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## **The Image of (Black?) Sea in the Poetry of Valerian Gaprindashvili**

### **1. Anticipating and demarcating the significance of a ‘neo-argonautic’ myth for modern Georgia**

The significance of Black Sea in the mental geography of Georgians cannot be matched by its significance in the mental geography<sup>1</sup> of other nations at the Black Sea littoral. Being the sole sea to which Georgia has access, lying to the west of that Europeanising Christian nation and representing itself the liquid element in its pure form (if there is a Black Sea coast which lacks islands and peninsulas, in this sea poor in the former but relatively rich in the latter, it is the Georgian coast), Georgian Black Sea is potentially charged with heaviest cultural symbolism. It could symbolise alien space; ultimate openness to other cultures and creatures; freedom; scene of contact with the western (Christian, European, democratic) world; and, possibly, an urge to reconsider the relation between the horizontal and the vertical axes of space-time. Thus it takes roughly the half of all possible meanings within a cosmography (a picture of the world amalgamating archaic myths, cultural traditions and scientifically-supported geopolitical concerns).

The hugeness of this significance may solidify in specific narrative myths, or may not; in the Georgian case, it possibly did. The Argonautic myth (as-reproduced-in-modern-Georgian-culture) seems to have the potential to be a culture-foundational myth for modern Georgians (no less than the one embodied in the form of a travelogue in Ilia Chavchavadze’s მგზავრის წერილები, ‘Letters of a traveller’, has). A ‘neo-argonautic’ myth would re-articulate the relative value of such symbolic agents as Medea, Jason and Orpheus and position this re-articulation (and re-evaluation) in the centre of a modernizing project; just as or much like Chavchavadze did with another triad of symbolic agents, namely, the cultured Georgian aristocrat-becoming-a-member of an intelligentsia, the Russian imperial officer and the Caucasian mountaineer, having transformed the Caucasian geopoetics of Romanticism (on the transformation programmed and paragonised by Chavchavadze: Manning 2012: 29-58).<sup>2</sup> I would

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<sup>1</sup> On mental or symbolic geography, its alternative designations and a tentative definition see: Greifenhagen 2002: 6-7. Possibly, the founding work of the ‘interdisciplinary subdiscipline’ addressing the phenomenon: (Gould, White 1986). Whether a symbolic appeal of a place ‘translates’ into its “residential desirability” (one of the key mental phenomena contributing to a mental map, in the conceptualisation of Gould and White), is of secondary importance for the present work.

<sup>2</sup> I base my idea of pre-modernist (in the sense of literary, not theological, modernism) Georgian perception of the Argonautic myth on: Andronikashvili 2019: 415-419; Nadareishvili 2012.

not identify such a myth with the Soviet project of “New Colchis” (on that project: Andronikashvili 2019: 423-426); I would call that project a Soviet adaptation-and-reduction of the hypothetical ‘neo-argonautic’ myth. I would see the cumulative image of “Colchis as sea and land” (Andronikashvili 2019: 426-428) as T’itsian T’abidze’s personal contribution to the myth, but, relying on my own reading of T’itsian’s poems, I would modify Andronikashvili’s conclusion, considering T’itsian less ‘tellurocentric’ than suggested. I would see Sandro Shanshiashvili’s modification of the image of Medea, as outlined in (Modebadze, Tsitsishvili 2011: 107-111), as (part of) another personal contribution to that myth by a modernist writer. To summarise my intuitive preconception of the ‘neo-argonautic’ myth: (a new) Medea would transform Jason into (a new) Orpheus; whereby the cultural and social agency of the Georgian elite, through one of its textual projections, the lyrical speaker in Georgian modernist poetry, would identify itself, in one or another degree, with any of the symbolic agencies/mythical protagonists. No Black-Sea-related myth of comparable importance exists in the memory of the other Pontic nations (the Romanian one could have approximated, but not matched it, if an influential myth of Ovid’s exile commemoration existed in Romanian culture and artistic literature).

Modernist literature could have been a major means to elaborate such a foundational myth among Georgians. Seascapes (unlike various landscapes) should have been attractive to modernism because they barely support a mimetic artistic stance and because they invite to appreciate ‘ambiguity’ and ‘space-boundlessness’ as preferred meta-categories of psychic, lingual and cultural experience. It is the unconscious attachment to sea – a symbolic sea – that is peculiar to international modernism which cannot but carry a spirit of up-rootedness and self-uprooting, as the one recognisable in Arthur Rimbaud’s “Bateau ivre” (compare Jaliashvili 2010: 238<sup>1</sup>), and a spirit of indeterminacy (on the latter: Perloff 1981). Georgian modernism produced the powerful image of (poetic) language which turns to poet into its object or half-object (T’itsian T’abidze, “Poem-landslide”), but it could have produced a marine analogue of that image. Christian, classical Graeco-Roman and modernist tradition avail a modernist’s imagination with the ready images of life as a sea and mind (but also poetic work) as a boat. Ideal-typically, a Georgian modernist work contributing to a ‘neo-argonautic’ myth should be expected to negotiate the similarities and differences between the ship Argo lead by Jason and/or Orpheus (on the one hand) and the “Drunken boat” by/of Rimbaud. Within such an imagined universe, female images would oscillate between the prototypes (or, indeed, archetypes) of Medea, Patman, Nestan-Daredzhan and Ophelia.<sup>2</sup> Put in the terms of a famous emblematic

1 Jaliashvili recalls the emblematic significance of this poem for modernism, distinguishing poet’s freedom and abandonment of mimetic poetics.

2 One could expect that cultures that are less attached to sea would be more responsive to the change brought by modernism. One could suggest a primal ‘zone of response’: one materialising into images of infernal yet attractive women, ‘decadent’ distillates of the chthonic femininity associated with sea by archaic (layers of) imagination (on the either basic or predominant femininity of marine im-

definition (1916) of Georgian modernism of its symbolist phase (see T'abidze 1934: 121), a Georgian modernist work contributing to a 'neo-argonautic' myth would not let a Prudhomme take away his vase within which a Hafez's rose has been planted; neither would let Besiki's spirit and muse be overwhelmed by the charm of Baudelaire's flowers of evil. To put it in the terms pointing to another emblematic image: such a work would offer insight on 'pre-marital trials' undergone by an Orpheus and a Medea, before their marriage could be arranged by a mind understanding, associating with and able to distance himself from both.<sup>1</sup>

In this article I will explore the marine motives and images in the oeuvre of one of the first-rate Georgian modernists of modernism's symbolist phase, Valerian Gaprindashvili. Indirectly, I will assess the potential of this oeuvre (or at least of those its fragments which are laden with marine imagery) to contribute to the aforementioned foundational myth. Whatever Gaprindashvili's contribution to the myth, and the myth's sociological and political weight and prospects, one should consider that myth an aborted one: aesthetically, by the top-down marginalisation of modernism in Soviet Georgia, and politically, by conquest and incorporation of Georgia into the Soviet Union. The myth's double abortion (or, rather, its radical reshaping) is neatly embodied by T'itsian T'abidze's travelogue *New Colchis*, a testimony for an ostensible cultural capitulation, as I shall demonstrate elsewhere. Gaprindashvili produced another remarkable document of such abortion, as demonstrated below.

## 2. Genres of poetic interaction with 'Nature'

Assessment of the poet's existential involvement in his imagined or narrated interaction with the sea will be a secondary task within the article.

I shall assess the intensity of marine experience, or the degree of (existential) involvement in interaction with (a) sea, minding four distinctions and using them as criteria. These distinctions are:

1) The respective poetic text reveals/suggests a "spectacle" vs. a "symphony" vs. a "drama" "of Nature"<sup>2</sup> (see Tymieniecka 1985: 4-16). A "spectacle" of sea within

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agery in Georgian myth and folklore: K'ik'nadze 2010: 137, 141; Abak'elia 2010: 21). Such a 'zone' is apparent in the obsessed attention of Gaprindashvili's poetry with the image of Ophelia), and, in a subtler way, in the attachment of Gaprindashvili and T'itsian T'abidze to the image of Pat'man: the woman symbolising Avtandil's specific loss of social and moral status in One in the ounce's fur, his subsuming-and-making-use of the 'liquid' world-order symbolised by the marine state of Gulansharo and Pat'man herself (Zurab K'ik'nadze (2010: 137) underlines the specificity of that state and the significance of Avtandil's act).

1 In a 1917 article titled "Leila", Grigol Robakidze "claimed that Georgia was destined to accomplish a special mission" (Chkhartishvili 2021: 388): "After all Georgia is a fragment of the East. We should not forget our cradle. Precious is Western Europe, but for the sake of Europe we cannot abandon the East. It would be better if we marry them and celebrate the wedding as a traditional Georgian feast" (ibid.; English trans. by Chkhartishvili).

2 The disavowal of the 'Nature vs. Culture' distinction in postmodern environmental aesthetics (Morton 2007: 1-28) does not devalue the distinction between 'genres' of perceiving of/communi-

a poem would suggest a relatively low level of experiential intensity, one that does not result in involvement; a “symphony” would suggest an experience on the verge of involvement; and a “drama” – the engagement of the utmost core of a person deliberating between or loyal to both Christianity and post-Christian modernity: his free will.

2) Marine imagery is introduced with vs. without reference to embeddedness in ‘real’ (memorised and bodily) experiences of the implicit or explicit author (see Alexander 1985: 80).–The difference can be briefly described as: figural frame vs. no frame (or presence of psychological or an abstract frame); ‘I need vs. need no physical-world introduction in order to identify imagination, or romanticist-modernist self, with the sea’. This typology excludes non-romanticist and non-modernist ways to relate the self and the sea, but it is applicable to our case.-

Identifying the self with sea may stem from personal experience, but can be a tribute to modernist ideology. So the lack of figural frame, or “literal landscape”, in a work from the modernist epoch can signify different things: an experience of the sea element so strong, that the self has lost from sight the topographical ground of that experience; a genuine identification of one’s self with some idea of the sea; or tribute to fashion. Under the first option a “spectacle” of the sea is hardly possible, we would have a “symphony” or “drama”. Under the second one all three genres seem (equally?) possible. Under the third (tribute to fashion) “spectacle” is the likeliest genre, for it is the most energy-sparing. (This is a preliminary allocation, however. A strategy to master various generic approaches to a fashionable topic, idea etc. is not sparing at all, and some authors adopt such strategy).

3) Marine imagery reproduces ancient topoi (see Curtius [1953] 2013: 92, 128-129 etc) vs. (claims that it) brings out current experience. “In Aeschylus, *Prometeus* (88 ff.) invokes the ether, winds, streams, sea, earth, and sun: they must witness that he, the god, suffers” (Curtius [1953] 2013: 89). “The Roman poets are wont to compare the composition of a work to a nautical voyage. [...] The epic poet voyages over the open sea in a great ship, the lyric poet on a river in a small boat” (ibid: 128). “The ‘boat of the mind’ is already a commonplace in late Antiquity” (ibid: 130), which was adopted by medieval Christian literature (on its Georgian uses: datašvili 2010: 81-87).<sup>1</sup>

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cating with natural elements. The generic distinction helps relativise and historicise both positions on the former one. To simplify a bit, environmental aesthetics rationalises intuitions grounded in “symphonic” and “dramatic” responses to elements.

1 In translating the title of Rimbaud’s “Bateau ivre” (note that Rimbaud has avoided the possibly tempting alliteration and inner quasi-rhyme of \*Navire ivre), Georgian symbolists (e.g. gaprindašvili 1990: 135; “კომუნარებს” (“To the communars”): “ის თქვენთან არის – კატასტროფის ხარზი მგოსანი, / თვით არტურ რემზო, გაგიჟებულ ბრძოლის უნარიით: / მთვრალი ხომალდის კაპიტანი და ჯვაროსანი, / შორ სივრცეების მეოცნებე და კომუნარი.”) and scholars (e.g. Jaliashvili 2010: 238) alike prefer ხომალდი (sea ship, possibly big and battle one) to ნავი (just boat) and გემი (ship, not necessarily a big and a marine one). One possible reason is the (in)voluntary contamination between Rimbaud’s boat, the “battleship” “Argo”, and the battleship “Aurora”. A

High dependence on topoi could indicate a lower experiential intensity, insofar we speak of romanticism and modernism (yet some modernist writers, let us call them now ‘neo-conservative’, can use topoi both frequently and to express a core aspect of their ‘message’ – like Viacheslav Ivanov in Russian symbolism, e.g.).

From the perspective of the “creativist” artistic paradigm of “solitary mind”<sup>1,2</sup> the use of topoi suggests first of all non-immediateness of experience; a “literal landscape” can indicate the opposite. We can actually unify two of the distinctions employed as two criteria into a single one: “literal landscape” vs. topos vs. presence of none (vs. presence of both?).

4) Marine imagery can refer to Black Sea vs. to any sea. One should expect the former feature from a post-symbolist work and the latter one from a (proto)symbolist.

This distinction alone tells us nothing about the intensity of experience. The distinction can be viewed as a concretisation or a transposition of the distinction between the presence vs. lack of “literal landscape”.

Distinctions 2, 3 and 4 can be merged into a complex one. An account of an experience can leave the topographic aspects behind to focus on the ‘substance’ of the experiencing personality; it can do the same with the geographic aspect, but also keep it intact, as some kind of a link to the territorial world outside the personality, its demons and its angels; next, the focus on the experiencing personality could attain the density and formulaic simplicity of a topos (in our case, with marine imagery); lastly, an author could decide to try the possibilities of the topos without even hinting at or having in mind any personal marine experience (at that point language would have taken the floor from the human person). In this ad hoc ontology a certain ‘moment of encounter’ emerges as the opposite of a human or lingual entity that is closed on itself.

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related reason might have been the will to differentiate between it and the Christian image of “boat of soul” (on the latter in Georgian context: Datashvili 2010: 81-87). Briefly on the significance of Rimbaud for the “Blue Horns”: Mtvarelidze 2010: 191.

1 Good vantage points for the study of the psychological, aesthetic and cultural disposition of the “solitary mind” in the oeuvre of Gaprindashvili could be his “მართობის დედოფალი (ნინა მაყაშვილს)” (“The q/Queen of s/Solitude/l/Loneliness (To Nina Maq’ashvili)’; Gaprindashvili 1990: 166).

2 According to the views of what can be considered a kind of school in late Soviet and Russian historical poetics, represented, most notably, by Sergei Averintsev, and Valerii Tiupa, romanticism, 19th-century realism, modernism and part of the “historical avant-garde” are said to pertain to the artistic paradigm of counter-traditionalist creativism (and its mental correlate, “solitary mind”) which came after “reflective traditionalism”. Yet already after the symbolist stage of modernism, artistic mentality oscillates between and diverges along four options: radicalisation of counter-traditionalism, switch to neo-traditionalism, to the “authoritarian mentality” of socialist realism, or to the “swarm mentality” or neo-primitivism (Tjupa 1995; Skljarov 2012: 12-36 and bibliography there). Counter-traditionalist works, generally, do not rely on topoi, have forgotten them or try to obscure their dependence on them. Classical late-twentieth century Western works on modernism and avant-garde (by Renato Poggioli, Mihai Calinescu, Peter Bürger, with the partial exception of Poggioli) generally ignore the post-symbolist split, being preoccupied with the (radicalisation of the) counter-traditionalist mainstream.

The theoretic considerations from the last few paragraphs have, however, only peripheral significance for the core interest of the present article. They provide a framework for a preliminary classification of the poems under focus and for a subsequent analysis of *change* in Gaprindashvili's marine sensibility. As for the sensibility itself, its 'realness' or 'bookishness' are almost irrelevant to the myth-generating (or myth-supporting) power of Gaprindashvili's marine imagery: people are often enchanted by "lies" and insensitive to "true stories". An estimation of a motive's and an image's 'memorisability' and of an image's 'convincingness' (if an image in an artistic work is expected to be convincing) would be more informative, but this is an unfulfillable task for me now.

### 3. An overview of Gaprindashvili's works containing marine motives and images

More than thirty poems by Gaprindashvili (hereafter, G.) mention sea or elaborate its image; they were being created in 1914-1939, that is, practically across the whole of his artistic career. Some poems are prominent in G.'s maritime 'discourse' with the paratext of their titles – "ზღვა" ('(The s/)Sea'<sup>1</sup>, "Batumi, 1922"<sup>2</sup>), "ზღვაზე" ('At the sea', "September, Kobuleti, 1935"<sup>3</sup>) and "ზღვას" ('To/Addressing the sea', "7 February, 1939"), "ცირკი ზღვის პირას" ('Circus at the sea shore', "27 March, 1939"), "წიგნიდან ზღვა" ('From the book *Sea*', "17 June, 1939")<sup>4</sup>, "ზღვა და ბელადი" ('Sea and the Chieftain', 1939, acc. to [gaprindašvili 1944]), – while others (solely) with their texts proper. The poems of the first kind spill the silhouette<sup>5</sup> of sea into the supratextual entities which comprise the respective poems, while those of the second kind retain the element within themselves. Thus they contribute differently to the cumulative image of sea on the level of an oeuvre (all works of an author). Sea (as any other word or image or thematic nebula) within an oeuvre is both mappable and depictable-as-if-from-above, and "spills" can be likened to islands in a sea and to zones<sup>6</sup> where waves break into foam. Poems mentioning sea in their

1 All translations of titles and textual fragments in this article, unless indicated otherwise, are mine. Literalism and non-conclusiveness in translating are deliberate; hence the 'semantic' single quotes (upon first mention of a title, standard "double quotes for shorter works" and italics for longer ones are used). Minding the importance of word-order in a verse text, I preserved the original word-order wherever it did not make the translation hard to understand. A theoretic guide for my intuition how to translate has been Henri Meschonnic (1999).

2 Dates and places of completion of G.'s works, unless indicated otherwise, are given according to (Gaprindashvili 1990).

3 The prominence given to the designation of month at dispense of place cannot be interpreted here.

4 The designation "From the book..." could be a mystification.

5 A sole mentioning of the word "sea" can be considered a verbal analogue of a silhouette, not of an image.

6 I would compare a littoral zone with an initial or final work within a oeuvre, a book of poems, a poetic cycle.

titles but maintaining it in a central position; and poems mentioning marine creatures or phenomena in their titles (like ‘Dolphin and m/Medusa’<sup>1</sup>)<sup>2</sup> occupy intermediate positions, however, I will include them in the second group.

Generally, “sea” is, most notably, fourfold in G.’s works: an aspect of a dual universal element, whose other aspect is music; an otherworld, or maybe just the ‘other’ half of the world, or maybe just a link to the otherworld or the other part, on the verge between physicality and non-physicality; an empirical sea; a metaphor for the human masses. The former three meanings frequently conflate; all four of them meet only once, in “Sea and the Chieftain”.

The three poems containing “sea” in their titles in a kind of a central position form a telling intertextual sequence. It is tempting to view the title ‘Sea’ as indicating an instance of “locution” and “representation”; ‘At the sea’ – as referring to potential “illocution” and “expression”; ‘To the sea’ – as referring to (but not performing) “perlocution” and “appellation” (it could have been titled ‘(Oh,) sea’, in the vocative, but was not).<sup>3</sup>

Each of these three poems summons a number of marine motives. I analyse the poems in another article which is under print elsewhere. I can only say here that the post-hoc constructed sequence of three poems<sup>4</sup> can be viewed as a testimony – albeit based on a limited textual base – to an accelerating move (even surge) towards dis-solitude, self-dis-seclusion of the implied author.

A myth<sup>5</sup> has an illocutive force that is only partly and indirectly dependent from the illocutive force of verbal texts involved in its deployment. The aforementioned accelerating move speaks not for the power of the ‘neo-argonautic’ myth, but for G.’s will to partake in it.

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1 Actually, ‘(A d/)Dolphin and (a m/)Medusa’: “დეღვინი და მეღუზა” (“May, 1921”; gaprindašvili 1990: 112).

2 The presence or not of comma in poly-componental paratexts like “May, 1921” should be a matter of careful consideration in a critical edition (against the context of changing punctuation norms and the writer’s personal punctuation dispositions). Generally, comma’s presence would imply a bi-partite semantics of the paratext and an equal value of ‘May’ and ‘(May) 1921’, or of calendric and historical times.

3 I am juxtaposing in this paragraph the linguo-semiotic typologies of John Austin and Karl Bühler (2011: 34-39).

4 The supposition of intentional building of semantic links between the poems can be supported by detecting of, e.g., rare re-occurring phrases like “escort of waves”. This particular phrase, linking ‘To the sea’ with ‘Sea’, suggests, in particular, the femininity of sea in G.’s oeuvre (or at least in these two poems). The urge ‘Of your waves with the big escort / and strengths again bring me joy.’ (“შენი ტალღების დიდი ამალით / და ძლიერებით კვლავ გამახარე.”, third stanza) ‘remembers’ the descriptive fragment ‘With an alien escort came a woman [...]’ (“უცხო ამალით მოვიდა ქალი [...]).” To say it in the most non-engaging way, at different points of its linear deployment ‘To the sea’ is reminiscent of ‘Sea’, ‘Dolphin and m/Medusa’, “ნოჟარი” (‘Drinking shell’, on it see below) and other marine poems.

5 My understanding of myth is indebted to Alexei Losev’s ‘Dialectics of myth’ (1928) and to Carl Gustav Jung’s theory of archetypes. I would briefly define “myth” as a narratively and ‘tropically’ (from “tropes”) deployed presence of an “archetype”.

In poems exposing marine motives without being centred on sea in their titles, sea is just a detail or a secondary character within a spectacle, symphony or drama. Most of them only marginally, if at all, contribute to a ‘neo-argonautic’ myth(ology) but nevertheless they deserve attention, for two reasons.

First, sea and coast are the most expected settings, symbolic and empirical, for a ‘neo-argonautic’ myth, despite the outright geo-topographical indifference of the most influential proponent(s) of ‘neo-argonautic’ mythology within the cultural domain which nurtured G.’s creativity and within which he had to socialise his works. I would identify that “domain” with the complex and multilingual literary field of the pre-WWI Russian Empire and, in particular, with the decadent-and-symbolist artistic movement within that state;<sup>1</sup> and those “proponents” with the Russian symbolist Andrei Bely and the artistic circle Золотое руно (‘Golden Fleece’) organised by him.<sup>2</sup> *Non-detachment* of imagination from territory, which seems to pervade Georgian ‘neo-argonautism’ (as seen from works of G., T’itsian T’abidze<sup>3</sup> and Sandro Shanshiashvili<sup>4</sup>), in distinction to the Russian one, might have either geocultural roots (different perception of (land) scapes and territory) or poetological ones (late symbolism and post-symbolism differ from early symbolism in their attitude to territory). Whatever the case, the issue cannot be dealt in this article; outlining all uses of marine motives within an oeuvre (e.g., Gaprndashvili’s) can be a basis for such an exploration.

Second, a general picture of marine motives (and images) in G.’s oeuvre would help assess the weight of ‘neo-argonautism’ within (by definition broader) preoccupation with sea.

An exploration of G.’s ‘dialogue’ with other proponents of ‘neo-argonautism’ (or, more properly: participants in ‘neo-argonautica’), to start with the most voiceful and persistent<sup>5</sup> one, A. Bely, can be a matter of another research work. That would, of course, draw upon several articles by Luigi Magarotto and Harsha Ram.

Of this group, “სიზმარი” (‘Dream’, “March, 1917”) and “ნოქარი” (‘A shell / porcelain<sup>6</sup>/glass/faience bowl’<sup>7</sup>, “28 August, 1922”) are probably the most saturated with culturally significant semantics.

1 I do not want to underestimate the role of G.’s Francophone orientation and of his aborted 1910s stay in Paris.

2 Study of that circle started with a 1984 article by Alexander Vasil’evich Lavrov.

3 See Lyutskanov 2019: 451-452, 457.

4 See Modebadze, Tsitsishvili 2011: 109.

5 Between 1927 and 1930, he made three months-long trips to Southern Caucasus.

6 These two options (actually we have homonyms here) are indicated in (Chubinashvili 1984).

7 “ნოქარი” is an archaic word. The latter two translation suggestions are based on the digitised version of Orbeliani 1991 [1713] (<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gwdict/index.php?a=term&d=8&t=33233>): “ჭიქა თუ ქაშანური [...]”, where a reference to 4 Kings (in Western Christianity, 2 Kings) 21:13 is added: “მოუსპო იერუსალიმი ვითარცა ნოქარი ერთი დათხეული ზედაპირსა თვისსა”. According to the English Bible (King James Version): “and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down” (<https://www.tanakhml.org/d12.php2xml?sfr=11&prq=21&psq=1&lvl=99&pnt=nul&acc=nul&dia=nul&enc=nul&xml=>). The poem is not present in the 1926, 1937, 1944 and 1964 editions of G.’s poetry. ‘Drinking shell’ seems to me the most apt synthetic (integral) translation.



#### 4. 'Dream' (1917) as an epicentre of 'neo-argonautica'

Among poems exposing marine motives without mentioning sea in the title, "Dream" is especially worth analysing in this article, because it deploys a narrative simile of the argonautic myth rich in historical allusions.

'Dream' (Gaprindashvili 1990: 48-49) inscribes a symbolic image of the Russian events of February 1917<sup>1</sup> into the ones of the French revolution of 1789, and both – into the Argonautic myth. He imbues this complex image with the specific sense of macrohistoric indeterminacy (and possibilities) felt in Georgia in 1917.<sup>2</sup> Sea is more a character than an image here, but the poem stages an event, even a drama, within which sea has only secondary importance.

Already in the first stanza (of eight lines, followed by quatrains), sea carries male Western/revolutionary danger which, at the level of dream, is neutralised; and a musical/string structure of the universe, subtextually bordering a musical-aquatic, or string-wave one, is revealed. At first glance, 'the ship of the night visits the shore [coming from open sea]' ("ღამის ბომალდი ეწვია ნაპირს"), is a simple metaphor of night or nocturnal darkness (maybe introducing to the semantic field of an appointment). However, given that on Georgian coast the sea is on the west and land on the east, it turns out that the (battle)ship of the night comes to the shore from land. The implied author's standpoint turns out to be of a shore (borderstrip?) agency (population) facing (danger) not only (from the) sea but also (from the) land. Notwithstanding these considerations, one can recognise in one of the semantic layers of the poem an allegory about a punished Jason. A musical instrument, *kamancha*, appears as the metaphorical mirror of both danger and (self)punishment; music and killing fuse. Verses 5-7 ("შავი მარატი გადმოსხეს ნავით. / ხანჯლის ქამანჩას ის დაეკოდა, / ველარ სტკებობდა მთვარის ნავით") are indicative: 'Black Marat was transferred by a boat. / [A/The] dagger's *kamancha* broke/cut it [Marat's boat/ something]<sup>3</sup> / [it=*kamancha*] could no more sweeten [=please] him with the moon's breeze'. This instrument embodies an Iranian-Caucasian-Anatolian cultural genealogy which is hard to ignore.<sup>4</sup> (Relying on hypothetical additional meanings of the words ბომალდი and ნავი, it would even be possible to identify the shore with the surface

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1 "In February 1917, the Social Democrats came to power in Transcaucasia" (Jones 2005: 237; see also *ibid*: 245, 254).

2 Cf.: "January 1917 was met by the Georgian community bitter-heartedly. [...] 1918 will doubtlessly bring us back that which so ... grabbed from us 1801. [...]" ('Anno 1917: a political analysis', by a "K. G.", journal *Prometheus*, no. 1, 1918, in: *Lit'erat'uruli zhurnalebi* 2011, I: 281-285, cit. 281).

3 This translation is valid if the verb is tripersonal and "Marat" is the indirect object, compare: გული დაეკოდემა = hurts his heart, lit. 'hurts him the heart'. If the verb is bipersonal: '(A/The) dagger's *kamancha* hurt/castrated him'. Grammatically incorrect but perceptively likely: '(A/The) dagger's *kamancha* he broke'.

4 According to Chubinashvili ([1884] 1984), ხანჯალი (dagger) is a word of Persian origin. What matters here is not whether he is right or not, but whether the word was perceived or not as 'Persian-ate' in the early 20th century.

where *kamancha*'s bow and strings meet. The circumstance that *kamancha* has in its body a membrane from fish's skin or bladder<sup>1</sup> could support such an interpretation).

If a receptive or an ideological stereotype exists which links the sea with danger, it is reiterated here. A notable prefiguration or simile of 'Dream's first stanza is contained in G.'s "დაისი პირველი" ('First twilight'; Gaprindashvili 1919: 7): '[...] deceives this evening like a veil. / And the sun bit by bit in the water abyss sinks for rest, / as a [battle] ship charged with dark Hamlets' ("[...] აცბიერბება ეს საღამო როგორც ვუალი. / და მზე თანდათან წყლის უფსკრულში ჩაესვენება, / როგორც ხომალდი დატვირთული ბნელ გ/ჰამლეტებით. [...]').

The title, '[A/The] dream', frames the lyro-epical event in a way that helps seeing it as a transparent anti-'colonial' allegory. Since the times of the Old Testament, God sends allegoric or non-allegoric dreams to would-be fulfillers or victims of His will. The poem conveys a kind of 'de-colonising' (de-Hellenising, de-Europeanising, de-Russifying, and, in an *anticipatory mode*, de-Sovietising) message. A certain Jason-Marat-Kerenskii(?Zhordania)... is neutralised by an alluded-to female figure reminiscent of Medea and Charlotte Corday<sup>2</sup>, but also from within. Inasmuch as a poet is associable with Orpheus, and inasmuch the presence of an Orpheus is expectable on any ship approaching Georgia after the precedent of Argo, one can speculate that G. identifies himself, or his implied author, with Orpheus.<sup>3</sup> Male agency in poem possibly splits into, or fluctuates between, an objectified protagonist ("black Marat") and an Orpheus not seen but felt through his presence (and interpretable as an 'inner voice' of "Marat" rather than his antagonist). Hence we possibly have the following archetypal, or mythical, situation: an Orpheus-inspired Medea, or Medea playing a musical piece for *kamancha* by Orpheus, neutralises (repels) a Jason. Investing musical instruments with historiosophical and geopolitical meaning is *at least* as old as Grigol Orbeliani in Georgian poetry ("მიბაძვა საათნავს" ['Imitation of Saiatnova'], 1833; Orbeliani 1879: 25-27); however, there we had a contest between instruments. Here, only local(ist)/Eastern resistance has musical voice. That contest between instruments is re-staged (or staged as a mismatch between their components) by G. in his "Dolphin and m/Medusa" ("ვით ავი სკრიპკა და ყრუ მიზრაფი, / მტრები ერთმანეთს ჩუმათ ხვდებიან", 'like evil skripka and deaf mizrap, / enemies each other silently meet'), where it becomes an allegory of a failed intercivlisational synthesis in Georgia.

<sup>1</sup> "კორპუსს გადაკრული აქვს მემბრანა – თევზის ტყავი ან ბუმტი", see the entry in the digitised version of [nadiraže et al. 2011], <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gwdict/index.php?a=term&d=39&t=4661>.

<sup>2</sup> G. makes her presence in his oeuvre explicit through another poem, the sonnet "Jean-Paul Marat" (1926: 114).

<sup>3</sup> An association between Orpheus and an intratextual projection of G. is evident in "ოფელია-ევრიდიკა" ('Ophelia-Eurydice', "14 January, 1921"; Gaprindashvili 1990: 106) and in "Inscription on an anthology book" (1940, indicated in: 1944: 73). The relevant passage in the second poem reads: "ამა წიგნისა დაუვიწყარ მშვენიერ ხმაზე, / ვით ორფელსი, ევრიდიკას, – თავის ყოლაოზს, – / მივეყვები ხსოვნის გაფითრებულ ნაზ საქანას [...]" ('Of this book in the unforgettable beautiful voice, / like Orpheus Euridice – his guide – I follow / of memory the gentle swing turned pale'; cit. after: gaprindašvili 1944: 73).

However, the failure characterises *Russian*-Oriental interaction, while another poem refers to the *Western*-Oriental one, saying nothing of the outcome: “გრძელი მიზრავით პაგანინი გააპობს სურათს” (‘With the long mizraph [=plectrum for tar] Paganini cuts a picture’; “Abrakadabra” [1926: 83-84]).<sup>1</sup>

The second stanza strengthens the ambiguity in the male hero’s image and supports the hypothesis of a historically multi-layered hero. The text of the stanza alludes to the misalliance between Queen Tamar and Iurii Bogoliubskii. The “Russian (prince) who was called by the Georgians the Scythian”, her first husband, was dismissed and exiled (sent on boat to Constantinople) after “the Satan enter[ed his] heart” and “incited him to provoke Tamar [...] with all kinds of words” (*Kartlis Tskhovreba* 2014: 245), or, according to another chronicler, after he “displayed his Scythian manners: together with loathsome drunkenness, he began to do many improper things” [ibid: 290].

Third to fifth stanzas shape the image of Black Marat as a personification of Death. Maybe there is a hint to the Dance of Death and to the Flying Dutchman. If the second is true, Tamar could be identified with his would-be bride, the only kind of person capable of saving him from the curse of roaming (at least according to R. Wagner’s interpretation of the legend). Minding the allusion to past and imminent revolutions, one is tempted to read between the lines the implicit author’s guess that Georgia can humanise the revolution. At the same time, the quasi-demonic yet ‘high’ image of Jason/Marat undergoes ‘prophanisation’, ‘lowering’, being attributed the aspect or masque of a pirate (3<sup>rd</sup> stanza).

If the poem, and especially its marine chronotope, is read like an intimate mirror (as suggested by Jaliashvili [2010: 238, 242]), one can identify the “b/Black Marat” and his implied prototypes, embodiments and similes with the implied author; the poem then would border a verbal self-exorcism.<sup>2</sup>

To summarise, the text is about association between revolution and death. Diverse cultural arch-protagonists are recalled: Jason, the Flying Dutchman, Queen Tamar who intimidates the sea (K’ik’nadze 2010: 140-144); and probably the imagery of dance macabre (Dance of Death). Sea has indirect presence: as a carrier of danger (ship(s)). The association of revolution/danger with sea prefigures the banalised emblem of the October coup d’etat/revolution, the battleship “Aurora”.

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1 There is no need to say that here we have a tradition that was rephrased, but also partly prophanised, in young T’itsian’s famous declaration ‘The rose of Hafez, I put / into [Pierre-Joseph] Proudhon’s [sic; Sully Prudhomme’s?] vase / In the garden of Besiki I planted Baudelaire’s / evil flowers” (L’art poetique, “Moscow, 1916”; T’abidze 1934: 121-122, cit. 121).

2 We could speculate that the poem is a surrealist account of the existential situation presented in “ორეულებთან შეხვედრა ხიდზე”, ‘Meeting with (the) doubles on the/a bridge’ (“[1915-1919]”; Gaprindashvili 1990: 84).

## 5. Semantic chains and clusters among all poems containing marine motives

1 “*Spectacular*” to “*symphonic*” motives. They belong to a descriptive level which necessitates to evoke neither the moment of speech (put in linguistic terms), nor the actuality of a marine experience (encounter with sea).

A) ‘A link to the otherworld or to the *other half* of the world’

Sea, or what we are likely to identify the sea with, is the space between shadows and the incarnate life; this space can be identified with a mirror: “[...] / and the shadows stare at me like grey masks, / me and them between are waves unsurmountable” (“[...] / და აჩრდილები მიცქერაიან რუხი მასკებით, / ჩემ და მათ შორის ტალღებია გარდაუალი: / [...]”) (“First twilight” [gaprindašvili 1919: 7] = “Synaxar of twilights” [Gaprindashvili 1926: 7]); “grew larger the mirror – into large-waves sea having transformed (itself)” (“გადიოდა სარკე – ზვირთებიან ზღვად გარდამქნილ”) (“მე – სარკეში”, ‘Me – in the mirror’ [1926: 28]). A trace of this ‘cosmology’ is seen in “Abrakadabra” (1926: 83-84)<sup>1</sup>.

Sea is a screen upon which (non)events, (non)attitudes etc from the material world of here-and-now are projected, in order, possibly, to change their modality (‘Marriages in the twilight’, “ჯვარისწერები დაისში” [gaprindašvili 1919: 12]): ‘Stay on the waves T’itsian and Kolombina’ (“სდგანან ტალღებზე ტიციანი და კოლომბინა”).

A trace of identification between sea and air is visible, but also of convergence between macroscopic landscape art and mesoscopic *nature morte* and portrait, in ‘The moon of Machabeli’ (“მაჩაბლის მთვარე”; 1990: 123, cit. after 1926: 163): ‘Moon of Machabeli, take care of thieves! [...] on the walls dead parrots. / [...] of the candle shadows, false stars. [...] like a medusa in ethanol swims forth / the head of Machabeli with open eyes’ (“მაჩაბლის მთვარე, ქურდებს მოხედე! / [...] / კედლებზე მკვდარი თუთიყუშები. / სანთლის აჩრდილნი, ცრუ ვარსკლავები. / [...] / როგორც მედუზა სპირტში დაცურავს / მაჩაბლის თავი ღია თვალებით.”).

Sea is the link to long-term historical memory: “წიგნიდან – ზღვა” (‘From the book “Sea”, “17 June 1939”; gaprindašvili 1990: 273): ‘the sea wave remembers the past well, / it remembers Rome and Byzantium’ (“ზღვის ტალღას ახსოვს წარსული კარგად, / მას ახსოვს რომი და ბიზანტია.”); Argonauts are not mentioned, but are hinted as the precedent for Rome and Byzantium. Sea (not mentioned but implied) is (like) (the medium of) memory: “წარწერა ანთოლოგიის წიგნზე” (‘Inscription on an anthology book’; gaprindašvili 1990: 283-284, cit. after gaprindašvili 1944: 73): ‘the/an anthology is a guarantee (/safety) of(/for) immortality / with the Argonauts of the Golden Fleece and the golden w/Word’ (with

1 ‘And like a fish will start moaning the carmine mirror’ (“[...] და როგორც თევზი დაიკვნესებს სარკე ალური. / [...]”).

‘guarantee’ and ‘Argonauts’ in rhyme position; “ანთოლოგია უკვდების არის თავდები / ოქროს ვერძის და ოქროს სიტყვის არგონავტებით”<sup>1</sup>).

Sea is a *possible* key to immortality, though it turns out that it is not, according to the first stanza of “ძიება” (‘Search’; “Surami, 2 August 1939”): ‘I sought long time (for) immortality / in the movement of stars and of clouds, / but I was not able to find its receipt / neither in the books nor in the deepest sea’ (“მე უკვდადებას დიდხანს ვეძებდი / ვარსკლავების და ღრუბლების სვლაში, / მაგრამ ვერ ვპოვე მისი რეცეპტი / ვერც წიგნებში და ვერც უღრმეს ზღვაში.”; Gaprindashvili 1990: 275), the declaration of which can be viewed as a disappointed echo of “To the sea”, although the stanza looks like a piece of “rhetorical rationalism”, that is, one in which the mentioning of sea is due to the necessity of mentioning all elements (and not because of special interest in it). The parallelism and, hence, the possible and half-pronounced synonymy between “clouds” and “sea” hints at a cosmology noticed here above. Moreover, sea appears as the half of a wider life-world, one that explicitly comprises ‘culture’ and ‘nature’: it is the other half of that whose first half are “books”. In the last stanza, the lyrical speaker says that revolution has pulled him aloof, has made him see the greatness of the people, and that now he testifies for heroism to be the real truth; there is a grammatical option *not* to specify, *whose* heroism, and the option is utilised.

At least two more poems by G. under the same title, “Search”, were completed: on 28 March 1928 (published in: gaprindašvili 1944: 6-7; 1990: 190; “ჩემი სულია განძების ყუთი...” [‘My soul is a box of treasures...’]), and in 1926 at the latest (date unknown to me; gaprindašvili 1926: 191; 1990: 180; “შენ უნდა ნახო ჭეშმარიტება...” [‘You have to see (the) truth...’]). The earliest looks like an optimistic epitome of modernist experience and the experience of a non-communist intellectual from the first (at the most) five years of Bolshevik rule in Georgia (1921-1926). It includes the path of sea and the experience of a sailor in the life-repertoire of him who, having “seen” “truth”, will for sure go to heaven after his death; a quest for truth and rich, and nomadic, experience of the *non*-transcendental world seem enough for that: ‘Approach with more truthfulness / the sea and the desert as if [you approach] hope. / Be roaming, always walking. / Be a fisherman, be a horse-herder’ (“მიუახლოვდი მეტი სისწორით / ზღვას და უდაბნოს როგორც რომ იმედს. / იყავ მოხეტე, მუდამ იარე. / იყავ მეთევზე, იყავ მეჯოგე.”) (lines 7-10). There are indirect signs of a ‘Byzantine’ (Eastern Orthodox) Christian undercurrent in the poem. First, there are other words translatable as “truth” in Georgian, besides “ჭეშმარიტება”: “სიმართლე”, “სინამდვილე”. Yet when one replies to the words of joy on the occasion of Christ’s Resurrection (“Christ arose!”), s/he uses a word with the same root as “ჭეშმარიტება”: “ჭეშმარიტად!”. Second, it is noteworthy that the fictional interlocutor is urged to *see* the truth (line 1), which means that it has

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<sup>1</sup> These are the last two lines of an ambivalent sonnet, with stanzas shaped like in an Italian one, and rhymes (supported on syntactic level) as in an English.

an unalienable sensual aspect. Third, the discourse is (unobtrusively) antinomic (e.g., in lines 9-10).

The 1928 poem bears a clearer imprint of some engagement with Christian worldview: ‘I however (am disposed to) believe in the Revelation moment (lit. ‘sky’s/heaven’s disentanglement/opening moment’)’ (“მე მაინც მჯერა ცის გახსნის წუთი”), “I (am disposed to) believe – in me is the truth” (“მჯერა – ჩემშია ჭეშმარიტება”), etc. Sailorship has become a sign, or a sensual accompaniment, of something else, beyond sensuality (but still not identical to the final goal, heaven): ‘Like a sailor, ... / [...] // Indeed, even once an unknown jewel / I cannot touch/reach with trembling hand, / every single day I wait for the holiday, / (in order) to drink the bowl with dry throat’ (“ვით მეზღვაური, ჩავყვინთავ ზღვაში, / რომ ვნახო ფსკერზე ოქრო და ლალი, / ერთად დარაზმულ ტალღების სვლაში / რომ დავიმკვიდრო ლურჯთვალა ქალი. [...] ნუთუ ერთხელაც უცნობ სამკაულს / მე ვერ დავწვდები მთრთოლვარე ხელით, / მუდამდღე ველი მე დღესასწაულს, / რომ შევსვა თასი გამშრალი ყელით”). The poem can be seen as a performative rewriting of “Dolphin and m/Medusa”, whereby the implied author has stepped into the marine scenery to play the role of the d/Dolphin (a spectacle became a drama).

Sea is a secondary figure in these apparent worldview transformations, yet it is revoked as a witness. One can trace the impact of the “argonautism” of Russian symbolism (and personally of Andrei Belyi) here; of the apparent Christianisation of the implied author of the Russian post-symbolist Nikolai Gumilev. Most importantly, in these poems G. shapes the silhouette of an Orpheus who displaces or surpasses *as if from within* Jason, as a protagonist of the argonautic myth (if the myth is to survive at all). The last of the three “Search”-es probably interrupts this development: can we assume that an Orpheus has gone underworld to save his “Eurydice” and that servile speech could be interpreted as a refrainment from speech? Or maybe “heroism”, mentioned in the last stanza of the 1939 poem, applied to the underworld hero Orpheus, not to the symbolic heir of Jason atop the Soviet superstate?

#### B) ‘The otherworld/other half *itself*’

I am aware that the semantic divide between this group of manifestations of the marine element and the previous one (outlined in section A) is not clear-cut one, maintaining it is heuristic.

In “ორეულთან შეხვედრა ხიდზე” (‘Meeting with a/the double on a/the bridge’, “1915-1919”; Gaprindashvili 1990: 84) some dark (1<sup>st</sup> stanza) and dangerous (2<sup>nd</sup> stanza) part of the universe is wave-structured: ‘In wicked night I am banned from approaching you on the bridge. / When I go – appeals to me in dark voice the water. / [...] // Rise like huge waves before my eyes ferocious lions – / of the road keepers [...] / water will be the [=my?] only shelter’ (“ბოროტ ღამეში მეკრძალება ხიდზე გარება. / როცა მივდივარ – დამიძახებს ბნელი ხმით წყალი. / [...] // აზვირთდებიან ჩემ თვალის წინ მკაცრი ლომები – / გზის დარაჯები [...] /

ოქნება წყალი ერთადერთი თავშესაფარი.”). It is associable, as evident in the 3<sup>rd</sup> stanza, with sea and the feminine element, and, moreover, it is inventive, playing not only on man’s sexual instinct but on his pity/conscience (hence not just a beautiful woman but Ophelia): ‘Comes up from the water Ophelia on a sea dog sitting / [...] / but [go] away from me, gentle rider!’ (“ამოვა წყლიდან ოფელია ზღვის ძაღლზე მჯდომი, / [...] / მაგრამ შორს ჩემგან დამლუპავო ნაზო მხედარო!”). (Determining the folklore context of the image falls outside the scope of the present article).

The motif splits into ‘sea-as-music’ and ‘sea-as-feminine-danger’; or wanes into a forest or wood being compared to a sea (“ტყეს”, ‘To the forest/wood’; gaprindašvili 1990: 158-160). While insignificant in the genealogy of the motif, this turn is more than significant in the comprehension and recognition of sea as a possible point of reference for the implied author. Comparing terrestrial objects to marine ones (and not vice versa) is a step towards adopting the habitus of a sailor.

Sea and music (less frequently poetry) converge, just as paysage and naturmort, in several early poems: “დაისი მესამე” (‘Third twilight’; 1919: 9)<sup>1</sup>, “სადამო ლორნეტში” (‘Evening in the lorgnette’; 1919: 14)<sup>2</sup>, “ქიმერიონი” (‘Kimerion(i)’; 1919: 15)<sup>3</sup>, “კონცერტზე” (‘At the concert’; 1926: 140-141)<sup>4</sup>, “პაგანინი” (‘Paganini’, “February, 1918”;<sup>5</sup> 1926: 143<sup>5</sup>; 1990: 65)<sup>6</sup>, “Dolphin and

1 ‘A steed(/a winged horse) steers into the drunken café the audacious poet / [...] / into the misty people he darts with a sonnet / and his disrupted body rumples (the)waves’ “რამს შემოაგდებს მთვრალ კაფეში ლალი მგოსანი / [...] / ნისლიან ხალხში ის სონეტით გადავარდება / **და მისი ტანი დამსხვრეული ტალღებს ბარდება.**” (ბარდება: cf.: “ბარდიI [...] ბუჩქების ან ბალახეული მცენარის ერთმანეთში გართხმულ-გადახლართული ღეროები”, “ეკალი და ბარდი”).

2 ‘Again (a) twilight – with the torch of eternal ruby, / [...] / Evil mumbs, P/paganini and chianuri, / where the waves boast while locked under bolt’ “ისევ დაისი – მარადიულ ლალის ჩირალით, / [...] / ავი ყბაყურა, პაგანინი და ჭიანური, / **სადაც ტალღები ამაყობენ გადარაზულნი.**” The title is indicative too: it implies a convergence between a land/seascape and theatre/opera hall.

3 In case we introduce the contextual information that the café which frequently hosted Georgian writers in the building of the Rustaveli Theatre was named on 16 June 1919 after the poem of Gaprindashvili (Tevzadze 2012: par. 38 from 137; compare: Ch’umburidze 2018: 450). Such a nomination of the café would suggest that the chronotopes of the poem and of the meetings and recitations in the café were at least marginally associated by Grigol Robakidze (who proposed the name) and his associates, G. himself included.

4 ‘The concert was heavy and good. / [...] / I have been hearing the seas wandering / and the most tender breeze of nanina’ (“იყო კონცერტი მძიმე და კარგი. / [...] / მესმოდა ზღვები მე **ხეტიალი** / და უნაზესი ქროლვა ნანინის.”).

5 ‘On the scene plays (a) Paganini an amber fiddle (chianuri). / The dark parterre unnoticeably fills in with water[.] / It is a flood. He hears the screams of the humans. / Before him swam up a fiddle (chianuri) – a new ship’ (“სცენაზე უკრავს პაგანინი ქარვის ჭიანურს. / ბნელი პარტერი შეუმჩნევლად ივსება წყალით / წარღვნაა. უსმენს ის კვილიებს ადამიანურს. / **მის წინ აცურდა ჭიანური – ნავი ახალი.** [...]”) (‘Paganini’; 1926: 143).

6 There are actually two different poems under one and the same title. Both are included in the 1990 edition (p. 65, 130). In the later one prominence gains a two-aspectual – semantic-acoustic – echo of the “drunken boat”, მთვრალი ნავი: “pale chianuri”, მკრთალი ჭიანური. Chianuri is counterposed within the poem’s plot to another musical instrument, kamancha. (‘Paganini’; 1990: 130). This poem will receive more attention in a separate article, devoted to the cultural-historical and cultural-political semantisation of names of musical instruments in Georgian romantic and modernist poetry.

Medusa”<sup>1</sup>; “Dolphin and Medusa”<sup>2</sup>; in “Third twilight” and “At the concert” sea is equated to the content of (instrumental) music). The ‘embrio’ of this ‘cosmology’ can be recognised in the idea of a wave-string, concretisable as a hydro-musical, structure of the universe which appears in one of the earliest works of G., the fragment “რკალიდან ‘ოცნება’” [‘From the cycle *Hope*’, “June, 1914”] (gaprindašvili 1990: 25): “ბნელი ტყე, როგორც ჩანგი სოველი, / წვიმიან ღამით ხმოვანობს ქარში. / [...] / ვით სკრიპკის ბუდე, ცა დაითალხა [...]” (“Dark forest, like a moisty chang, / in a rainy night sounds at the wind. / [...] / Like a fiddle (*skripka*)’s nest, the sky gloomed (/veiled itself in mourn)”). The lyrical protagonist begrudges a lonely wave in a/the black river; and he likens the rainy and windy night to a black basin. The phrase (and maybe the image) of “b/Black Sea” seems derivable from here... In a rainy and windy night the universe is potentially a Black Sea.<sup>3</sup> That structure is sedimentised in the images of musical instruments (*chang*, *skripka*) and of hydronymic objects (river, swimming pool). A trace of this ‘cosmology’ is seen in ‘Abrakadabra’ (1926: 83-84)<sup>4</sup>, ‘Scorpio(?) and soprano (To Agasova-Kalandadze)’ (1926: 149)<sup>5</sup>, ‘A/The room-baldachin’ (1926: 170), “Dream” (1<sup>st</sup> stanza), “Drinking shell” (1990: 123-124; in the title and the following line): “ზღვა ამღერება ნაზი ნუგეშით” (‘Sea makes one sing(/play) with gentle consolation’). The latter poem, actually, condenses the mentioned ‘cosmology’ into an emblem: ნიჟარი=ნიჯარა means both a ‘seashell’ and an ‘earshell’ (cf. notes 45 and 46 above). While the chosen form, –ო, homonymising – and indeed integrating – an archaic word for ‘porcelain’ etc, hints at both the manmadeness and the fragility of the ‘sea-and-music’ symbolism,

1 ‘As an evil skripka and deaf mizraf, / the enemies meet each other’ (“ვით ავი სკრიპკა და ყრუ მიზრაფი, / მტრები ერთმანეთს ჩუმათ ხვდებიან”).

2 Such a (modern, secular and common-sense) perception could be grounded in the notion of the three concentric seas (black, red and white) in Georgian archaic cosmography (Abak’elia 2010: 16-17).

3 “სკრიპკეზივით წვრიალბუნ დიდი ქუჩები [...] და როგორც თევზი დაიკვნესებს სარკე ალური [...]” ‘like a fiddle grated/squeaked/rasped/creaked the big streets [...] and like a fish will be moaning carmine mirror’ (Abrakadabra). For ‘fiddle’, or ‘violin’, the Georgian poet used a foreign word, the Russian “skripka”. This word’s etymological link to the verb meaning ‘to creak, to grate’ is obvious. That is why the neutral “sound/voice” for “წვრიალი” was ruled out from the translation.

4 ‘Night [that is] high like a pulpit. / [...] meet together: a one-year goatbuck [homonymic option: (high-heel) slipper] – a mizraf / and like a skripka meagre scorpio. / Of the sea and of orchards there was the parch’ “ღამე მაღალი როგორც კათედრა. / [...] / შეხვდენ ერთმანეთს: ქოში – მიზრაფი / და ს[კ]რიპკასავით მჭლე მორიალი. / **ზღვის და ბაღების იქ იყო ფარჩა**” (“მორიალი და სოპრანო (აგასოვა-კალანდაძეს)”). Virtual visuality here is oscillating between images of the main parts of a musical instrument and figures from the Zodiac (Capricorn and Scorpio), as well as between visual ‘literalism’ and allegorism. It is this oscillation that testifies to, or is identifiable with, the symbolist poetics of the piece.

5 ‘With a/the long mizraf I split the haughty curtain. / A/the golden trireme flashed with smoky outlines. / Like a falcon rushed the day’s dawn’ (“გრძელი მიზრაფით მე გავაპე ფარდა ზვიადი. / ოქროს ტრირემა აელვარდა კვამლის ხაზებით. / შევარდენივით შემოიჭრა დღის განთიადი”).



as well as its ephemerality: sea can recede into a shell, and music into noise. If we count for the Biblical association and meaning of the homonym, then sea is indirectly likened to Him who can wipe Jerusalem and turn it upside down. In “Paganini”, the musical instrument is called a ship; it is maybe a signification of the human (or artist’s) condition too.<sup>1</sup> In “To Ali Arsenishvili” the motif has degraded to topos-like metaphor: “we swayed upon the sea of poems”. Actually this motif can be viewed as an objectivation of Tymieniecka’s idea of *symphony of nature*: nature’s progression assigns the man the role of an instrumentalist. ‘(A/the) meeting of four poets at the seaside’ (“ოთხი პოეტის შეხვედრა ზღვასთან”, “[1916-1926]”; 1990: 164) is a kind of culmination of the motif: “ჩვენ ავმღერდებით ახალ ჰანგებით, / ზღვა ახალ ლექსებს დაგვაწერიებს.” (‘We begin to sing with new tunes, / The sea new poems makes us write’).

Sea water is a danger in “თეთრი ნაბადი” (‘White burka’ [1919: 39]<sup>2</sup>) and “Grigol Robakidze” (1919: 64; 1926: 71<sup>3</sup>), and one containing femininity (maybe in WB, and esp. in GR, also in “საფირონი – აშორდა” ‘Sapphire – goes away’; 1926: 162)<sup>4</sup> or bringing masculinity (emasculated, as in “Dream”, or not: “Obstinace and gorging stomach”, 1937 [1990: 252-253]<sup>5</sup>). [Quotes]. In an episode of “Parisian commune” (1926: 197-220) the plot of “Dream”, 1917, is, first, retold in a condensed way (197-198), then is alluded at through unsurprising and, finally, surprising symbolisation (211, 215): ‘towards me come nights, / like boats with mourning flags, / like a battleship, / whose captain / is the merciless and greedy death itself’ (“[...] / ჩემთან მოდიან ღამეები, / როგორც ნავები ტრაურულ დროშით, / როგორც ხომალდი, / რომლის კაპიტანი / თვით უღმობელი და ხარბი სიკვდილი. / [...]”); ‘The “d/Drunken battleship” is a symbol / of the rebel Paris’ (“‘მთვრალი ხომალდი’ სიმბოლოა / ამბოხებულ პარიზის” (211); ‘The poet Rimbaud – a/the deserter of/from literature, / the “Drunken Battleship”’s captain, leaves Europe forever, // [...] thunders the ocean, like a fairy tale, / but there will be another dawn’ (“პოეტი რემბო – დეზერტირი მწერლობის, / “მთვრალი ხომალდის” კაპიტანი, სტოვეებს ევროპას სამუდამოდ, // [...] ქუხს ოკეანე, როგორც ზღაპარი, მაგრამ იქნება სხვა განთიადი”) (215). Thus the later work shapes the reading of the

1 Kolau Nadiradze viewed sea as “writing table” (Jaliašvili 2010: 238), the symbolism of ‘sea as noise/music’ seems to modify that symbolisation.

2 ‘The sea [that has] come up to the window, blue sands, / a dance in a burka, ruptured, alien and greedy. / [...] / Calls me the willow, the sirens greedily wait for me, / my elbows in the waves will decorate your burka’ (“[...] ზღვა ფანჯრამდი ამოსული, ლურჯი კვიშები, / ნაბადში ცეკვა აჩეხილი, უცხო და ხარბი. / [...] / მიხმობს ტირიფი, სირენები ხარბათ მელიან, / ჩემს მხრებს ტალღებში დაამშვენებს შენი ნაბადი. / [...]”).

3 ‘Stare at you from the sea sirens – water Phatmans’ (“გიცქერენ ზღვიდან სირენები --წყლის ფატმანები.”).

4 ‘Sea’s seraphim – Cleopatra [-] ventilates you [lit. ‘breezes you’]’ (“ზღვის სერაბიმი -- კლეოპატრა გნიავედება”).

5 “არგონავტების ნაცვლად მოვიდენ / მუშები თავის მძლავრი მარჯვენით” (253). (ინათი და ყორათი)

earlier one in a way invoking a concept from the theory of autotextuality, the ‘work-magnifier’, or “the amplifier work” (Kolarov 2020: 228): “a given work clarifies a certain meaning of another work, strengthening its emphasis, raising it to a higher power”. This self-interpretation by G. helps, among other things, to associate the “black Marat” (and the ‘boat’, ნავი, that brought him) from ‘Dream’ with Rimbaud and, hence, to hypothesise that ca. 1917 G. thought of Rimbaud’s drunken vessel as of a ‘boat’; only later (e.g. ca. 1924, in the “Communars”), under the double pressure of the image of the battleship Aurora and the social imperative to be an epic poet and not a lyric one, did G. re-interpret Rimbaud’s ‘boat’, “bateau”, as ‘(big/battle) ship’, ხომალდი. Classical Roman tradition (see above) proved long-living.

### C) Sea’s scattered polysemantism

Within the ‘supertext’ of G.’s oeuvre, several works contribute to creating the semantic unit of ‘sea=the otherworld / sea=half of the universe’, as outlined in sub-sections (A) and (B). Yet other works mentioning (or hinting at) sea support that semanticisation only marginally, or are hardly relevant to it.

Sea is an episodic symbol of the half of the *non-trivial* part of the universe: ‘In front of Shevchenko’s portrait’ (“შევჩენკოს პორტრეტის წინ”, “2 December, 1938”; 1990: 264), “ზღვის და უდაბნოს მარტობა სცან შხამიანი”; and in ‘Heavenly sonnet’ (“ზეციური სონეტი”, “24 September 1939”; quotation see below).

Sea, not directly mentioned, is a symbol of (queenly feminine) beauty in ‘To Shota’ (“შოთაშევჩენკოს პორტრეტის წინს”, “11 March, the Capital City, 1940”; 1990: 282). In a convoluted text resembling the introductory stanzas of ვეფხისტყაოსანი (‘The o/One in the ounce’s fur’ or, as made normative by existing translations, *The man/knight in the panther’s skin*), the phrase “სილამაზის ტალღა უკლები” (‘the untouched waves of beauty’) is used to designate, most likely, the look of Queen Tamar glimmering through her eyelashes.

Sea participates in an interaction (possibly confrontational, but also usual, one that is – actually was – the background of a story rather than its part) with river Rioni, in ‘Obstinace and gorging stomach’: ‘Resembled with [his] emaciated, yellow hands / man his double,<sup>1</sup> / thundered Rioni again with rage / and made crack the anger-pouring sea’ (“გავდა ჩამომხმარ, ყვითელ ხელებით / ადამიანი თავის ორეულს, / ჰქუხდა რიონი კვლავ გახელებით / და ასკდებოდა ზღვას ბრაზმორეულს.”) (1990: 252-254, cit. 252).

Sea is a desired space (and river is a helper to reach it), in ‘Rioni (To Grigol Toradze)’ (“რიონი (გრიგოლ თორაძეს)”, “Tbilisi, 1926”; 1990: 156-158, cit. 157): “My dream floats towards sea. / Like you do with your waves, deposit me away [, Rioni]!” (“ჩემი ოცნება ზღვისაკენ მიჰქრის. / ვით შენი ტალღა შორს გამრიყავი!”).

<sup>1</sup> I.e.: ‘with his emaciated, yellow hands man resembled his double’.

With reference to the last two poems, river and sea could be seen as the physical-geographic images of transiency (life) and eternity ('meta-life').

Sea is maybe afterlife ("Circus at the seaside", see a brief analysis below); or a possible afterlife, in "Heavenly sonnet" (1990: 266-267): 'On this earth two grandeurs I always look at, / these are the heavens and also the sea – resemble(s) me a mirror: / [...] / If only the blue sea could rise upright into burning paradise, / if only could tempt us sky's azure eternity!' ("ამ ქვეყანაზე ორ დიდებას ყოველთვის ვხედავ, / ეს არის ზეცა და კიდევ ზღვა – მსგავსება სარკის: / [...] / ნეტავ ლურჯი ზღვა აიმათოს მწველ პარადიზად, / ნეტავ გვხიბლავდეს ცის ლაჟვარდი სამარადისო! / [...]").<sup>1</sup>

As already indicated, sea is, functionally, God: in "To the sea" (over the decades, sea has turned from 'alien lower depths' into an equivalent of – non-ctonic! – God).

On the other hand, sea can appear as (part of) 'the same' (world): sea travel is indirectly compared to ploughing, in "To Sandro Shanshiashvili", and sea – to a garden (in "Obstinacy and gorging stomach" and "Circus at the seaside").

Humans float on the sea surface (like Jesus who walks on water) in "White burka".

D) Section conclusion: sea's compositional value, devoid of its semantics; sea's geographical identifiability

Sea can be the main character, but it can be a mere landscape detail, as in „მარტოობის დედოფალი“ ('The q/Queen of l/Loneliness/s/Solitude'; 1990: 166)<sup>2</sup>, „შოთას“ ('To Shota', „უთუოდ ჰგავდი ბედით ტარიელს...“, 1937; 1990: 254-256)<sup>3</sup>; and even a detail outside the field of visibility, as in „ოფელიას დღესასწაული (ვერიკო ანჯაფარიძეს)“ ('Ophelia's holiday (To Veriko Andzaparidze)'; 1926: 97): 'recurring Jordan the crowd brushes (/devours): a woman will be brought by the waves' ("განმეორებულ იორდანეს ბრბო მოედება: / იქნება ქალი ტალღებდან ამოსაყვანი."); one can only guess that *sea* waves, made from the 'material' of Dead Sea, are meant. The latter poem is prominent with the apparent conflation of Christian and secular Renaissance topoi/motives, and for the indirect merging of marine and riverain waters. Or sea can be an element of a more or less prominent picture-emblem, one which removes the distinction between mimesis and allegory, and between centrality and marginality within a composition: "Search"-1 (<1926) and "Search"-3 ("books" and "utmost sea depths" are the poles of the universe), "Rioni (to Grigol Toradze)", 'In front of Shevchenko's portrait' (as is S-1, "sea and desert" is the bipolarity of the world). Identification of sea with human masses, as in '(The) sea

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<sup>1</sup> I would interpret the poem as an allegorical cry to be saved from, transferred out of the Stalinist reality. It, however, is included in the 1944 selection.

<sup>2</sup> "შეცურდა ზღვაში მზე – პაპირუსი." ('Swam into the sea the sun – [a] papyrus').

<sup>3</sup> "არის ოსტატის ხელით ნაჭედი / ზღვაში მსრბოლავი შენი ზანგები" ('With master's hand are forged / in the sea competing your negroes').

and the Chieftain’, is one possible direction of allegorisation, and one ‘pregnant’ with symphony and drama.

Black Sea is alluded at in: “(The) Sea”, “Obstinace...”, “At the sea”.

## 2. “Symphonic” to “dramatic” motives

The complex motif ‘the protagonist/lyrical I stays at the seaside and negotiates his genealogical and ontological relation to sea’ unites “At the sea”, “A/The meeting of four poets...”, “Circus at the seaside” and “Sea and the Chieftain”. This is possibly the core situation relating (human) agency and sea as an empirical object in G.’s poetry. G.’s lyrical I and heroes never met the sea on board the ship and even less in open sea.

As already noted, sea is driver of imagination and poetic speech. In “Dolphin and Medusa”, in “Drinking shell” and in “(The) Sea” this property is not objectified, it is on the level of implicit author, not of characters; in the ‘frame’, not in the ‘picture’. It becomes objectified in “Meeting of four poets...” (see the quote above) and in “Sea and the Chieftain”. (The protagonist of “Sea and the Chieftain” is too compositionally and rhetorically strong within the work to be made an instrument, or speaker, by the sea element; they meet on a par and in some sense he even submits the sea).<sup>2</sup> Potential *symphony of nature* becomes actual in the former two poems and it becomes a kind of a drama in the latter work.

In “At the sea”, sea is the home of lyrical speaker; and it is a creation of his imagination. ‘Symphony’ is going to turn into a ‘drama’. This poem is a kind of cosmogonic culmination of G.’s thematisation of sea; not in the sense of accumulation of motives sparsely present in other works.<sup>3</sup> Even though the latter is also defensible: if we argue for the ‘distilled’ presence of those motives here (e.g., from being the darker and wetter and feminine half of the universe, sea has become lyrical speaker’s alter ego). Counter-intuitively, sea in this poem does not seem to have a soul.

“Drinking shell” introduces sea as both an instigator to speak of, and a stage to display, an appointment reminiscent of the meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia (and Avtandil and Patman from ვეფხვის ტყაოსანი) and, via the ‘reversing mirror’ of H. and O., of Jason and Medea. In the potential drama for two characters (the implied author or his male embodiment, and his female partner) sea is assigned the role of a playwright.

Sea can be attributed psychic life, as in “Meeting with the doubles...”, “Evening in the lorgnette” and, most notably, “(The) sea”. Attributing to sea something more than

1 ყორაი is ‘gorging stomach’, but also the name of a village in Imereti.

2 ‘Stays he by the sea with fiery eyes, / [...] / salute him the hurricanes, / and by the sea [they] gave him a fighters’ oath’ (“დგას იგი ზღვასთან ცეცხლის თვალებით, / [...] / ესალმებან მას გრივალეზი, / და ზღვასთან დასდო მეზრობის ფიცი.”; ‘as if presents to him from far countries / the sea an anxiety [that is] always voiceful’ (“თითქოს მთართვა შორ ქვეყნებიდან / ზღვამ მღელვარება მარად ხმიერი.”) (1944: 58); ‘The talent of assault was given to the chieftain by sea’ (“შეტევის ნიჭი ზღვამ მისცა ზელადს”) (1944: 60).

3 The propositions up to this point in the paragraph are supported by previous analysis of the present writer (in press).

aesthetic, speculative and physical-biological value – a psychic life – is a prerequisite for a drama relieving the lyrical speaker from its solitude. The latter happens in “To the sea”, where the second character does not seem to be a projection of the lyrical ‘I’. A drama for three characters is on the making in “Sea and the Chieftain”: the “Chieftain”, the sea/people, and the lyrical ‘I’. But do all three characters meet at a single moment of the poem (or of the drama in the shape of a poem)? There is only one such moment suggested by the flow of the text. The moment is arrived at in the last four stanzas of the poem, which form its third and shortest part (1944: 60-61). Yet the meeting is left to the readers’ imagination: the implied author stands before the Batumi obelisk built to memorise the 1902 March demonstration and contemplates the revolutionary events and protagonists. The Chieftain is too ‘high’ to be immediately accessed by the poet. The obelisk, an architecturised sediment of the sea, plays the mediator. The reader is instigated to complete an image of non-meeting in his or her mind (and to recall the constellation of characters from Pushkin’s *Copper/Bronze Horseman*).

An inner transformation of the lyrical form into an epic-dramatic one could have been an imperative or at least a desiderata in Stalinist Georgia, and G. apparently sought to conform, if one follows the thread of marine motives in his poetry. We can only speculate what would have been the macrogeneric orientation G.’s marine poems, had he lived till the ‘Thaw’.

#### **6. ‘Sea and the Chieftain’: the epitome of the polysemy of “sea” and an antithesis of the (neo)argonautic myth**

This *long* odic-biographical poem, or *poema*, of forty-four quatrains (“ზღვა და ბელადი”, 1939; Gaprindashvili 1944: 55-61), was written after 1937 (when G.’s last life-time collection of poems was published); it was included neither in the 1964, ‘Thaw’, selection, nor in the exhaustive 1990 ‘Perestroika’ one.

The leader/chieftain/head, whom the reader unmistakably recognises as Stalin, is assigned the property of master (lord and conductor) of sea (the element of sea), while the sea itself is symbolically identified to human masses (of labourers). Thus the long poem, or poem, enters an intertextual dialogue with two earlier works of Gaprindashvili: the poems “The meeting/appointment of four poets at the seaside” (1916–1926; through the motif ‘sea makes the poets voice it, but the earth waits for her sons’) and “At the sea” (1935) (through the combination of motives ‘the sea is the work of a master’s imagination’ ‘the sea is the homeland/shaper of the lyrical I’). But the lyrical I has deprived himself of this ambivalent property and assigned it to his hero, the “Chieftain”. And the ‘mastery’ of sea has been transposed onto the plane of metaphor. Actually the Chief(tan) is the master of human masses (and, possibly, their product), and only metaphorically the master (and progeny) of sea, inasmuch as sea

and human masses are identified. It is an almost a *drama of* interaction with *sea* that is revealed in “At the seaside”; here, that drama (‘Sea and the Artist’) is downgraded to a metaphoric representation (rather than symbolic indication) of a social-political drama (‘The Masses and the Chieftain’). On a subtextual level the superhero, the “Chieftain”, is denied access to and communion with the *symbol* of sea (or with the symbol which holds the sea as its unalienable part or dimension). He is banned from such communion just as the signified of the *metaphor* cannot fuse with the signifier of the metaphor. Reducing symbol to metaphor, Gaprindashvili prevents himself from paying sincere homage to Stalin; from sincere identification of Stalin to the triad Taniel – Shota – Tamar (the last member of the triad remains unevoked in the poem)<sup>1</sup>. As for the ‘sea’ itself, it is deprived of its, usual in the works G., femininity. This is the general impression from the poem.

Further observations should focus on two moments: one is the narrative and imagerial circumstances of introduction of the word “sea” into the poem (the *second* appearance is devised as a contrast between Baratashvili and the “Chieftan”, and between the river Mtkvari and the nameless sea; it helps recognise the deep dimension of the first mention: “In Gori begins that current which then turns into a sea”); and on the image of the obelisk that pervades the final four stanzas (the reader is not prevented from the thought that the obelisk is an embodiment of both revolution and Stalin/the “Chieftan”, and that it is both a product and an epitome of sea’s collaboration with “Lenin” and “mountains”); from a positivist standpoint, the poem alludes to the 1902 strike and demonstration of Batumi workers which was organised by local Social-Democrats, incl. the young Soso, see very briefly in Jones 2005: 102).

The last 13 stanzas, and esp. the last 4, recall “Circus at the seaside”: they look like its ‘high’ replay and expansion. While “Circus...” looks like a short grotesque or allegorical travesty of the mentioned stanzas of “Sea and the Chieftain”. The “lion” from the “Circus” can be viewed as a variant of the “Chieftain”, while the circus itself – as an intrinsic attribute to the obelisk (and the rituals it necessitates). The penultimate stanza of “Circus...” can be read as an allegory of the mind-debilitating effect of Bolshevik revolution on Georgian society (which had meanwhile turned into a circus). The ultimate one possibly says that Georgian society, in its achieved ‘animalness’, is worth its Soviet destiny. Sea appears as an alien yet salvific space and agency, and the beasts in the circus as the non-aliens in a dead end.

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth stressing that the “Chieftain” is implicitly identified to the core character of The one in panther’s fur, Taniel, while, in earlier works, G. has only dared to identify himself (his lyrical I) and the agency of a poet with a less central character, to Avtandil, who actually is only second in prominence in Rustaveli’s novel, as hinted by the narrative and focal structure of the work (A. is the protagonist of a narrative which brings to, or which frames, a narrative ‘protagonised’ by T.). Besides, self-identification with Avtandil had been indirect and delicate, risking to remain unnoticed: through the image(s) of Pat’man and Ophelia. The author (Gaphr.) offered the political leader a symbolical status previously offered (by him) to nobody (even to one’s modernist ego, otherwise ripe with self-aggrandisement), but the semantic structure of the poem seems to have not sustained the offering.

A second reading of “Sea and the Chieftain” can concretise and partly reshape the general impression and the interpretative desiderata implied by it.

The poem is built of four parts – a biographical (of 19 stanzas), a historical-biographical (8 stanzas), a historical (13) and an ‘ekphrastic’ one (4), which assign centrality, respectively, to the prospective Chieftain in his childhood, to him in his youth, to the workers’/people’s masses, and to the implicit author-in-the-mirror-of-an-obelisk.

The **first** part gradually creates the image of an antagonist of celestial order (the one emblematised by Apollo and St George). First, an allusion to a ‘Georgian Pan’ (Pan is a helper of Dionysus, according to Nonnus of Panopolis, and musical competitor against Apollo, according to Ovid, and one who died because Christ was born, according to an interpretation by Gilbert Keith Chesterton that follows the logic of Christian apologists), and trickstership is introduced into the future chieftain’s image: ‘he spied sky’s paling / and played *salamuri* (folk flute) with ardour. / He imitated thrush’s singing’ („იგი ზვერაგდა ცის მიმქრალობას / და სალამურზე უკრავდა გზნებით. / იგი ბაძავდა შაშვის გალობას“ (line 1-3, 7<sup>th</sup> stanza; 1944: 56). The 9<sup>th</sup> stanza is more explicit on his role of a chthonic or aquatic deity: ‘From Gori’s citadel he looked, / how (as) flocked clouds in the sky, / and albeit he was unable to grab the clouds, / anyway he used to say – I will put you under my rule!’ („გორის ციხიდან იგი ხედავდა, / როგორ ცვივოდნენ ცაში ღრუბლები, / თუმც ხელით ღრუბლებს ვერ ახვეტავდა, / ამბობდა მაინც: – დავეუფლები!“; *ibid*). The symbolic identification is supported by quasi-naïve’ quasi-realist details like this: ‘he set traps for birds’ („იგი უგებდა ჩიტებს მახეებს“ (10<sup>th</sup> st., 3<sup>rd</sup> l.; *ibid*). The reader gradually realises (starts deliberating about) the unease of author’s doubly ambivalent condition: first, as a modernist poet, he would praise any avatar of aquatic (dis)order, but he would be reluctant about the conformity of such praise with a political agenda (esp. one from the social-political ‘above’); second, as a Christian Georgian, he would hardly be sincere in praising of, actually, a *veshapi*, but as a symbolist poet he would be tempted to prolong a discourse of ambiguity and ambivalence. To return to the poem’s first part, the praise of a semi-revealed chthonic-aquatic deity utilises the arguably most important symbolic asset in Georgian culture, *The o/One in ounce’s fur*: ‘He felt the ignition brought by verses: most of all liked the lad / the capture of the high-standing citadel of Kadzheti’ („გრძნო ლექსებით მან გაჩაღება: ყველაზე უფრო მოსწონდა ყმაწვილს / ქაჯეთის მაღალ ციხის აღება“) (cf. *The one/One in ounce’s fur*, stanza 1364, line 2: Rustaveli 1912: 221<sup>1</sup>; rustaveli 1888: 311<sup>2</sup>), ‘In his dream came enemies’ camp, / [he] felt his future Tariel-like exploits’ („ესიზმრებოდა მტერთა ბანაკი, / გრძნობდა მომავალ ტარიელობას“) (15<sup>th</sup>

1 “on all sides round about is rock, a foe may not come up to it” (chap. “XLII: Tariel and Avt’andil do to P’hridon”).

2 “ყოვლენით კლდეა, გარეშემო მტერი ვერა მოადგების” (chap. “ტარიელისა და ავთანდილისა წასვლა ფრიდონისას”).

stanza; 1944: 57). If we mind some passages above, we will recognise that Kadzheti is important not for hosting the evil Kadzhis, but for being located on an elevated position, near the skies. And just a stanza earlier, with the very introduction of the Georgians' most precious literary asset into the ode, the implied author's loyalty to his subject of praise has unnoticeably cracked: 'In the brave youth's mind figured as a labourers' army / the sudden swish of wheat's (lit. bread's) ears. / As heroism and bliss / here he heard Rustaveli' ("ვაჟს წარმოუდგა მშრომელთ ჯარებად / კვლავ მოზიბინე პურის თაველი. / როგორც გმირობა და ნეტარება / აქ გაიგონა მან რუსთაველი.") (13<sup>th</sup> stanza; 1944: 56-57). The association of "bread's ears/false ears" (spike/inflorescence) with an army prefigures the association of revolutionised people with the sea; through the polysemy of the word თაველი<sup>1</sup>, G. undermines his own ode, its affirmative attitude. The series of four stanzas attaching the image of the prospective chieftain to the world of Rustaveli is followed by a veiled yet resolute identification of the protagonist with an aquatic deity, one that encompasses a river from its source and sea with its vastness (and, one can surmise, depth): 'In Gori starts that current, / which in its course turns into sea afterwards, / and sea, unto us in [our] hearts deeply engraved, / with its thunder makes us anxious until today' ("გორში იწყება ის ნაკადული, / რომ თავის სვლაში ზღვად იქცა შემდეგ, / და ზღვა, ჩვენს გულში ღრმად ჩახატული, / თავის ქუხილით გვალელებს დღემდე.") (17<sup>th</sup> st.; 1944: 57). The sea is equated to revolution and to the global (at least meta-national) movement released by it. As if in awareness that the careful readers have noticed the 'underwater current' in the text, the already-actual Chieftain is, first, implicitly likened to a Hephaestus and thus, allusively, threatened by overthrow or by being stolen the fire by a Prometheus: 'Kremlin stays, like infallible anvil' ("კრემლი დგას, როგორც ერთგული გრდემლი") (18<sup>th</sup> st.; ibid.). Second, association of the already-actual Chieftain with the chthonic/aquatic order becomes subtler: 'But stays he – (a/the) rightful light!' ("...მაგრამ სდგას იგი – შუქი მართალი!"). The latter phrase, which closes the whole part of the poem, uses the word "შუქი", according to Chubinashvili ([1884] 1984) 'sun's or candle's ray or light' ("მზისა ან სანთლის სხივი ან სინათლე"); the Chieftain is called, then, 'material' light, one which is consistently differentiated from celestial (heavenly, immaterial) light by the Georgian language (სინათლე, with the same root as ნათლობა, 'baptising') and by Christian, esp. Byzantine (and Hesychast in particular), theology.<sup>2</sup> The attentive reader realises

1 "1. ღომის და ზოგიერთი სხვა მარცვლოვანის ყვავილენი [...]. 2. სახელწოდება ყოველგვარი თავთავისა (ზოგიერთ კუთხეში) [...]" (თაველი according to: <http://ena.ge/explanatory-online>).

2 Narration on Jesus' transfiguration and extraordinary light on Mount Tabor in the Georgian New Testament in the redaction of George Mtatsmindeli ([https://www.orthodoxy.ge/tserili/mtatsmindeli/akhali\\_agtqma.htm](https://www.orthodoxy.ge/tserili/mtatsmindeli/akhali_agtqma.htm)) uses words indicating 'light' that derive from the stem ნათ-, and not შუქ-, see: Matt. 17:1-13 (three times, l. 2, 5, 13); or designates light indirectly, through its attributes, but following the same distinction, as in Mark 9:2-13 ("ზრწყინვალე და სპეტაკ", 'brilliant and (super) white', with სპეტაკ and თეთრი forming a correlation analogous to ნათება-შუქია) and in Luke 9:28-36 ("სპეტაკ და ელვარე", '(super)white and as-a-lightning'). Variation across different Old



that the Chieftain, prospective and present at the same time, has been inobtrusively attributed properties of a chthonic, or evil, double of Jesus Christ depicted as a baby with an imprint of an old man seriousness and wisdom on His face (on this bivalence of Christ in Byzantine mentality and iconography see: Averintsev [1977] 1997: 181-182), and of any follower of Christ, or open-hearted, studious and pious man who tends to be “an infant and an old man simultaneously” (on that early Byzantine perspective of self-perfection see: *ibid*: 179-185).<sup>1</sup> The Chieftain appears now as a subtle parody, or, if we take into consideration the non-classicist aesthetics of Christian ‘art’, a grim and incomplete double of Christ’s actual and Christian’s potential duality of age: ‘The two strongholds – Gori and Kremlin, / like an impassable seem to us wall, / [...] // Stares [he] at us from the two different houses / as a child and as a lord, / so much labour whom won’t tire [=will tire anybody], / but he stays – a truthful [material] light!’ (“ორი სიმაგრე – გორი და კრემლი, / ვით მოუვალი მოსჩანს კედელი, / [...] // გვიცქერს სხვსდასხვა ორი სახლიდან / როგორც ბავშვი და როგორც სარდალი, / ამდენი შრომა ვის არ დალიდა, / მაგრამ სდგას იგი – შუქი მარტალი!”) (st. 18-19; gap’rindašvili 1944: 57).

The **second** part shows the prospective Chieftain ‘entering History’ through becoming a partner and a master of sea that is being associated with the human masses of workers. A comparison in the mode of exegetic typology is deployed from the very outset between the Chieftain and the major Romantic poet of the Georgian nation Nikoloz Baratashvili: ‘Whereas Baratashvili loved often / with Mtkvari disputation, Mtkvari’s rustle[;] before us flashes a huge hero, / that who has chosen the clash/splash of the dams<sup>2</sup> // This was our Chieftain himself... / Sits he by the sea from his boyhood...’ (“თუ ბარატაშვილს უყვარდა ხშირი / მტკვართან ბაასი, მტკვარის შრიალი. / ჩვენ წინ ელვარებს დიადი გმირი, / ვინც რომ არჩია ხვრთთა გრიალი. // ეს იყო თვითონ ჩვენი ბელადი... / სდგას იგი ზღვასთან თავის ყრმობაში...”) (st. 20-21; 1944: 57-58). Implicitly and indirectly, their attitude towards Russian occupation of and influence in Georgia is compared. While B. argues with (sits on the bank of) Mtkvari (Kura), the young prospective Chieftain resists the sea winds and intimidates them, being steadfast like the Darial gorge: ‘Stays he by the sea with fiery eyes, / like Darial unbending (non-crumblable?<sup>3</sup>), hard (reliable?).

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Georgian redactions and manuscripts of the Gospels (see their complete synopsis at: <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etca/cauc/ageo/nt/ntkpl/ntkpl.htm> [Samushia, Dundua, Gippert 2011-2017]) follows the logic of the aforementioned distinction (with, sometimes, ‘like snow’ coming instead of ‘like immaterial light’).

1 I can only guess whether this theological and anthropological perspective was transplanted in Georgian Christendom and survived through the long centuries of its existence. For now, I would assume a positive answer.

2 The respective word has a homonym, a dialect word from Imereti and Racha (G. was born and went to school in Imereti), which designates a kind of whip. So the Chieftain liked the sound of construction and ‘domesticated’ water (as said in the literary language), but also the sound(s) of race and torture (as half-said in the dialect of the writer’s native area).

3 Which cannot be made crumble into screens.

/ Salute him the hurricanes, / and [together] with the sea give [him] a fighter's oath' ("დგას იგი ზღვასთან ცეცხლის თვალებით, / დარიალივით უდრეკი, მტკიცე. / ესალმებიან მას გრიგალები, / და ზღვასთან დასდო მეზრძოლის ფიცი.") (st. 23; 1944: 58). (G. projects onto the Chieftain a fragment of his own image, created twenty-one years earlier by T'itsian T'abidze, cf.: 'You fell in love with Ophelia [...] / but the rein of your verse blows through<sup>1</sup> (a) Darial[,] / [O,] New Moses, in the Red Sea of poetry', "შენ შეუყვარე ოფელია [...] / მაგრამ სადავე შენი ლექსის დახრის დარიალს / ახალო მოსე, პოეზიის მეწამულ ზღვაში" ('To Valerian Gaprindashvili', "Orpiri, 1918"; T'abidze 1934: 100)). It turns out that the Chieftain is (like) a Darial whom the (erstwhile?) "New Moses" cannot control with his verse. We have a declaration of capitulation here, enveloped in what now looks like a eulogy to an unmatchable and incompatible rival. On the other hand, the Chieftain may be conceived as a (false) double of the old Moses: the Chieftain stays and imposes submission through fiery sight and some unimaginable hugeness. This monumentalism instils doubt to a Christian-minded reader; association with a Colossus, a Goliath and a... Pharaoh occur. The Chieftain seems to not have utilised the emergence in the world of the divine Word, be it in the shape of Commandments or of Gospels. Moreover, if one holds in mind the similitude to the scenes from the book of Exodus, one would wonder: whom, and to where, would the Chieftain lead across the Black Sea? Whose role would he play in case an exodus through that sea takes place – of a Moses of a Pharaoh? Utilising the pattern of the Christian exegetic figure of typology, G. produces a profoundly ambivalent image of the apparently eulogised person). It is implied that Georgia does not need B.'s perceived parochiality and readiness to plot and rise against Russia, but Stalin's acceptance and mastering of its currents. The 'masses' are attributed an action which is hostile to celestial order: "აი, მოჰქრიხართ მასთან ბიბინით, / რომ შემოევლოთ ყოველი მხრიდან. / დიდი მანძილი გამოირბინეთ / და მოიტანეთ ვარსკლავნი ციდან!"; the Mayakovskian theme of "attack towards the skies" is delicately replayed. Amidst images of prospective Chieftain becoming the master of the sea (the sea element is perceived as the other body of the workers' masses, see above): 'From the sea he silently gathered power, / a solid rounded rock made him the breakers' clash' ("ის ზღვისთან ჩუმად იკრებდა ძალას, / ასაკლდევებდა ზვირთთა გუგუნნი.") (st. 26), 'for him the shore was a rostrum / [...] / he hurricanes with [his] hand stopped'

<sup>1</sup> Forms through blowing or breathing; as God in Exodus 14:21, 15:8, 15:10 (in English, according to the New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2014&version=NRSVUE> and <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+15&version=NRSVUE>; in Georgian, according to the Mtskheta manuscript: <https://www.orthodoxy.ge/tserili/mtskheturi/gam11-15.htm>). A literalist reading of T'itsian's verse, however, would produce 'bends, breaks ([the already existing] Darial)' as translation. Such a reading would necessitate to see here a cultural-political metaphor: the agent who "bends" Darial has the power to reshape and even ruin the poetical communication through Darial, i.e., between Russia and Georgia.

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(“მისთვის ნაპირი იყო ტრიბუნა. / [...] / იგი ქარიშხალს ხელით იჭერდა”) (st. 27); – he is almost called a new Christ: ‘The sea names him world’s redeemer, / in every wave he now sees / workers’ muscles, workers’ hands’ (“ზღვა ქვეყნის მხსნელად მას ასახელებს, / ყოველ ტალღაში ის ახლა ხედავს / მშრომელთა კუნთებს, მშრომელთა ხელებს.”) (st. 25; 1944: 58). It is an aquatic or pelagic ‘Christ’ who has outgrown the tiny “sea” of Galilee. In a sequence of stanzas whereby the lyrical narrator’s and the protagonist’s viewpoints cannot be separated from each other, thus contributing to a monumentalising, counter-psychologising effect, the role of John the Baptist is taken by the sea. The episode recalls two narratives from Georgian folklore involving Queen Tamar and commented by Zurab Kiknadze (K’ik’nadze 2010: 140-145). In a way, the prospective Chieftain had been the ‘secret agent’ of the aquatic element on the earth, so the act of ‘anointment’ is to be expected. However, this is an ‘anointment’ of a trickster or Antichrist, if we compare to the case of Tamar. Tellingly, he does not go to “the centre of the sea”, and his symbolic army comes from there.<sup>1</sup>

Let us return to the comparison between Baratashvili and the Chieftain which opens the second part of the eulogy. Not only is Baratashvili small and ‘unglobal’ (local) when compared to the “Chieftan”; he seems to have not bridged the (ontological) gap between his human self and the natural element, while the “Chieftan” seems to have bridged it. The “Chieftan” is identifiable with a river-and-sea god (see esp. stanzas 17, 24; 1944: 57, 58). I would see him as a Jordan from the Khludov Psalter who has subsumed Poseidon (brief description of Jordan from that Psalter: Diehl 1933: 90 (pl. 72.2); reproduction of the image: *ibid.*: [184]; on the tradition of personification of river Jordan in Byzantine art well into the Palaeologan period and on the possible heretical and crypto-pagan overtones of some of its branches and manifestations see: Ajnalov 1900: 141, 142; Popovich 1963: 15-29; Bockmann 2014: 211; on the commonality of “features”, “if not [...] attributes” between Jordan and Poseidon: Popovich 1963: 15). The anthropomorphic personification of Jordan is present in a 13th-c. Georgian collection of homilies by Gregory of Nazianzus (see Kavtaria, Tatishvili, Dughashvili, 2018: 48), but I have no idea of its general presence in Georgian pictorial traditions, neither of G.’s acquaintance with Orthodox Christian visual culture. In the depictions of Jesus’ Baptism, Jordan seems to be the only figure outside, or at the margin, of a range of saintly or nearly saintly personages (if not counting for the maybe ‘neutral’ fishes included in the scene at times). However, in some pictorial sources (Armenian gospels from the 13th-14th c., Matenadaran mss. 4820 and 6303, see Hacopian 2014: 109, 122), a second ambivalent and in all likelihood ungodly figure appears, that of a dragon or snake, of a veshapi (vishap); at first sight, it could be interpreted twofold. First, as a regional interpretation of the figure of the pagan Graeco-Roman river god Jordan (or as a manifestation of regional pagan tradition of river deities, applied to the case of the Biblical river, re-personified not in anthropomorphic but in

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<sup>1</sup> There is some sparse textual evidence – beside the present one – that the Blue Horns were leaning to symbolically identify sea and the river Jordan.

zoomorphic form). Second, as a zoomorphic representation and anticipation of the figure of devil/Satan, who appears, in the Gospel of Matthew, as tempter of Jesus immediately following the scene of baptism (cf. Matt. 3:13-17 and 4:1). To return to the image of the Chieftain from G.'s eulogy (as traceable in its stanzas 17, 21-27), this image seems to simultaneously allude at the Hellenistic rivergod Jordan, a veshapi, and the Satan; hence, the Chieftain appears as a chthonic antagonist and more or less double of Jesus, John the Baptist and Moses at once. Visual allusions apart, the scene of (prospective) Chieftain at the seashore (st. 21-27) alludes simultaneously to Baptism, Temptation in the wilderness, and Passage through the Red Sea. In some visual sources the rivergod Jordan is shown not as "a small figure in the waves" but "sitting opposite John" on the other bank (Bockmann 2014: 211) while in others the image of Jordan is iconographically parallel to the Sea" (Popovich 1963: 27; compare: Ajnalov 1900: 142). The Chieftain is identifiable too with a terrestrial hero who had attained that quality after or during a successful fight against a mountain stronghold (symbolically or metaphorically equated to Kadjeti; stanzas 9 and 14-16, compare The one in ounce's fur, stanza 1346). Unlike Baratashvili, who – literally or through an allegorical representation – stays at the river bank (typically, in "Thoughts at the bank of Mtkvari", 1837 [1843] and "A/The platan", 1844, but also in "Ketevan", 1835 [1843]), and like the animated speaker-and-protagonist in Rimbaud's "Drunken boat", the "Chieftain" seems to sail down the river (though this specific movement is not shown). To say it again, it is noteworthy that Georgian symbolists translated Rimbaud's boat as ხომალდი ('big/battle ship'), and not as ნავი 'ship/boat (in a general sense)' (see čubinašvili [1884] 1984; barbakaze 2010: 30, featuring an 18th-century definition, by Sulkhvan-Saba Orbeliani). Rimbaud's image, of course, is an apparent remake of a medieval topos with Biblical and ancient Roman roots. We can interpret both the title and the poem as the 'history of the wandering soul' (I am hinting here at History of the soul that comes to self-awareness, an anthroposophical autobiographical treatise by the Russian symbolist Andrei Beli; as well as to an anthology of Bulgarian symbolists' pronouncements about symbolism, titled 'Wandering aesthetics' [Iliev 1992]). Whether marine portions of Rimbaud's "Drunken ship" are screened in Georgian receptions of the poem in favour of its riverain ones, would be indicative for a (non)breach in 'thallasophobia'. While, on the other hand, re-designating of the 'boat' as '(big) ship' possibly indicates a subconscious allocation of modern soul's wandering to the marine, rather than to the riverain space... G. mentions Rimbaud's poem in his "Parisian commune" (as already noted). Tellingly, G.'s lyrical speaker fuses with sea (or contemplates fusing) while in some aspect of his existence staying on the shore (and not sailing on a boat). (And T'itsian T'abidze's one, in his programmatic 'Poem-scrree', "ლექსი მეწყერი", half-fuses with a sea that is symbolically identified to w/Word (speech, verse, poetry), not with the element per se). To return to Baratashvili: I am aware (just as G. was) of the use of marine images

by him: “Now neither butts/submits to<sup>1</sup> Kartli’s heart the Caspian anxiety, / nor can ever more shatter its [heart’s] rest its [Caspian] applause/heaving; / Black Sea billows, instead of our bloody enemies, / now are brought [/tossed/summoned] from many sides by our brothers [/fellows/neighbours]!” (“საფლავი მეფის ირაკლისა”, ‘The grave of King Heraclius’, 1842; baratashvili 2005: 50)<sup>2</sup>. Now I see that G. might have alluded to the just cited penultimate stanza of B.’s poem through the image of the obelisk at the Black Sea shore in Batumi (on the latter image see below).

The **third** part mainly narrates about the Batumi 1902 workers’ strike. The sea is shown to be an animated and interested spectator. While in the previous part it was shown through the ‘eyes’ of the prospective Chieftain, here it is viewed through the prism of the implied author ‘playing’ a more or less “realist” narrator. Here, in the historical part of the poema, sea and workers/people are *not* identified; symbolism is inapt in a historical narrative: ‘Sea as if were on the workers’ side / and like a lion it was roaring’ (“ზღვა თიტქოს იყო მშრომელთ მხარეზე / და როგორც ლომი ის ღრიალებდა.”) (st. 35; 1944: 59). It can be apt, only if motivated, which happens soon: ‘The approaching waves resembled workers, / as if this [=their mass and flow] was a sea [that has] overflown, / together with the workers quivered the streets, / quivered the platan that had been raised as an orphan’ (“გადმოსულ ტალღებს ჰგავდნენ მუშები, / თითქოს ეს იყო ზღვა მოვარდნილი, / მუშებთან ერთად თრთოლდნენ ქუჩები, / თრთოდა ჭადარი, ობლად აღზრდილი.”<sup>3</sup>) (st. 36; 1944: 59-60). If we juxtapose with the symbolisation from the previous part, it is shown how history fulfills the young-future-chieftain’s dream; and symbolist vision is assigned to the young chieftain, whereas the implied author, or lyrical speaker, when speaking without a mediator, cannot allow himself a symbolic speech. The poet has left his utmost function to the new Artist, the shaper of the marine element and of human masses.

The **fourth** part is apparently devoted to an obelisk built in Batumi to memorise past social-political struggle, but also (note the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> lines) to stimulate love for (Soviet) Russia: ‘In Batumi avails itself today an obelisk – / of past fights with a precious inscription. / To the big homeland of freedom / we are hastened by our hearts’ beat’ (“ბათუმში მოსჩანს დღეს ობელისკი – / განვლილ ბრძოლების ძვირფას წარწერით. / თავისუფლების დიდ მშობლისაკენ / მივესწრაფებით ჩვენ გულის ძგერით.”). At second sight, however, the obelisk is dedicated to the Chieftain himself, as the second stanza shows (the initial pronom has no apparent antecedent in the previous stanza, so one is free to attribute the content that follows to either the

1 See both, antipodic, meanings of რბოლა>ერჩის in Chubinashvili’s interpretative Georgian-Russian dictionary, 1984 [1884], column 1046.

2 “აწ არღა ერჩის ქართლის გულსა კასპიის ღღევა, / ვერღა ურყევს მას განსვენებას მისი აღტყველვა; / შავი ზღვის ზვირთნი, ნაცვლად ჩვენთა მოსისხლე მტერთა, / აწ მოგვიგვირან მრავალის მხრით ჩვენთა მოძმეთა!”.

3 The third line alludes to an earlier poem by G., “Abracadabra”, while the fourth one to Baratashvili (retroactively conjoining two of his poems), but I cannot comment these issues now.

obelisk or a human): ‘He was raised up: by Lenin, by the mountains... / The talent of assault was given by sea to the chieftain<sup>1</sup>, / knew brutal entanglement with enemies – / trampled (stamped) Siberia and billows’ (“იგი აღზარდეს: ლენინმა, მთებმა... / შეტევის ნიჭი ზღვამ მისცა ბელადს, / იცოდა მტრებთან სასტიკად შებმა – / სთელავდა ციმბირს და სახრჩობელას<sup>2</sup>.”) (1944: 60). The chieftain appears as a monumental work of art (an art which shapes life and is a non-secluded part of it).<sup>3</sup> Along the third and the fourth parts of the ode the implicit author growingly divests himself of his properties of an artist (poet, voice or imitator of God), to nearly reduce himself to a nude prostrated voice. In the third stanza of the fourth part, the penultimate stanza of the ode, the workers-identified-with-sea and the chieftain-identified-with-sea-’s-master are jointly identified now with h/Him, who carries (is clothed in) the ounce’s fur: ‘Waves, as big as ounces (panthers), / before him lie as much as you want diverse. / And the e/Element today is peaceful – / sung (glorified) with high shairi’ (“ტალღები, როგორც ვეფხები დიდი, / მის წინ წვეებიან რაგინდნაირი. / და სტიქიონი დღეს არის მშვიდი — / ამღერებული მაღალ შაირით!”). The image of ounce-like waves reshapes, retroactively, the images of roaring sea, possibly with the help of the intuitively easy-coming association of a stormy sea’s rugged surface and a living beast’s fur. Heracles, John the Baptist,<sup>4</sup> the ‘super-empirical’ protagonist of Rustaveli’s romance, and Stalin form an interpersonal gradation of similes in the mode of medieval exegetic procedure of typology. But contrary to one’s immediate guess, the implied author does not identify himself with the author of “high shairi” that praise the “peaceful element”. “Sea and the Chieftain” is being written, both before and after this point in the text of the ode, in ten syllables long lines, and “high shairi” is a sixteen-syllables verse. I guess this incongruence marks a rift from the drive for self-dispossession for the benefit of the subject of praise. A more subservient poet would have (explicitly) discussed his (non)ability and (non)entrustedness to praise the ‘new Tamar / David Soslan’ in “high shairi”. In the last stanza of the ode,

1 Or, more properly: ‘(It was) sea (that) gave the chieftain the talent of assault’.

2 It is possible to understand the last line as a semantic simile of “სიკვდილითა სიკვდილისა დამთრგუნველი” (“trampling down/overcoming death by death”), from the Paschal troparion, sung in Georgian Church (compare: Sokolov 1899: 106, 109; [https://orthodoxwiki.org/Pentecostarion#Leavetaking\\_of\\_Pascha](https://orthodoxwiki.org/Pentecostarion#Leavetaking_of_Pascha)) on the Leavetaking of Pascha (ადდგომის წარგზავნა), that is, on Wednesdays of the sixth week after Easter (<https://www.orthodoxy.ge/lotsvani/troparebi/zatiki.htm>). Lexical non-identity is expected, Gaprindashvili refrained from the overt blasphemy of identifying the Chieftain with Christ. Intentionally or not, allusion to the Paschal troparion turns like a boomerang against the eulogised Chieftain: for he has trampled ‘death’ (“Siberia and gallows”) with death (not his own on the cross, of course, but of others’ – with Siberia renewed and with new ‘gallows’).

3 There is no need to refer here to the famous work of Boris Grois.

4 Julian the Apostate too, for specifically erudite readers. The youth Julian sleeps on an ounce’s fur in the foundational work of Russian literary symbolism, the novel *The Death of Gods* by Dmitrii Merezhkovskii (1895). It is possible that the image of the Chieftain, oscillating between the archetypes of Antichrist and Christ, was shaped by G. with Merezhkovskii’s work in mind or in the subconsciousness.

the implied author remains together with the sea, at a low level of the universe, far from the Chieftain (who has occupied the skies), and the obelisk is assigned the role of mediator: ‘Stays the sculpture with more strength – / The sea is only its pedestal, / it is full with beauty, / vocated to guide us’ (“დგას ქანდაკება მეტ ძლიერებით! – / ზღვა არის მისი კვარცხლბეკი მხოლოდ, / იგი სავსეა მშვენიერებით, / მოწოდებული ჩვენს წინამძღოლად!”). The subtextual process whereby the implied author dissociated himself from the subject of glorification, comes to its concluding point. The concluding slogan is hollow and the implied author (solely the implied!) has retained his self-respect. Sea has been given back its freedom.

To return to the Chieftain’s double genealogy (Lenin and mountains). An allusion to ZAHES<sup>1</sup> and the nearby staying statue of Lenin is possible, to support the idea that Lenin has inspired the “mountain(eer)s” opening to the “sea” and that “the Chieftain” is the paragonal embodiment of this opening. The geographic fact that both ZAHES and Stalin’s birthplace are located in the basin of a river falling into the Caspian, while the poem features the Black Sea, tacitly, by its sole presence in the memory of the poem’s Georgian readers, enforces the extolment of “the Chieftain”. He is not only a ‘ZAHES more powerful than any hydro-electric station, built and unbuilt’, but he can make life (a river) flow in the opposite direction.

In “Sea and the Chieftain”, the implicit author does not dare to deposit his projection in the text; so the ode cannot become a drama; the third would-be character, the poet, is prevented from embodiment (in the fictional world). In Gaprindashvili’s tacit remake of the famous Alexander Pushkin’s poem (1833), the ‘copper/bronze horseman’ remains without a ‘Eugenius’. The Soviet Georgian poet, unlike the Imperial Russian one, could not afford himself a character who would be a virtual offender (that is, who would offend in his thoughts or in private) of the ‘Emperor’s image’. This would have led to a lethal result for the poet. Yet charging the new ‘Eugenius’ with love for the new ‘imperial monument’ would have been too clumsy a servility.

Re-reading “To the sea” alongside “Sea and the Chieftain”, two perspectives to rethink the image of sea in the former work occur. First, sea could be associated with ‘the people’, maybe the most expectable authority to sanction the production and the ‘mind-style’ of a former modernist converted to socialist realism. In such a case “Sea and the Chieftain” would play the role of a work-explicator, “the explicator-work”, “in the sense that it explicates that which the other work achieves at the expense of complex artistic organization” (Kolarov 2020: 228). Second, sea could be associated not just with ‘the people’ but with the people devoid of (free from the supervision or imposed parity) of the leader/chieftain. If the reader fails to discern the detail of unsupervised sea/people in “To the sea”, “Sea and the Chieftain” has played the role of a ‘work-distractor’, having distracted attention from potentially dangerous semantic

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<sup>1</sup> Zemo-Avchala Hydro-Electric Station near Mtskheta, the jewel of industrialising Soviet Georgia in the 1920s.

lacks in “To the sea”. In their combination, the two works embody a (quasi)religious hesitation: between conformist servilism and neutral pantheism. The second choice does not dissolve the tissue of the ‘neo-argonautic myth’.

The mental and artistic style of the poema oscillates between socialist realism, individualist symbolism, and neo-traditionalist post-symbolism. The liveliness of experience from encountering sea is kept in a ‘stand-by’ position; just as the ‘neo-argonautic myth’ in its complexity, one partly sustained by the mentioned liveliness.

### Conclusion

In 1917, Gaphrindashvili created a text (‘Dream’) which could have been an important contribution for a neo-argonautic foundational myth. In 1939, one year before his death, he created three sharply different texts testifying to a divided conscience seeking refuge in and patronage under the exogenous space and agency of sea (‘To the sea’), but finding social security in travesty (‘Circus at the seaside’) and (even if finally ambiguous) servilism (‘The sea and the Chieftan’). In the meanwhile, he ‘married’ the marine element and music, marinership and musicianship; and kept making difference between an argonautism of Jason and of Orpheus, or of ‘golden fleece’ and of ‘golden word’ (even though less conspicuously than T’itsian T’abidze). That myth implied, and still implies, a strategy of multi-directed cultural (and geopolitical) autonomy which is not easier to implement than a century ago. To start with, the mentioned poetic texts have to be re-read by Georgians.

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<sup>1</sup> Preprint proof-edited paginated version; courtesy of the author.

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იორდან ლუცკანოვი  
(ბულგარეთი)

## (შავი?) ზღვის სახე ვალერიან გაფრინდაშვილის პოეზიაში

### რეზიუმე

**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** ვალერიან გაფრინდაშვილი, შავი ზღვა, ახალი არგონავტების მითი, საზღვაო მგრძნობელობა, მოდერნიზმი, ევლოგიკური ამბივალენტობა.

სტატიაში გაანალიზებულია ვალერიან გაფრინდაშვილის ლექსები, რომლებშიც გადმოცემულია საზღვაო მოტივები. ანალიზი ორი მიმართულებით მიმდინარეობს: თეორიული და კულტურულ-ისტორიული.

თეორიული პერსპექტივა შთაგონებულია ანა-ტერეზა ტიმინიეკის ფენომენოლოგიური კვლევით, მგრძნობელობის შესახებ; ბუნების ელემენტების, კერძოდ, ზღვის მგრძნობელობის ასახვა მხატვრულ ლიტერატურაში და მისი შემდგომი დიფერენცირება „სპექტაკლს“, „სიმფონიას“ და „ბუნების დრამას“ შორის (ან, უფრო დეტალურად, „დედამინის პეიზაჟის“ ამა თუ იმ ძირითად ელემენტებს შორის, როგორცაა ზღვა ან მთა). „სპექტაკლი“ ლირიკული გმირის ინტერესის ობიექტია; „სიმფონია“ ჩნდება მაშინ, როდესაც აღნიშნული აგენტი ხდება „სპექტაკლის“ „ინსტრუმენტი“, რომელიც აღარ არის სპექტაკლი; ბუნებრივი ელემენტისა და ლირიკული გმირის ურთიერთქმედებით კი ჩნდება „დრამა“.

კულტურულ-ისტორიული კვლევა წარმართულია ინტუიციური ვარაუდით, რომ ქართულმა კულტურულმა ელიტამ მე-20 საუკუნის დასაწყისში შეიმუშავა (ან აპირებდა შეემუშებინა) კულტურულ-ფუძემდებლური მითი, რომელიც ორიენტირებულია კულტურათაშორის შეხვედრებზე არა მთების, არამედ – ზღვის გადაღმა. ეს ერთგვარი გამოწვევა იყო იმ ფონზე, რაც ქართულ ლიტერატურაში უკვე დამკვიდრებული იყო; ყველაზე ცნობილია ილია ჭავჭავაძის „მგზავრის წერილებით“. ამ სიახლეს შეიძლება ვუწოდოთ „ნეოარგონავტიკის“ მითი.

იმის ნაცვლად, რომ რუსეთში მიღებული ევროპული განათლების გადამუშავებით კულტურული „ქართველობის“ მარცვალი დაინახოს და ქართველ მთიელთა ადამინური ბუნება გადააფასოს, ეს ჰიპოთეტური ახალი მითი მას ხედავს „მედეას“ უნარში, თავიდან მოიშოროს „იასონი“ ან კიდევ უკეთესი, გადააქციოს იგი „ორფოსად“ მასთან შეხვედრის შემდეგ (და მანამდეც კი).

ზემოთხსენებული მოსაზრებების უმნიშვნელოვანესი გადაკვეთის წერტილია საკითხი იმაზე, მიუძღვით თუ არა წვლილი და თუ ასეა, რა დოზით ან რა სახით, საზღვაო სახეებს მითის ილოკუტიური (რაიმე მიზ-

ნით შესრულებული სამეტყველო აქტი) და პერლოკუტიური (სამეტყველო აქტი, როდესაც მსმენელმა გაიგო მთქმელის განზრახვა და სწორი რეაგირება მოახდინა მასზე) ძალის და ზოგადად, მითის არსებობაში. მკვლევარი ვარაუდობს, რომ რადგან, პირველ რიგში, „(ნეო)არგონავტიკის“ მითი უნდა შეიცავდეს საზღვაო სახეებს, და მეორეც, რომ მითმა უნდა მოაჯადოვოს, შესაძლოა, მისი ეს უმთავრესი ფუნქცია დალექილიყო მითის შემადგენელ ცალკეულ გამონათქვამებში. მკვლევარი თვლის, რომ ტიმენეცკის მიხედვით, გაფრინდაშვილის ლექსები, რომლებშიც გაშლილია ზღვის „დრამა“, პოტენციურად, „ნეოარგონავტიკის“ მითის ნარმოქმნაში შეტანილი ყველაზე ღირებული წვლილია.

იხრება რა, ცალკეული ლექსების, როგორც ავტორის შემოქმედების მეტატექსტის შემადგენელი ნაწილების განხილვისკენ, მკვლევარი გარკვეული დოზით იყენებს ორი თეორიის ინსტრუმენტებს: 1. ლირიკული ციკლი, როგორც დასტური პოეტური ტექსტის მიდრეკილებისა, ჩართული იყოს უფრო მსხვილ შემოქმედებით ერთეულში (ლეონ აკოფიანი) და 2. ავტოტექსტუალობა, როგორც ინტერტექსტუალობის შიდა შემოქმედებითი ვარიანტი და (თვით)გამეორების დიალექტიკა (რადოსვეტ კოლაროვი).

პირველი თეორიიდან აღებულია, უპირველეს ყოვლისა, ნარმოდგენა ზედნაშენის ურთიერთკავშირის სხვადასხვა ხარისხის შესახებ (ლირიკული ციკლის, ნაწარმოების) და, შესაბამისად, „ცენტრისა“ და „პერიფერიის“ ორგანიზებულობა ზედნაშენის შიგნით. მეორე თეორიიდან აღებულია ყოყმანის, როგორც გადადების სპეციფიკურ გაგება და, ასევე, „სამუშაოს გამაძლიერებლისა“ და „სამუშაოს ამხსნელის“ გაგება.

აღიარებს რა სათაურის მნიშვნელობას, მკითხველის სწავლების პროცესში, სტატიის ავტორი გაფრინდაშვილის ლექსებს, რომლებშიც გვხვდება ზღვის სახეები და მოტივები, ორ ძირითად ჯგუფად ჰყოფს: სემანტიკური პოზიცია (2) და – სხვა დანარჩენი ლექსები. სხვა დროს თუ ყურადღებას ამახვილებს პირველ ჯგუფზე, ამჯერად მკვლევარი მეორე ჯგუფზე ჩერდება. მათში ის აღიარებს ორი ლექსის განსაკუთრებულ მნიშვნელობას, რომლებიც, ჯერ ერთი, თხრობისა და სახეობრივი აზროვნების დონეზე, ყველაზე ნათლად გადმოსცემენ „(ნეო) არგონავტიკის“ მითს და შესაბამისად, უარყოფენ კიდევ მას. მეორეს მხრივ კი, ავტორის მიზანია შეკრიბოს საზღვაო მოტივები და სახეები, რომლებიც მეტნაკლებად განცალკევებულად ვლინდება სხვა ლექსებში: „სიზმარი“ (1917), „ზღვა და ბელადი (1939), მეორე ლექსზე აქცენტის გაკეთება აუცილებელი გახდა კიდევ ერთი მიზეზით. ეს არის ლექსი ხოტბა და როგორც ჩანს, გაფრინდაშვილის ერთადერთი ლექსია, რომელშიც შეკრებილია „ზღვის“ სიმბოლოს ყველა ძირითადი სემანტიკური ასპექტი, რომლებიც გვხვდება მის შემოქმედებაში: ორმაგი უნივერსალური ელემენტის ასპექტი, რომლის მეორე ასპექტია მუსიკა, მიღმიერი სამყარო, ან, შე-

საძლოა, მხოლოდ სამყაროს „მეორე“ ნახევარი, ან, უბრალოდ, კავშირი სხვა სამყაროსთან თუ სხვა ნაწილთან, სხეულებრივობისა და უსხეულობის ზღვარზე. ამ ნაწარმოებიდან ამოღებულია არასხეულებრივობა, ემპირიული ზღვა, ადამიანური მასების მეტაფორა, მაგრამ ქალურობა, როგორც ხსენებული „სხვაობის“ ერთ-ერთი მთავარი მახასიათებელი, ამ ნაწარმოებიდან ამოშლილია.

ამ ორი ლექსისადმი მიძღვნილ ახლო კითხვის ორ ბლოკს შორის, მე-4 და მე-6 თავებში ავტორი გვთავაზობს საზღვაო მოტივების ზოგად მონახაზს გაფრინდაშვილის დანარჩენ ლექსებში (რაც არის მე-5 თავის მთავარი ამოცანა და სტატიის მთავარი აღწერილობითი ამოცანა); ადგენს ლექსების კატალოგს, შემდეგი კრიტიკერიუმების მიხედვით: პირველ რიგში, ეს არის „მეტასემანტიკური“ კრიტიკერიუმი, რომელიც განასხვავებს „ჟანრებს“ საზღვაო სტიქიებისადმი კუთვნილების მიხედვით. ასკვნის რა, რომ რომ ზოგიერთი ლექსი მერყეობს „სპექტაკლსა“ და „სიმფონიას“ შორის, ზოგი კი „სიმფონიასა“ და „დრამას“ შორის, სტატიის ავტორი შესაბამისად ჰყოფს ლექსებს. შემდეგ, ამ ორი ჯგუფიდან თითოეულში ახარისხებს ლექსებს საზღვაო სახეებისა და მოტივების მეტ-ნაკლებად განსაზღვრული სემანტიკის მიხედვით, რომლებიც გვხვდება ამა თუ იმ ლექსში. ზღვის ასოციაცია ქალურობასთან და სამყაროს „სხვა ნახევართან“, ასევე, საზღვაო „განსხეულება“ აკუსტიკურ/მუსიკალურ „სხეულში“, როგორც ჩანს, ზღვის ყველაზე ხშირი სემანტიზაციაა გაფრინდაშვილის პოეზიაში. განსაკუთრებული ყურადღებას ექცევა პოეტიკულ-მეზღვარისა და ნავის ადამიანური სულის (ერთი მხრივ) და არგონავტების მითთან დაკავშირებული მოტივების (მეორეს მხრივ) ანტიკური ტოპოსების თანაფარდობას. ამ ინტერესის ნიადაგზე მკვლევარი გვთავაზობს გაფრინდაშვილის ერთი და იმავე სათაურის („ძიება“) მქონე სამი ლექსის წინასწარ შედარებით ანალიზს. ზღვის მოტივების შემცველი ლექსების საერთო სქემა ემსახურება დამხმარე მიზანს, თვალი გაადევნოს და აჩვენოს თავსებადობა და თანაზომიერება ისეთ განსხვავებული ლექსებისა, როგორებიცაა „სიზმარი“ და „ზღვა და ბელადი“ .

მოკლე დასკვნაში ავტორი აჯამებს „(ნეო)არგონავტიკული მითის“ გაფრინდაშვილისეულ ახსნას და მკითხველს სთავაზობს, განიხილოს მისი პოეზიის ირიბი კავშირი ამ მითთან, როგორც მისი ქვეყნის ზიგზაგური პერსპექტივის სიმბოლო, პოლიტიკური „ლევიათანებისგან“ და „ბეჭემოთებისგან“ დამოუკიდებლად.

სტატიაში მოცემულია გაფრინდაშვილის პოეზიის ფრაგმენტების პნკარედული თარგმანი ოცდაათზე მეტი ლექსიდან.