

Winfried Boeder (University of Oldenburg, Germany)

STANZA STRUCTURE AND TEXTUAL COHESION IN RUSTAVELI ¹

1. The Problem

One of the main problems of text linguistics is the question: What is it that makes a text coherent? Actually, this question has always been a corollary of any close reading of literature, and it has constantly to be answered in the typically philological activity of emendating texts: Lack of sense-continuity counts as a strong argument for the assumption that the text at hand is corrupt, and establishing coherence is a decisive step towards its understanding. However, I will not try to contribute to Rustvelology in this sense. Rather, my paper will deal with the more shallow level of textual organization that is already accessible by looking closely at the linguistic means. In particular, I am interested in small-scale composition, in the the structure of Rustaveli's stanzas, their inner fragmentation, their independence from each other and their coherence in longer passages. I suggest that there is some leading principle behind the bewildering variety of form, and that this principle is quite different from what at least I know of traditional European texts. As a text sample I have chosen mainly two passages: a narrative passage, namely the famous episode: "How the King of the Arabians Saw the Knight Clad in the Panther's Skin", and a non-narrative passage, the "Testament of Avtandil to King Rostevan when he Stole Away".

2. The Position of Aphorisms in Rustaveli's Stanza

In 1919 Nikolaj Marr held a lecture on "Caucasian poetry and its technical foundations" (Marr 1966: 13-14) where he pointed out that the fourth line of

¹ An earlier version of this paper was read at the *Vth Caucasian Colloquium* of the Societas Caucasologica Europaea (London, June 25 - 30, 1990) and at the *International Shota Rustaveli Symposium: History, Insight, Poetry* (University of Turku, Finland, April 11 - 12, 1991). At many places I have profited from the commentary of Nodar Nataze and Aleksii Činčarauli (Nataze 1974) and from the comments of the Committee for the Establishment of an Academic Text Edition of the "Man in the Panther's Skin" in the journal *მაცნე. ენისა და ლიტერატურის სერია* (1974-1988). - I would like to thank Kevin Carpenter (University of Oldenburg) for carefully improving my English.

Rustaveli's stanza is not only set off by the use of an extra *და* *da* 'and' at its beginning, it is also the privileged place of proverbs, maxims, aphorisms and the like, i.e. units which, grammatically seen, may be determined as fully generic sentences. Here is an example:

- (1) ავთანდილს მისვდა მოსმენა საქმისა სანატრელისა,
 ადგა და კაბა ჩაიცვა, მჯობი ყოვლისა ქრელისა;
 უნარის შეყრა ვარდისა, არ ერთგან შეუყრელისა.
 და ამოა ქვრეტა ტურფისა, სიასლე საყვარელისა! (121)²

Avtandil was glad to hear this joyful news.

He rose and donned his best and brightest coat.

He rejoiced to meet the rose; they had never yet met alone.

And *Pleasant is it to gaze on beauty, and be near one beloved.*³

The generic part of the stanza may extend over more than one line, as in:

- (2) არას გარგებს სიმძიმელი, უსარგებლო ცრემლთა დენა;
 არ გარდავა გარდაუვალად მომავალი საქმე ზენა;
 წესი არის მამაცისა მოჭირვება, ჭირთა თმენა,
 და არვის ძალუც ხორციელსა განგებისა გარდავლენა. (793)

Sadness avails thee not, nor useless flow of tears.

The deed which is inevitably decreed above cannot be avoided.

It is a law with men that they should struggle and suffer woes,

And *no creature or flesh hath power to thwart Providence.*

- (3) ვერ დაიჭირავს სიკვდილსა გზა ვიწრო, ვერცა კლდოვანი;
 მისგან გასწორდეს ყოველი, სუსტი და ძალგულოვანი;
 ბოლოდ შეყარნეს მიწამან ერთგან მოყმე და მსცოვანი.
 და სჯობს სიცოცხლესა ნაზრასსა სიკვდილი სახელოვანი! (798)

A narrow road cannot keep Death, nor a rocky one;

By him all are levelled, weak and strong-hearted;

In the end the earth unites in one place youth and greybeard.

And *Better a glorious death than shameful life!*

² Citations are according to the "Academic Edition" (Rustaveli 1988).

³ Translations are from Wardrop (1912), which have been corrected in some places (see notes).

Some generic sentences, however, occur in the non-final part of the stanza, as in the first line of:

- (4) არდავიწყება მოყვრისა აროდეს გვიზამს ზიანსა;
 ვჰგმობ კაცსა უაუგოსა, ცრუსა და ღალატიანსა!
 ვერ ვეცრუები, ვერ უზამ მას ხელმწიფესა მზიანსა.
 და რა უარეა მამაცსა სულდიდსა, წახლვაგვიანსა! (796)

Mindfulness of a friend ne'er doeth us harm.

I blame⁴ the man who is shameless, false and treacherous.

I cannot be false to him,⁵ I cannot do it to that mighty king.

And *What is worse than an arrogant, hesitant*⁶ *man.*

A closer look at the distribution of generic sentences in Rustaveli's work reveals that the ratio between final and non-final occurrences is about 3 : 2. So Marr's intuition was correct to some extent. There is, however, a functional difference between final and non-final positions: non-final generic sentences are maxims, and they are the premises of practical reasoning. Indeed, (4) 796 may be reconstructed as.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| (5) Premise 1 (generic): | It never does us any harm not to forget a friend |
| Premise 2 (non-generic): | I blame a man who has no [sense of] shame, who is deceitful and treacherous [and I would be a man of such undesirable behaviour if I didn't help Tariel]. |
| Conclusion (non-generic): | [So] I cannot deceive him, I cannot do any harm to that king (sc. Tariel). |
| Comment (generic): | What is worse than an arrogant man who [on the other hand] hesitates to go [to help]? |

A corollary of this functional difference is a difference in the embedding of these generic sentences: non-final generic sentences are always embedded in direct speech, while the final ones may be either direct speech or not (Boeder 1990). This distribution is in accordance with a further feature of the last lines: they are a privileged place of authorial remarks, which need not be proverbial, but may be directed at the particular event related in the non-final part of the

⁴ Wardrop: despise

⁵ to him omisit Wardrop

⁶ Wardrop: hesitant, tardy-going

stanza. These authorial remarks are comments or, to use Sargis Caišvili's (1974: 64) words, "a kind of conclusion of reflections given in the preceding lines". An example is:

- (6) ესე თქვა და სინარულით თამაშობა ადიადა;
 მგოსანი და მუშაითი უნმეს, პოვეს რაცა სადა;
 დია გასცა საბოძვარი, ყველა დარბაზს შემოსადა;
 და მისი მსგავსი სიუნვითა ღმერთმან სხვამცა რა დაჰბადა! (119)

Thus he spoke, and sporting was increased with rejoicing;
 They called the minstrel and the acrobat wherever they were found.
 Many gifts were distributed, he summoned all to the throne-room.
What other did God create with generosity like unto his!

The author can even address his hearer, as in:

- (7) ორთავე ხელი მოჰკიდეს და დასვეს თავისსა,
 გვერდსა დაუსვეს ავთანდილ, სურვილსა მოეკლა ვისსა;
 უნახავსა და ნახულსა სჯობს ყოვლსა ხანახავისსა,
 და ნუ ეჭვ მიჯნურთა მათებრთა ნუცა თუ რამინს და ვისსა. (1538)

Both took her by the hand and set her on their throne;
 They placed Avtandil by the side of her for desire of whom he was
 slain;
 She is better than the seen and the unseen, (better) than all sight.
Think not any were like them in love, not even Ramin and Vis.

In other places, it seems indeterminable whether the last line belongs to the author or to the hero, as in:

- (8) ავთანდილ უჭვრეტს ტარიელს, უსულოდ ქვემდებარესა,
 შეფრინდა, შევლად მიმართა მას, ტკბილად მოუბარესა,
 ვერა ვერ არგო დამწვარსა, სრულად ცეცხლნადებარესა;
 და მისთა ნიშანთა სიცოცხლე მართ მისი მიიბარესა. (1336)

Avtandil gazes at Tariel lying lifeless;
 He fled to him, he set about helping him, the sweetly-speaking;
 He could not be of avail to the consumed one, completely burned up
 with fire;
Had her (sc. Nestan Darejan's) signs indeed taken his life? ⁷

⁷ Wardrop: Her tokens had laid hold of his life

The specific meaning of the last line in a stanza is a phenomenon that may also be observed in other epics such as the Middle High German Nibelungen epic. It was written around 1200, at about the same time as Rustaveli's work, and is also composed of rhyming quatrains. Interestingly, the authorial fourth line often has a feature that is absent from Rustaveli's poem. As some philologists have observed, it often contains a prophesy of the tragic outcome of the events which gives the whole epic a particular tension and gloomy mood as in the second stanza:

- (9) Ez wuohs in Burgonden ein vil edel magedîn,
 daz in allen landen niht schœners mohte sîn,
 Kriemhilt geheizen: si wart ein scœne wîp.
 dar umbe muosen degene vil verliesen den lîp.

There was a very noble young woman growing up in Burgundy,
 Such that in no country there could have been a more beautiful one.
 Her name was Kriemhilt: she was a beautiful woman.
 Many brave men had to lose their lives for her.

Similarly, couplets are the privileged place of medieval *chansons de geste* (Suard 1984: 137-138).

The question why the last line is the privileged place of aphorisms and authorial remarks cannot be answered by simply pointing out that it is due to a literary tradition. In everyday conversation, statements of this kind are a typical device for “(opening up) closings”.⁸ They are a natural device which leads the narrative back to the *hic et nunc* - to the author's evaluation or to values of his audience.⁹

⁸ Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 306) observe: The “‘topic-bounding’ technique [...] involves one party's offering of a proverbial or aphoristic formulation of conventional wisdom which can be heard as the ‘moral’ or ‘lesson’ of the topic being thereby possibly closed. Such formulations are ‘agreeable with’. When such a formulation is offered by one party and agreed to by another, a topic may be seen (by them) to have been brought to a close.” An example is: “Uh - you know, it's just like bringing the - blood up.” “Yeah well. *Things uh always work out for the best.*” “Oh certainly. Alright Tess” (ib. p. 307)

⁹ Their value and their connection with the narrative itself can be quite different at different times. Suard (1984: 141-142) observes that in the older epic, their universal truth (“vérité exemplaire”) connects the historical feats of the ancestors with the values of contemporary society. In later poems, it becomes a poetic means that distinguishes the epic from “true history”. Similarly, there is a whole scale of degrees to which “evaluations” are integrated into the narrative (Labov - Waletzky 1967: 39).

3. The Structure of the Stanza

We can, then, conclude that there is a strong tendency in Rustaveli's stanzas, or maybe in epic stanzas in general, to endow their last lines with a particular value. Now out of 1573 stanzas that the new Academic Edition has retained as authentic, only about 150 stanzas contain aphorisms, and even if we add other authorial comments and the like, only a small portion of the stanzas are of this type. But a close look at any passage of Rustaveli's text reveals that every stanza is at least bipartite from the point of view of textual function, and that the functional cut between the final line and the non-final segment of the stanza is by far the most frequent. To give an example, let us consider the beginning of a narrative episode, Rostan's and Avtandil's encounter with Tariel weeping in the wilderness. The solid lines on the left side of the text connect those verses which are linked by cohesion. The words that enter into this relation are underlined:¹⁰

(10)

ნანეს, უცხო მოყმე ვინმე ჯდა მტირალი წყლისა პირსა,
შავი ცხენი სადავითა ჰყვა ლომსა და ვითა გმირსა,
სშირად ესნა მარგალიტი ლაგამ-აბჯარ-უნაგირსა.
ცრემლსა ვარდი დაეთოთვილა, გულისა მდუღრად ანატირსა. (83)

მას ტანსა კაბა ემოსა გარეთმა ვეფხვის ტყავისა,
ვეფხვის ტყავისა ქუდივე იყო სარქმელი თავისა,
ხელთა ნაჭედი მათრახნი ჰქონდა უსნოსი მკლავისა;
ნანეს და ნანვა მოუნდა უცხოსა სანანავისა. (84)

წავიდა მონა საუბრად მის ყმისა გულმდუღარისად,
თავნამოგდებით მტირლისა, არ ჭჭრეცით მოლიზღარისად, -
მუნვე წვიმს წვიმა ბროლისა, ჰგია გიშრისა ღარი სად, -
ანლოს მივიდა, მოსცალდა სიტყვისა თქმად აღარისად. (85)

ვერა ჰკადრა საუბარი, მონა მეტად შეუწრდა,
დიდნან უჭჭრეცს გაკვირვებით, თუცა გული უმაგარდა;
მოახსენა: „გიბრძანებსო“, ანლოს მიდგა, დაუწყნარდა.
იგი ტირს და არა ესმის მისგან, გაუუმეცარდა. (86)

მის მონისა არა ესმა სიტყვა, არცა ნაუბარი,
მათ ლაშქართა ზახილისა იყო ერთობ უგრძნობარი,
უცხოდ რამე ამოსკენოდა გული ცეცხლთა ნადებარი,
ცრემლსა სისხლი ერეოდა, გასდის, ვითა ნაგუბარი. (87)

¹⁰ Initial და da 'and' in the fourth line of the quatrains have been omitted for the sake of simplicity.

სხვაგან ქნის მისი გონება მისმან თავისა წონამან.
 ესე მეფისა ბრძანება ერთხელ კვლა ჰკადრა მონამან.
 არცა დააგდო ტირილი, არცა რა გაიგონა მან,
 და არცა გახლიჩნა ბაგები, თავი ვარდისა კონამან. (88)

HOW THE KING OF THE ARABIANS SAW THE KNIGHT CLAD IN THE PANTHER'S SKIN

- 83 They saw a certain stranger knight; he sat weeping on the bank of the
 stream,
 He held his black horse by the rein, he looked like a lion and a hero;
 His bridle, armour and saddle were thickly bedight with pearls;
 The rose of (his cheek) was frozen in tears that welled up from
 [made weep] his woe-stricken heart.
- 84 His form was clad in a long coat over which was thrown a panther's
skin,
 His head, too, was covered with a cap of panther's skin;
 In his hand he held a whip thicker than a man's arm.
 They looked [saw] and liked to look at [see] that wondrous [strange]
sight.
- 85 A slave went forth to speak to the knight of the woe-stricken heart,
 Who, weeping with downcast head, seems not a spectacle
 [something to gaze at] for jesting;
 From a channel of jet rains a crystal shower.
 When (the slave) approached [went near], he could by no means bring
 himself to speak a word (to Tariel).
- 86 The slave was much perturbed, he dared not address [speak to] him.
 A long time he gazed in wonder till his heart was strengthened;
 Then he said: "(The king) commands thee (to attend him)." He (the
 slave) came near, (and) greeted him gently;
 He (Tariel) wept on and heard not, he knew not that (the slave) was
 there.
- 87 He heard not a word of the slave, nor what he said [had spoken];
 He was wholly unconscious of the shouting of the soldiers,
 He was sobbing strangely, his heart burnt up with fires;
Tears were mingled with blood, and flowed forth as from
 floodgates.

88 Elsewhither his mind [perception] was wafted, by the weight of his
head!

Once again the slave uttered [dared] the king's message [command],
But (Tariel) ceased not from weeping and heard [perceived] him not,
Nor was the rose-bouquet (of speech) plucked from his lips.

In 83 we have a tripartite structure, where the first line and the last line show lexical cohesion by words for “weeping” (მტირალი, ცრემლისა, ანატირსა *mṭirali, cremlisa, anaṭirsa*) and are thus opposed to the middle lines depicting Tariel's warriorlike attributes. 84 takes up this description of what people see in the first three lines, whereas the fourth line is opposed to it as referring to the fact **that** they see it and that they **want** to see it. On the other hand, “seeing” is a cohesive link connecting the fourth line of 84 with the first line of 83 (ნახეს, ნახვა, სანახავისა; ნახეს *naxes, naxva, sanaxavisa; naxes*). Similarly in 85, the first and last lines are opposed to the middle lines as the messenger's “action” vs. “description of Tariel's weeping”. In 86, the messenger's action continues in the first three lines, but the last line comes back again to Tariel's weeping and his non-reaction. 87 continues with Tariel's non-reaction in the first two lines, while the second half of the stanza describes his behaviour: his groaning and his weeping. The first line of 88 is about Tariel's absentmindedness and thus takes up the first half of 87. In the second line the messenger repeats his attempt to communicate while the rest of the stanza is again about Tariel's weeping and non-speaking. So a division of Rustaveli's stanza into two or three segments of unequal size seems to be the rule, and the same is probably true for other epics. This segmentation into textually different parts avoids the monotonous chains of homogeneous states or events that is regarded as typical of narrative texts.

With reference to Lotman (1972) I consider this to be a special case of a general tendency of textual organization: on the level of the stanza it repeats higher level oppositions like “thesis” and “antithesis”, “frame” and “events”, “complication” and “solution”, “plot” and “evaluation”, “story” and “*fabula docet*”, “premises” and “conclusion” - oppositions that are well-known since antiquity. They have their lower level counterparts, namely linguistic opposites like “topic” and “comment”, “given” and “new” on the sentence level.

4. The Fragmentation of the Stanza

However, these oppositions of traditional rhetoric are mainly based on dichotomies, and the binary nature of **all** of Rustaveli's stanzas remains to be proven. But even if we could show that every stanza has a basically binary structure we would be left with the problem of giving this structure a functional

composition, and not of sujet, might be what Rustaveli himself meant when he said that he found “this Persian tale” (9,1: ამბავი სპარსული ambavi Sparsuli) and “rolled this precious pearl on the palm of his hand”, as he puts it. Let us look at some examples.

Although the episode in which the king of the Arabs sees the knight in the panther’s skin is a narrative part of the epic and thus necessitates a linear chain of events, this chain is interwoven with several motifs that occur again and again and that can best be recognized on the basis of lexematic repetition: As I have pointed out, the “seeing” of 83,1 is repeated in 84,4 (“looking”), “weeping” occurs in 83,1, 83,4, 85,2, 86,4, 88,3; its collocational partner, the tears, occur in 83,4, 87,4 and in a metaphoric form, as rain, in 85,3. The (literal) “scalding” of Tariel’s heart¹¹ in 83,4 is repeated in 85,2, the “strangeness” of his appearance in 83,1 recurs in 84,4 and 87,3. An exhaustive list of cohesional links would of course comprise many other lexemes and cases of partial semantic identity and collocation.

One might argue that this compositional pattern is due to the repetitive nature of the events themselves. But if we consider non-narrative passages such as Avtandil’s testament, the compositional principle becomes even more evident. As in (10), words with repeated roots are underlined in the Georgian text. Repetitions in the same line (figura etymologica and the like, as in a 786,2) are neglected. In Wardrop’s translation, square brackets contain literal meanings. The places of previous occurrences are given in parentheses.

(12)

- a 786 დაჯდა წერად ანდერძისა, საბრალოსა საუბრისად:
 „ჰე, მეფეო, გავიპარვი ძებნად ჩემგან საქებრისად;
 ვერ დავდგები შეუყრელად ჩემთა ცეცხლთა მომდებრისად;
 და შეძინდე და წამატანე მოწყალება ღმრთაებრისად.
- b 787 ვიცი, ბოლოდ არ დამიგმობ ამა ჩემსა გაზრასულსა.
 კაცი ბრძენი ვერ გასწირავს მოყვარესა მოყვარულსა;
 მე სიტყვასა ერთსა გკადრებ, პლატონისგან სწავლათქმულსა:
 და „სიცრუე და ორპირობა ავნებს სორცსა, მერმე სულსა“.
- c 788 რათგან თავია სიცრუე ყოვლისა უბადობისა,
 მე რად გაგწიროთ მოყვარე, ძმა უმტკიცესი ძმობისა?!
 არა გიქ, ცოდნა რას მარგებს ფილოსოფოსთა ბრძნობისა!
 და მით ვისწავლებით, მოგვცეს შერთვა ზესთ მწყობრთა წყობისა.
- d 789 წაგიკითხავს, სიყვარულსა მოციქულნი რაგვარ წერენ?

¹¹ Wardrop: woe-stricken

- ვით იტყვიან, ვით აქებენ? ცან, ცნობანი მიაფერენ.
 „სიყვარული აღგვამაღლებს“, ვით ეუვაანნი, ამას უღერენ,
 და შენ არ ჯერ ხარ, უსწავლელნი კაცნი ვითმცა შევაჯერენ!
- e 790 ვინ დამბადა, შექლებაცა მანვე მომცა ძლევად მტერთად;
 ვინ არს ძალი უხილავი შემწედ ყოვლთა მიწიერთად,
 ვინ საზღვარსა დაუსაზღვრებს, ზის - ჟგჯგაჟი ღმერთი -
 ღმერთად, -
 და იგი გაჰნდის წამისყოფით ერთსა ასად, ასსა ერთად.
- f 791 რაცა ღმერთსა არა სწადდეს, არა საქმე არ იქმნების.
 მზისა შუქთა ვერმჭვრეტელი ია სმების, ვარდი ჭნების;
 თვალთა ტურფა საჭვრეტელი უცნოდ რადმე ეშვდინების;
 და მე ვით გავსძლო უმისობა, ან სოცოცხლე ვით მეთნების!
- g 792 რაზომცა სწყრები, შემინდევე შეცვლა თქვენისა მცნებისა.
ძალი არ მქონდა ტყვექმნილსა მე მაგისისა თნებისა;
 აწ წასლვა იყო წამალი ჩემთა სახმილთა გზნებისა,
 და სადა გინდ ვიყო, რა მგამა, ყოფამცა მქონდა ნებისა!
- h 793 არას გარგებს სიმძიმელი, უსარგებლო ცრემლთა დენა;
 არ გარდავა გარდაუვალად მომავალი საქმე ზენა;
 წესი არის მამაცისა მოჭირვება, ჭირთა თმენა,
 და არვის ძალუც ხორციელსა განგებისა გარდავლენა.
- i 794 რაცა ღმერთსა გაუგია თავსა ჩემსა გარდასავლად,
გარდამნდეს და შემოვიქცე, აღარ დამრჩეს გული ავლად;
 თქვენვე გნანნე მზიარულნი დიდებით და დავლამრავლად;
 და მას რა ვარგო, დიდებად და კმარის ესე ჩემად დავლად.
- j 795 მეფეო, ესე თათბირი, მომკალ, ვინ დამიწუნოსა!
 მეფეო, ნუთუ წასლვამან თქვენ ჩემმან დაგაჭმუნოსა,
ვერ ვეცრუები, ვერ უსამ საქმესა საძაბუნოსა,
 და პირისპირ მარცხვენს: ორნივე მივალთ მას საუკუნოსა.
- k 796 არდავიწყება მოყვრისა აროდეს გვიზამს ზიანსა;
ვჭგმობ კაცსა უაუგოსა, ცრუსა და ღალატთანსა!
ვერ ვეცრუები, ვერ უსამ მას ხელმწიფესა მზიანსა.
 და რა უარეა მამაცსა სულდიდსა, წასლვაგვიანსა!
- l 797 რა უარეა მამაცსა ომშიგან პირის მსმეჭელსა,
შემდრკალსა, შეშინებულსა და სიკვდილისა მეჭველსა!
კაცი ჯაბანი რითა სჯობს დიაცსა ქსლისა მბეჭველსა!

და სჯობს სახელისა მოხვეჭა ყოველსა მოსახვეჭელსა!

- m 798 ვერ დაიჭირავს სიკვდილსა გზა ვიწრო, ვერცა კლდოვანი;
 მისგან გასწორდეს ყოველი, სუსტი და ძალგულოვანი;
ბოლოდ შეყარნეს მიწამან ერთგან მოყმე და მსცოვანი.
 და სჯობს სიცოცხლესა ნაზრახსა სიკვდილი სახელოვანი!
- n 799 მერმე ვიშიშვი, მეფეო, თქვენად კადრებად ამისად:
 სცთების და სცთების, სიკვდილსა ვინ არ მოელის წამისად;
 მოვა შემყრელი ყოველთა ერთგან დღისა და ღამისად,
 და თუ ვერა გნახე ცოცხალმან, სიცოცხლე გქონდეს ჟამისად.

THE TESTAMENT OF AVTANDIL TO KING ROSTEVAN WHEN HE STOLE AWAY

- a He sat down to write the will, thus piteously inditing:
 "O king! I have stolen away in quest of him I must seek
 I cannot remain sundered from him, the kindler of my fires.
Forgive me and be merciful to me like God. (786)
- b I know that in the end thou wilt not blame this my resolve.
 A wise man cannot abandon his beloved [loving] friend.
 I venture to remind thee of the teaching of a certain discourse by Plato:
 "Falsehood and twofacedness injure the body [flesh] and then
 the soul." (787)
- c Since lying [falsehood (b4)] is the source of all meanness¹²,
 Why should I abandon (b2) my friend (b2) a brother by a stronger tie
 than born brotherhood?
 I will not do it! What avails me the knowledge (b1) of the
 philosophizing [wisdom (b2)] of philosophers!
 Therefore are we taught (b3) that we may be united [be given unity]
 with the choir of the heavenly [above] hosts. (788)
- d Thou hast read how the apostles write of love (b2, c2),
 How they speak of it, how they praise it; know (b1, c3) thou it and
 harmonize thy knowledge (b1, c3):
 "Love (b2, c2, d1) exalteth us", this is as it were the tinkling burden of
 their song;

¹² Wardrop: misfortunes

If thou conceive not this how can I convince ignorant [untaught
(b3, c4)] men (b2)? (789)

e He who created me, even He gave me power (c4) to overcome foes;
He who is the invisible Might [power (e1)], the Aid of every earthly
being,
Who fixes the bounds of the finite, sits immortal [not dying] God as
God,
He can in one moment change a hundred into one and one into
a hundred. (790)

f What God (e3) wills not will not become fact [deed].
The violet fades, the rose withers, if they cannot gaze on the
sunbeams;
Every lovely thing is desirable for the eye to gaze (f2) on.
How can I endure [have power (e1)] the lack of him, or how can life
please me! (791)

g However angry thou art, forgive me (a4) that I have not kept your
command;
Enthralled, I had no power (e1-2, f4) to fulfill [to please (f4) you with] it.
No! to go (forth) was the remedy for the flaming of my furnaces.
Wherever I may be, what matters it to me if I have but my freewill?
(792)

h Sadness avails (c3) thee not, nor useless [not availing (c3)] flow of
tears.
The deed which is inevitably decreed above cannot be avoided
[will not pass by without having passed by].
It is a law with men that they should struggle and suffer woes,
And no creature of flesh hath power (e1-2, f4, g2) to thwart [pass by
(h2)] Providence. (793)

i Whatever God (e3, f1) has predestined to come to pass (h2, 4] upon me
Let it be fulfilled [pass on me (h2, 4, i1)], and when I return my heart
will no longer remain ashes.
May I see you also joyful in majesty [glory] and manifold wealth.
What I can do [avail] for him is my glory (i3), and this is sufficient booty
for me. (794)

j O king, this is my decision. Slay me! if anyone can disapprove!

same tendril in different configurations. To mention just a few in Avtandil's testament: begging the king's pardon of 786,4 is repeated in 792,1 and 803,4 (შემინდევ *šemindev*); the idea of learning (სწავლა *sčavla*) from the sayings of wise men we have in 787,3, 788,4 and 789,4, the abjectness of being false (ცრუ *cru*) to a friend in 787,4 and 795,3; in 791,4 and 792,2 the declaration of being unable (გაძლება, ძალა *gazleba, zala*) to enjoy (თნება *tneba*) life without one's friend; the behaviour of a brave man (მამაცი *mamaci*) occurs in 793,3, 796,4 and 797,1, the possibility of seeing the king again occurs in 794,3 and 799,4 (ნახ- *nax-*). Similarly, half of 795,3 is repeated in 796,3 (ვერ ვეცრუები, ვერ უზამ *ver vecruebi, ver uzam*), and 797,4 and 798,4 are parallel (სჯობს სახელისა მოხვეჭა ... *sžobs saxelisa moxveča...*; სჯობს ... სიკვდილი სახელოვანი *sžobs ... sičvdili saxelovani* 'better a glorious death than life in dishonour'). Death as an equalizer occurs in 798,3 and 799,3 etc. etc.

6. Textual Continuity and Discontinuity

Does this "thematic polyphony" destroy the coherence of the stanza as a unit? I think not. To begin with, a rhyme of two or three syllables in all four lines of the stanza and the uniformity of the shairi are a very strong formal tie which corresponds to a unity of coherence, notwithstanding the fact that this unity is much less salient than we expect measured by the standard of European literature. Second, the "fragmentation" of the stanza is also compensated for by a strict disallowance of enjambement on a deeper level. Enjambement on the clause level is disallowed even between the lines of a stanza. But enjambement on the level of textual structure is also disallowed between stanzas. For instance, no description or action may be continued from one stanza to the other. We always have a change from description to action, from authorial remark to non-authorial text, from the action of one agent to the action of another agent, etc. I have already mentioned these changes in connection with the analysis of our narrative sample: the description of Tariel's exterior in 83 switches to his weeping in the last line, and therefore the description can be continued in the next stanza. Telling about Tariel's inability to perceive his visitors' voices in the first half of 87 and in the first line of 88 is interrupted by two lines on Tariel's groaning and weeping. The final generic sentences I dealt with first are, of course, good examples of switching from one textual function to another. That Rustaveli indeed tries to avoid enjambement and to give each stanza its self-contained independence is proven by a special device which occurs in both narrative and non-narrative passages of the text. It consists of repeating a modified version of the last line of the preceding stanza as the first line of the next one, e.g.

- (13) 85,4 He [sc. the servant-messenger] approached him, [but]
he didn't bring himself to speak a word.
86,1 He didn't dare to speak a word
- 86,4 He [sc. Tariel] is weeping and doesn't hear anything from
him [sc. the servant-messenger] (and) remains unconscious
[of what happens around him]
87,1 He didn't hear a word nor what was spoken
- 95,4 He [sc. Tariel] noticed that the king was coming to follow him.
96,1 When he understood [that] the king came...
- 787,4 Falseness and two-facedness injure the body [and] then the soul.
788,1 As falseness is the source of meanness...
- 793,4 No creature of flesh has power to escape [pass by] destiny.
794,1 Whatever God predestined to pass upon me...
- 796,4 What is worse than an arrogant man [who however] hesitates
[to help]
797,1 What is worse than a man [whose] face [is] distorted [for fear] in
the fight.

This kind of repetition allows Rustaveli to continue and to discontinue his text at the same time. He continues his text insofar as he continues to speak on the same theme. He discontinues his text insofar as the development of his theme does not advance when repeating the last line where an advancement is expected. While parallelism links up the lines of a poem (Jakobson 1966: 409), repetition of contiguous lines separates them. The poet thereby guarantees the independence of each stanza.

7. Conclusion

As a result we have a delicate balance between two divergent tendencies: On the one hand we have a tendency to stress the unity and independence of the stanza by using rhyme and such devices as interrupting structural monotony at the end of the stanza or repeating its last line in a modified form. This tendency is, however, counterbalanced on the other hand by a fragmentation of the stanza; it is difficult to assess the coherence of their segments while it is easy to detect the vertical connections between segments of different contiguous or non-contiguous stanzas. This gives the impression of a thematic polyphony in each

stanza and of a strong coherence of larger passages where different themes are developed by setting them into different configurations.

Bibliography

- Boeder, Winfried 1983: “*und* in den südkaukasischen Sprachen [(I:) Einige Verwendungen von *da* ‘und’ in der altgeorgischehn Literatursprache]”, *Folia Linguistica* 17: 287-326
- Boeder, Winfried 1990: “Zum textuellen Bau der Strophe bei Šota Rustaveli”, in: *Lingua restituta Orientalis*. Festgabe für Julius Aßfalg. Herausgegeben von Regine Schulz und Manfred Görg (= Ägypten und Altes Testament. Studien zur Geschichte, Kultur und Religion Ägyptens und des Alten Testaments 20). Wiesbaden, pp. 45-51
- Caišvili, Sargis 1974: სარგის ცაიშვილი: შოთა რუსთაველი - დავით გურამიშვილი. ნარკვევები ძველი ქართული ლიტერატურის ისტორიიდან (საქართველოს სსრ მეცნიერებათა აკადემია. ვეფხისტყაოსნის ტექსტის დამდგენი კომისია). თბილისი: მეცნიერება
- Jakobson, Roman 1966: “Grammatical parallelism and its Russian facet”, *Language* 42: 399-429
- Labov, William - Joshua Waletzky 1967: “Narrative analysis: oral versions of personal experience”, in: June Helm (ed.): *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts*. Proceedings of the 1966 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society. Seattle - London: University of Washington Press, pp. 12-44
- Lentz, Wolfgang 1952: “Beobachtungen über den gedanklichen Aufbau einiger zeitgenössischer persischer Prosastücke”, *Der Islam* 30: 166-208
- Lentz, Wolfgang 1955: *Yasna* 28. Kommentierte Übersetzung und Kompositionsanalyse (= Akademie der Wissenschaften und Literatur in Mainz. Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 1954,16, pp. 919-1009). Wiesbaden: Steiner
- Lentz, Wolfgang [1958]: *Goethes Noten und Abhandlungen zum West-östlichen Divan* (= Veröffentlichung der Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Hamburg). Hamburg: J.J. Augustin
- Lentz, Wolfgang 1961: “Oriental types of literary composition as described by Goethe”, *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 10: 59-62
- Lotman, Jurij 1972: Юрий М. Лотман: Анализ поэтического текста. Ленинград

- Marr, Nikolaj J. 1966: Николай Я. Марр: “Кавказская поэзия и ее технические основы”, in: Вопросы Вепхистკაოსანი и Висрамиანი. Подготовка сборника к печати, исследование, комментарии и примечания И.В. Мегрелидзе (= რუსთველოლოგიური ძიებანი 9) (საქართველოს სსრ მეცნიერებათა აკადემია, შოთა რუსთაველის სახელობის ქართული ლიტერატურის ისტორიის ინსტიტუტი). Тбилиси: Мецნიერება, pp. 13-41
- Rustaveli, Šota 1974: შოთა რუსთაველი: ვეფხისტყაოსანი. სასკოლო გამოცემა. ტექსტი გამოსაცემად მოამზადა, შესავალი, განმარტებანი და კომენტარი დაურთო ნ. ნათაძემ (რედ. ალექსი ჭინჭარაული), თბილისი: განათლება
- Rustaveli, Šota 1988: შოთა რუსთაველი: ვეფხისტყაოსანი (საქართველოს სსრ მეცნიერებათა აკადემია, შოთა რუსთაველის სახელობის ქართული ლიტერატურის ინსტიტუტი: "ვეფხისტყაოსნის" აკადემიური ტექსტის დამდგენი კომისია). თბილისი: მეცნიერება
- Schegloff, Emmanuel Sacks 1973: “Opening up closings”, *Semiotica* 8: 289-327
- Suard, François 1984: “La fonction des proverbes dans les chansons de geste des XIV^e et XV^e siècles”, in: François Suard - Calude Buridant (eds.): *Richesse du proverbe. Volume I: Le proverbe au Moyen Âge* (= Bien dire et bien apprendre [Bulletin du Centre d'études médiévales et dialectales de l'Université de Lille III] 3). Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, pp. 131-144
- Wardrop, M. S. 1912: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*. A romantic epic by Shota Rustaveli. A close rendering from the Georgian attempted by Marjory Scott Wardrop. London