian masculinity, one I have called the ‘ethnographic sublime’ based in the idealized view of the Georgian mountains, with another low, plebeian, even

grotesque imagining of masculinity. The resulting hybrid of opposed, even opposite, imaginings, could surely please no one. This commercial succeeds by instead splitting the concept of 'masculine tradition' playfully into two parts, one Georgian and one Russian, represented by two figures of 'surrogate identities', the Georgian hosts and the Russian guest. When the Georgian host in the bath-house says 'we will entertain our guest 'traditionally'', there are two understandings that might arise. One is that they are Georgian men with a foreign guest, hence they will treat him to food and drink, conformably with the Georgian self-understanding that Georgians are first and foremost characterized by their hospitality. The other is the idea that since they are in a bath house, therefore they will treat him to a (again Russian) prostitute. The bilingual confusion leads them to offer him food and drink (ALUDA), which he understands as the name of a blonde Russian prostitute named LUDA. When the misunderstanding is cleared up, Evgenii provides them both with their alibi and their surrogate alter ego, it was him, after all, who suggested they pick up a prostitute named Luda, they just wanted to drink Aluda beer. Just as masculine desire in its unsavory variety is figured as a Russian desire for a prostitute named Luda rather than a Georgian desire for a beer named Aluda, so too, feminine objects of purely sexual desire here are figured in traditional terms as blond Russian women named Luda, and not poetry spouting dark-haired Georgian barmaids. Free and easy uncommitted sex, for Georgian men, is nostalgically associated with Russian women under socialism, now associated with prostitutes who, while factually not always Russian, are usually imagined to be. The Georgian male sexual imaginary is divided into two distinct sorts of figures, the Russian woman, with whom sex for pure pleasure is appropriate (whether or not she is a

prostitute), and the Georgian woman, who is traditionally largely disassociated from sexual desire in this sense. Thus, representing a Georgian woman engaged in a form of sexuality felt only to be appropriate with Russian outsiders represents, perhaps, a vulgar insult at Georgian women. This was part of the error of the Lomisi commercial.

Secondarily one might add that while for the Pshav-Khevsurs sexual desire and marriage are decoupled, so with Georgian men, but the understanding of how that sexual desire is to be expressed, and with whom, is completely different.

Where the Lomisi commercial confused these two kinds of 'tradition', directly connecting the Georgian Beer Lomisi with sex with Georgian barmaids, the Aluda commercial divides Georgian men into an innocent desire for a Georgian beer (Aluda), typical of Georgian men, and a less innocent desire for a Russian prostitute (Luda), which is projected onto the Russian guest as being easily disavowed, a Russian thing. A whole register of masculine behaviors that Georgian men engage in, ranging from swearing to sleeping with prostitutes who are also supposedly Russian women with names like Luda, are enregistered by association with Evgenii as being 'Russian traditions', while Georgian masculine traditions are more innocent ones of drinking beer. It turns out, however, that Evgenii is not disappointed, the Georgian tradition is better, Aluda is better than Luda.