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Gender, emotion, and poeticity in Georgian mourning rituals¹

Helga Kotthoff

Introduction

This article deals with the relationship between gender, emotion, and culture in Georgian mourning rituals, especially in lamentations. In many parts of the world laments are performed by women, as well in Georgia. The emotion of grief is thereby indexically feminized. My article focuses on the poetic performance of grief and pain, consisting of various conversational involvement strategies, and the social meaning of this affective genre as gendered activity. In the role of lamenters women enjoy high respect. However, this social role contains tension for them. On the one hand, wailing reconstructs the feminine gender ascription of being vulnerable and over-emotional, on the other hand, it permits women to act as oral artists, and their talents are admired by the whole community. Instead of regarding ritual wailing as a form of losing control of oneself the high standard of verbal art clearly indicates that wailers must be in good control of their affects. The aestheticized speech demands bodily control of the mourners during the performance of "being beside oneself." They are admired as well as artists of pain and as persons having deep feelings. By involving others with their moving words the loss is symbolically shared and the wailers reaffirm the social network. Pointing out good deeds of the deceased and his/her clan allows them to communicate their moral standards and their views on what good social relationships look like. They also take the chance to praise each other in their laments. Another positive aspect of wailing for the women consists in allowing them to play a public part in practicing religion. Since within the official Orthodox church women have only low positions, they enjoy their important role as mediators between the living and the dead put on stage in the folk religious wailings. Lamentation is believed to intensify relations to the deceased in the hereafter.

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Laments also represent an accepted form of complaint about all forms of sorrow and pain in the lamenter's own life.² Women use the genre to publicize their sorrows.

Lamenting is interwoven in the Georgian system of gaining and paying respect and honor (Kotthoff 1999). The lamenter represents her clan in honoring the deceased (and thereby his or her clan).

In recent years it has been becoming more and more evident in cultural studies that emotion politics is central in the construction of a gendered world and has a lot to do with the organization of social hierarchies and solidarities.³ In taking a close look at gender and emotion politics in ritual wailing we hope to get a differentiated picture of the arrangements between the sexes in one culture (the Georgian).

I present transcripts from a lamentation⁴ and analyze the form and function of the genre drawing on concepts of emotion work and involvement strategies, thereby linking gender with body politics, power, and social structure. The article focuses on specific strategies of indexing communalization of the living and the dead, on interrelated affective dimensions, and on the tension the genre contains for women's social position.

1. Xmit naṭirlebi

The region this article deals with is the eastern part of the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, nowadays an independent country in the Caucasus. Lament performances still play an important role as part of death rituals in rural Georgia. When someone dies in a Georgian rural area, the "motiralebi"⁵ assemble to bewail the deceased loudly in an improvised and partly formulaic lament which is rhythmically and intonationally structured in lines. The "motiralebi" are usually close female relatives and neighbors. Men and women display different ways of emotion management and performance from the very beginning of the death event, thereby reproducing cultural gender norms. Laments constitute a body of women's expressive genres, and a societally acknowledged female way of reaffirming social bonds and moral standards. In the eastern parts of Georgia only women are lamenters. Interestingly, men play the most important role in ending the mourning phase and managing the ritual transition back to everyday life. At the mourning meal, "kelexi," they formulate a series of toasts, first to the deceased person, then to other dead persons and finally to the living.⁶

Grieving is a public act in Georgia. For an entire year a picture of the deceased is hung before that person's house. The transparency of village life entails that lamenters will be well-informed about the life of the deceased. They are able to intersperse their dirges with many anecdotes from the deceased's and his/her clan's life.

There is a certain order in who bewails whom and how much. For example, on the occasion of a child's death, its mother will be the principal wailer. Should she lack the requisite skills, however, another woman will assume this role. In every case the women take turns in lamenting, since they grieve all day during daylight hours for three to five consecutive days. Usually several women alternate in lamenting. The family of the deceased is not left alone with its grief. The loss is borne by all, thus affirming the social network of the entire grieving community.⁷ The women continue to lament at the cemetery until the coffin is lowered into the grave.⁸ On the seventh and fortieth days after death, and once more a year later, they lament again.

The dominant form of ritual wailing is called "xmit naṭirlebi". "Xmit naṭirlebi" means "crying loudly with one's voice". Also called "motkmiti ṭirili" (spoken weeping or wailing with the voice), this genre belongs to a special form of ritual communication. Sometimes, a woman laments and others hum the melody with weeping sounds, a stylized background wailing called "zari". The lament performer orients herself to the deceased, to other deceased, and to various present and absent addressees or the audience in general. There are many formulaic phrases which appear again and again. Every lament, however, is created individually for the deceased person and present persons, and large parts of each lament normally consist of improvisations. An "aesthetics of pain" (Caraveli 1986) is placed on stage.

I became acquainted with women's laments⁹ only after having lived in Georgia for many months. The "xmit naṭirlebi" are still widespread in rural areas, and in many regions (particularly in the Eastern mountain regions of Pšavi, Mtianeti, Xevsuretia and Tušetia) only women lament. In Svanetia and Samegrelo, West Georgian areas, men also practice special parts in ritual wailing (Bolle-Zemp 1997).¹⁰ In the mountain villages the dirges are sung and are accompanied by forms of self-aggression like pulling one's hair out. Grief styles differ regionally within Georgia. In the valley they are today often performed without a song melody; the lament has completely died out only among the Tbilissians in the capital of Tbilisi (not among immigrants). However, even among Tbilissians the deceased is mourned for three to five days by a circle of women who gather daily around the coffin. In contrast to Northern or Western



Lamentation at the cemetery of Muxrani 1995, photo taken by Helga Kotthoff

European cultures, this activity indicates that grieving in Georgia is a very expressive and time consuming undertaking. The lamenting women demonstratively put their grief and attachment on stage, falling on their knees before the dead, crying, kissing and hugging him/her.

In Eastern Georgia, only women are present in the room where the deceased lies, while the men stand silently in the doorway or in the yard. Women address their sorrow to other women, but men acknowledge it as well.

A few regional elements of the mourning ritual are exclusively performed for men, which expresses the patriarchal orientation of the culture. In the Eastern Georgian mountain regions widows cut off their hair and place it in the grave with their husband as a symbol that they continue to be their wives. It is regarded as morally bad if a widow remarries, since she still belongs at least in part to her deceased husband. A husband, in contrast, belongs to his deceased wife only for a short period of time; then he normally begins a new life with another woman.

The intensity and duration of a lamentation signifies the social value the deceased is ascribed. Various Georgian informants have explained to me that "a man who had provided great benefits to the village would be grieved longer and in many more forms than an insignificant person". Likewise, people who die at an early age are more profusely lamented than very old people. In former times a woman's wailing talent was seen as an important criterion for a good wife.

Young men watched the young wailers in order to choose a wife. To have a good wailer as a wife meant to have someone who would involve herself into making his transition into the hereafter easier. It is considered a terrible malediction for a man to insinuate that no woman will bewail him. Those who are seen as criminals are not (necessarily) granted the honor of a lament. In the village of Muxrani, near Mxeta, people told us of a man who allegedly did not work, who drank and beat his wife and children. When he died, neither his family nor his (female) neighbors wanted to "soften the earth" for him, which indicates the religious function that is ascribed to laments in Georgia. Shortly before burial, an old woman staged a lament in which she set forth that she did not want to have a bad conscience before the mother of the deceased in heaven because she had not softened the earth with tears of grief for her son. A lament is never only dedicated to the actual deceased but to her/his whole clan as well.

The length of mourning, the frequency of commemorative celebrations, the abundance of the funeral meal, the beauty and intensity of the lamentations, the number of guests and many other details indicate what place the deceased and his or her family is assigned in the social hierarchy of the community.

There are many oral rituals in Georgia which also embody the secrets of social order.¹¹ Most of these genres,¹² such as drinking toasts and forms of verbal duelling, are gender-related activities. They help people to exercise control over affective processes in a gendered way. Men, for example, must display self-control during the performance of drinking toasts, which are usually offered under the strong influence of alcohol (Kotthoff 1995b). Women, by contrast, tend to give expression to suffering in performing dirges, but they must at the same time conform the expression of their feelings to demanding conventionalized forms (as will be shown). The gender difference is not that men control their emotions and women let them take their course, but that both sexes practice emotion work in a specific way.

Men are largely obligated to maintain silence in the situation of death. As a visual display of grief, they are allowed to tear scraps of cloth from their shirts and to beat themselves on the chest.¹³ In addition, the men of a village will often refrain from shaving for many months following their loss. Bearded men were once assumed to have lost a loved one, usually their wife. Symbols of "letting oneself go" as a sign of mourning have been found in many societies.

In this context expressive sadness is not only permitted for women, but is considered their duty. Women assume this role in the emotional division of labor in many societies (Finnegan 1970, Caraveli-Chaves 1980, Stubbe 1985, Seremetakis 1991).¹⁴ By commenting on the life of the deceased and those who

are present they also serve important functions for the production and reproduction of societal morality. This is one reason why lamentation is not just a discourse of powerlessness. In any case, laments symbolize a kind of final summing up for a member of society. Cultural gender politics is carried out in that respective feelings are devolved on women as the principal mourners; they must be expressed during the rite of transition. As lamenters women gain high respect.

In addition, as an institutionalized form of expressive speech activity, lamentations offer a framework for expressions of many sorts of overpowering grief and pain in the lamenters' own lives which can also be channeled in this fashion.

In the countryside women play only a minor role in the community life outside the home. Only in a state of grief do women become public figures who are allowed to speak for the community. Private space then becomes public space.

Lamentation thus also plays an important role as a form of folk religious ritual. Religious practice is not limited to churches (Luckmann 1991); the genre of lamentation is extremely important for the constitution and manifestation of folk religion in everyday life. One reason for the survival of the genre could be that it fulfilled functions of cultural resistance in Soviet times. Through mourning the Georgian local communities recreated their own values against those of the dominant Soviet (Russian) regime. Ritual mourning allowed people to show each other that their religious (and thereby national Georgian) identity was still alive.

Another reason is, of course, that oral genres of morality and religion require a close-knit society because they depend on social knowledge; the Georgian villages fulfill these survival conditions even today.

In the post-Soviet era the Orthodox Church has regained power. Women play only minor roles within the official Georgian Orthodox Church. A significant aspect of the lament still is its religious dimension, because it constitutes metaphysical communication outside the official church.¹⁵ Within the unofficial religious life of their villages women still act as mediators between the realm of the living and that of the dead. In Georgian folk religion attachment to the deceased is extraordinarily marked. One assumes that the deceased can influence life on earth and that one must remain in continual contact with them in order to positively influence them. Throughout Georgia, even today people are still strongly convinced that the soul of the deceased person continues to live on for a while after death. We see in the transcripts that the deceased person is

directly addressed and appealed to, for example, as the addressee of stories. One reason for the extensive mourning and memorial work lies in the conviction that the deceased person should feel good in the afterlife, and that it will be better for those left behind if the deceased are content. The fictionalization of life in the hereafter is parallelized to life in this world. The mourning meal following the burial must, for example, be very abundant so that the deceased will be greeted with an equally generous meal in the hereafter. The lamentations which we have collected are full of messages for other deceased persons, for example, in the form: "Tell my mother that we have finally moved into our new house. But please do not tell her that we have lost our house in Abxasia." The deceased must be kept in good spirits.

Women also reproduce emotional womanhood in this genre. Deeply felt grief is regarded as a sign of being a good woman. The mourners display behavior that is considered feminine by society. The general ascription of emotional expressiveness, especially suffering, constitutes femininity in many cultures (Grima 1991, Mills 1991). Conventions of feeling demand that women's grief and sadness be especially deep and long-lasting. In Georgia the ability to express grief is definitely part of female body politics. In contrast to Western body politics, whose essence nowadays consists in making the traces of experienced life, of fear, suffering, aging and despair as invisible as possible (women attempt to continuously display the same flawless freshness and youthfulness), in Georgia the chief concern is, to the contrary, to iconically embody suffering and to portray expressive forms of suffering and grief through the body. Wailers sit bent over, with stooped shoulders, arms and head. They sob and often rest their heads in their hands. Movements become heavy and slow. Older women in general move more ponderously in Georgia than in the West. But we can observe changes nowadays. Young women have started orienting themselves to Western values. They also refrain from wailing. Further research must answer the question of how contact with Western ways of living influences grief rituals and gender politics.

Grief rituals represent special ties among women. Women not only lament the loss of the deceased, but also praise and support each other in their dirges. Their joint suffering and support constitute a social tie among them.

In principle, every woman can lament; however, some women are seen as outstanding because they have developed special skills. We were often told that only women who have experienced social tragedies are able to lament beautifully and move others. These lamenters are well-known and venerated throughout their village. When someone passes away, the lamenters hurry to the house in

which the deceased lived. They honor the dead and her/his family by lamenting for her/him. The family announces the death of a person by crying loudly.

As lamenters, women fulfill important anthropological functions which interpenetrate one another, including the thematization of a basic human experience, the communalization of that experience, aesthetization and handing down memory to the next generation.

The intensity of the presented and aroused empathy is the primary evaluative criterion for the lament's performance. The lament performer should transfer her pain to others. The value of formal beauty consists in its ability to create and support strong feelings of empathy in the audience. Laments represent a mixed form between formulaic and improvised texts, as is typical for most oral ritual performances (Finnegan 1970, Edwards/Sienkewicz 1990).

1.1 Women praise each other

As I already said, the wailers also use the genre to praise other women present. I present a short segment taken from a lament for the 86 year old woman Mariam performed in the village of Muxrani in 1994 (40 km from Tbilisi) on "panašvidi" — the last day before the burial. The full text is presented in the appendix.

Methodologically I prefer a data-centered ethnography. That means to take a close look at textual details of the wailing. I do not, however, claim that the text itself tells us everything; I do believe, though, that we ought to take people's actual modes of behavior and dialogues as the starting point for theories of their social organization and relevance structures. We, Elza Gabedava and me, also talked about ritual wailing with many practicing lamenters in Georgia and will integrate their views on that practice into our discussion.

When the sequence presented below took place, visitors one by one entered the room where the deceased, the 86-year old Mariam, lied. The female relatives and neighbors are seated around the coffin. The chief lamenters are the daughters, Liziko (L) and Ciala (C). By the head of the deceased stands a small table, on which candles and photos of persons who had died previously are arranged. Tamara (T), a neighbor and cousin, enters. I did not transcribe all the soft background wailing of the onlookers. She then becomes the addressee of praise for her care.

We will pay attention to the content that is communicated here and to an interesting formal feature of Georgian dirges: the constant crossing and shifting of address. I see it as an index of social unification.

Sequence I

- 1 Tamari: როგორ გამზადებულხარ, [მარო დეიდა გენაცვალე]
rogor gamzadebulxar, maro deida, genacvale
how beautifully you have prepared yourself,¹⁶ Aunt Maro, genacvale
- 2 Ciala: ცვეარა, თამარა დეიდა, აღარ იცი რაღა ქნა ქალი,
verara, tamara deida, arar ici rara kna kalo,
no, Aunt Tamari, you don't know what you are doing,
woman,
- 3 [ამდენი პატივისცემა აღარ ვიცი რა ვქნათ, თამარა დეიდა, უაჰ,
amdeni pativiscema, arar vici ra vknat, tamara deida, uime,¹⁷
so much deference, I don't know what we could do, Aunt Tamara, oh my
- 4 T: [?]
- 5 C: ყოველ დღე, ყოველ საღამოს, ყოველ დღიას
qovel dre, qovel saramos, qovel dilas
everyday, every evening, every morning
- 6 T: [მაინც გამზადებულხარ, გენაცვალე,
mainc gamzadebulxar, genacvale,
but you have prepared yourself, genacvale,
- 7 C: არ ვიცი რა გასამოვნო გენაცვალე
ar vici ra gasiamovno, genacvale
I do not know what pleasure I could give you, genacvale,
- 8 T: [დდი გვარის ხალხი ხართ
didi gvaris xalxi xart
you come from a large clan
- 9 იქ შემოგხვდებით ჩვენი ბიძაშვილები, სულ კარგები ვეყავს იქ,
ik šemogxvdebat čveni bižašvilebi, sul kargebi gvqavs ika.
there you will meet our cousins, all the good are there.
- 10 გენაცვალე, ჩემი დედაც შემოგხვდება, იცი რა კეთილი ქალი იყო
genacvale, čemi dedac šemogxvdeba, ici ra ketili kali iqo
genacvale, you will also meet my mother there, you know how good natured
she was
- 11 'H: ეს ვივლები გველას გაუნაწილე, აგრემც შემოგველე, შენა
'H: es qvavilebi qvelas gaunačile, agrenc šemogevle, šena
share these flowers with everyone there, I implore you, you
- 12 ბარემამ გული მტკივა, რომ ამ კაი შვილებსა სტოვებ
barefām guli mtkiva, rom am kai švilebsa štoveb
but my heart aches that you are leaving your dear children
- 13 სტოვებ და მიდიხარ
štoveb da midixar
you are leaving them and going away from them
- 14 ამათი ცქერა ღირს ერთ რამედა
amati čkera đirs ert rameda
it means so much to look at them,
- 15 C: [შენ გაიხარე, შენ,
šen gaixare, šen,
you should have joy, you,
- 16 T: [შენ კი თუაღოც დაგრძა და გულაც დაგრძა შენ შვილებზედა%%
šen ki tvalic dagrča da gulic dagrča šen švilebzeda%%
you, however, have left not only your eyes, but also your heart with your
children¹⁸

- 17 'H: მარუს შენი ჭირიბე, არ ვიცი კარგი, ბევრი ტარილი
'H: marus, šeni čirime, ar vici kargi, bevri tirili
Marus, let me bear your suffering, I cannot cry well and much
- 18 რა წყალში ჩავეარდე
ra cqalši čavvarde
into what water should I throw myself
- 19 [მინდა ბევრი რამე ვითხრა
minda bevri rame gitxra
I would like to say so many things to you
- 20 C: [ვაიხარე თამარა დეიდა შენ შვილებსა და შვილიშვილებში
gaixare, tamara deida šen švilebsa da švilišvilebsi
may you be happy, Aunt Tamara, about your children and grandchildren
- 21 გაგახაროს ღმერთმა
gagaxaros ომერთმა
God give you joy
- 22 დედა, რამდენ პატივსა გეცემს შენი ბიძაშვილი, დედა
deda, ramden paṭivsa gecems šeni biḡašvili, deda
Mother, how many favors your cousin has been doing for you, mother
- 23 დედა და ღამე აქ არის თამარა,
dē da ოამე აქ არის თამარა,
Tamara is here day and night,
- 24 დედა ავადაც იყავი, რომ ღამეცა მოხოვდა ეს დაღლილ დაქანცული ქალი
deda avadac igavi, rom ოამეცა მოხოვდა ეს დაღლილ დაქანცული ქალი
during mother's illness this exhausted woman asked me if she could also
- 25 შენთან დაერჩები, შვილო, შენ გვერდით დაერჩები
šentan davrcēbi, švilo, šen gverdit davrcēbio
stay with you at night, child, I would stay with you (she said)¹⁰
- 26 და მე არ ვუშვებდი
da me ar vušvebdi
but I did not let her
- 27 თამარა დეიდა დაღლილი ხარ, ქალი, წადი სახლში,
tamara deida, daṭlili xar, kalo, čadi saxlši,
Aunt Tamara, you are tired, woman, go home,
- 28 დამანებე ქალი თავი, რა გინდა ჩემთან ერთად მეთქი დედა
damanebe kalo tavi, ra ginda čemtan ertad metki deda
leave me, woman, you do not need to stay (I said)¹¹ mother¹¹
- 29 [რით გადავუხადო, დედა, ეს პატივისცემა, ქალი
rit gadavuxado, deda, es paṭiviscema, kalo
how can I, mother, pay back this honor, woman

Tamara directly addresses the deceased Aunt Maro (a diminutive of Mariam) with a compliment on her way of dressing. She pretends that Maro had dressed herself to be ready for the journey into the hereafter. To portray the deceased as active is typical in dirges. The line ends with the formula "genacvale". Laments are permeated with this formula which often marks the beginning

or the end of a line. "Genacvale" expresses the process of immersing oneself in a person's sorrow and can be translated as "I take your place". "Genacvalos deda" accordingly means "I take mother's place". Boeder (1988) writes that in a certain contextual position one can as well translate the formula as "I die for you". "Genacvale" is one of the special sympathy formulae which describe a strong religious wish for self-sacrifice.

Formulae which communicate the wish to take over another person's burden or even death play a major role in Georgian everyday life, not only in dirges. These formulae presuppose a possibility of transcendence which leave the realm of realism, imagining supernatural and magic powers.

First, there are the abundant, often-repeated formulae whose fundamental semantic pattern states, at least etymologically, the following: the speaker wishes to shoulder the burden of pain (the illness, misfortune...) which the person addressed suffers. The addressee's misfortune should be conveyed to the speaker; the lamenter wants to symbolically shoulder the suffering person's pain. (Boeder 1988: 12; translated by H. K.)

In line 17 we find the formula "šeni čirime" ("your pain over me" or "let me bear your suffering") which even more strongly expresses that the speaker would like to assume the addressee's misfortune, suffering, travail and even death. Despite its high level of conventionalization, the formula "šeni čirime" has a strong claim to authenticity. As well the lines 18 (into what water should I throw myself) and 21 (God give you joy) are highly conventionalized. The repetition of formulae communicates iconically: we will be united in our suffering.

The unification in suffering is also indicated by continuous address shifting. Ciala directs her words in line 2 to Aunt Tamara and thanks her for having done so much for her mother. Tamara directs her words to the deceased Mariam. Sudden address shifts are typical in Georgian lamentation. Line 2 means that Tamara is always trying to find things she could do for her neighbors. In line 3 we find the word "paṭiviscema" (deference, honor), a central concept in Georgian everyday life, not only in the ritual of wailing. Many activities are integrated into a system of giving and receiving respect and honor (Kotthoff 1999).

Ciala underlines Tamara's involvement (5) in a three-part list. Hyperbole in praising and thanking is among the characteristics of the lament-performance. In line 6 Aunt Tamara addresses the deceased again. The metaphor of travelling is important in representing death and highly frequent in dirges (not only in Georgia). In line 7 Ciala refers again to how she could return the honor and support she received from Tamara. Tamara, who is also Mariam's cousin,

imagines that grandmother Mariam will meet members of her clan in the hereafter; they are said to be good. Typically, in dirges the deceased are imagined as being better than the living. Among others, Mariam will meet her mother, to whom good-nature is attributed (10). She again directly addresses Mariam. In line 11 she suggests to Mariam to bring the flowers to those in the hereafter. A religious conception holds sway that the deceased, at least as long she has not yet been buried, takes note of all the messages presented to her and upon arriving in the hereafter passes them on to the relevant persons. In most lamentations those deceased persons are named with whom the deceased will later be reunited in the kingdom of the dead.

In lines 12 ff. Tamara recalls the children with kind words. In telling Mariam that it means much to look at her children, she indirectly compliments the present children. I call this strategy address-crossing. The deceased often becomes the official addressee, others present the unofficial ones. She is told praise stories about those present, who can be the praise objects or just the listeners. In any case, good deeds and characteristics are made public that way. In line 13 Tamara repeats that Mariam is leaving her good children now. This is of course an indirect way of complimenting Ciala and Liziko, the main wailers. Ciala returns the indirect compliments in line 15. Tamara addresses the deceased again in line 16. In line 17 we find the formula “*šeni čirime*” (your suffering should be mine) we already discussed. In other segments presented in the article we will discover many formulae which communicate that a person wants to carry all the sorrow and suffering for another person. These formulae show a high degree of involvement and sympathy. The phrases in 18 and 19 are also formulaic. In line 20, Ciala takes the turn again and appeals to God to assist Tamara and her family. From line 22 on Ciala again tells her mother how much Aunt Tamara had done for all of them, another case of address-crossing. She talks to the deceased Mariam as though she were alive. This is one of the features that characterize the discourse as religious. The wailing women tell her everything that present and absent people (mostly women) have done for each other. Thereby they indirectly praise and thank each other. They celebrate their readiness to help, their friendship, and their support. By constantly changing addressees, a community which still includes the deceased is indexically associated. In very concrete scenes Ciala continues showing everybody how helpful Tamara was. She presents herself unwilling to accept so much help and as not knowing how to pay back such a great support. We will return to these strategies of community formation later. It is evident that lamentations represent a genre of women’s care for the bond of friendship.

1.2 Women form family relationships

Lamentations also (re)construct images of good relationships within the family, for example, between wife, wife’s mother and husband:

The topic was already shifted to other deceased family members some lines before. Now Ciala’s deceased husband is brought into the center of attention. Starting in line 58 she asks her mother a rhetorical question of whether her husband gave her too little respect (*paṭivi*). This is only the start of praising him for paying so much attention to her mother’s well-being, thereby staging him as a man of high morals. In lines 60 and 61 she constructs a dialogue with her husband. He is presented as urging her to please her mother. In line 61 she quotes her own words. In line 62 she again cites her husband’s words and then talks about him and her mother in the third person. The cited formulation “*paṭivi eci*” — (pay her respect/do something good for her) runs through the lines now. It is not easy to translate “*paṭivi*” because it designates the Georgian concept of interactional honor (Kotthoff 1999). From line 65 on, she again speaks with her mother and tells her all the things her husband would have done for her. She also reminds her mother in line 67 how much she had pitied her when her husband died. The mother now becomes the addressee of her grieving for her lost husband. Indexically, Ciala also creates ties among the deceased. She refers to her own long state of grief (wearing black costume for the past twelve years), which in Georgia symbolizes good womanhood.

In line 70 she tells her mother, thereby including all the others present, that people think she should finally put aside the mourning dress. She lets everyone know that she is still unhappy about her husband’s death, thereby overfulfilling all cultural mourning norms for wives. In line 73 the focus is again shifted to the death of her mother. Now she has a new reason for mourning.

We do not know much about the truthfulness of Ciala’s narrative. At least we do not know how representative the narrated dialogue is for her husband’s behavior. But it is evident that this is the behavior she favors and portrays as ideal. Lamenting women form social relationships (and especially the ideals of those relationships) in praising certain ways of acting. Lamenting thereby becomes a form of public discourse that sets moral standards in the interest of women. Women in this genre tell their social world what they like and what they don’t like, what kind of behavior impresses them and what not.

Sequence 2

- 58 ნაკლებად პატივსაცემად გეცემდა, დედა, ჩემი ქმარი?
nakelebad pativsa gecemda, deda, čemi kmari?
did my husband respect you less, mother? my husband
- 59 როგორ უყვარდა, როგორ უყვარდა ჩემს ქმარს
rogor uqvarda, rogor uqvarda čems kmars
how much, how much my husband liked you
- 60 ცილა, პატივი ეცი დედას, პატივი ეცი
cial, pativi eci dedas, pativi eci
Ciala, do 'something good for mother, do 'something good for her
- 61 ვეტყობდი, კაცო, რაღა პატივი ვეცე?
vetqodi, kaco, raġa pativi vce?
then I said to him, man, what could I still do for her?
- 62 პატივი ეცე, არ მომასვენებდა, რომ ჩამოვიდოდა, ერთი წუთის მოსვენებას
არ მომეცემდა
pativi eci, ar momasvenebda, rom čamovidoda, erti čuti mosvenebas
ar momcemda
do something good for her, he did not give me a moment's rest when
mother visited us
- 63 [პატივი ეცი, გენაცვალე]
pativi eci, genacvale
do something good for her, genacvale
- 64 ? [?]
- 65 C: ეხლა რომ ცოცხალი ვიყოფილიყ, დედა: ეხლა რომ ცოცხალი
ვიყოფილიყ,
exla rom cocxali vopiliġo, dedi:; exla rom cocxali vopiliġo,
if he were alive now, mother, if he were alive now,
- 66 რა პატივისცემებში იქნებოდი, დედა, ვინმეს დააცვლიდა, გენაცვალე, დედა,
რამეს?
ra pativiscemaši iknebodi, dedi, vinmes daaclida, genacvale, deda,
raimes?
he would have done everything for you, mommy, would he have had
someone else do that, mother?
- 67 მათ უბედური რომ ვიყავი, დედა, იმატომ გეცოდებოდი,
ubeduri rom viqavi, deda imiġom gecodebodi ho,
you pitied me, mother, because I was unhappy, didn't you
- 68 იმატომ გეცოდებოდი, უბატრონი რომ ვიყავი, დედა
imiġom gecodebodi, upatrono rom viqavi, deda:;
because I was unhappy, I had no one to care for me, mother
- 69 როგორი ქმარი დაცკარეე, დედა, მეთორმეტე წელიწადია შავება არ
ვაძიხვია ტანთან, დედა
%rogori %kmari %davkarge, deda, metirmeġe čeličadia šavebi ar
gamixdia tanidan, deda%
what a husband I have lost, mother, for twelve years I have worn mourning
dress
- 70 %დედა, %გაიხადე %შავებო, მეუბნებიან
%deda, %gaixade %šavebio, meubnebodnen
mother, I should put aside my mourning dress, so they said to me
- 71 ჩემ გულს არაფერი უხარია, რატომ გავიხადე მეტი, დედა
čem guls araperi uxaria, raġom gavixado metki, deda
nothing can bring cheer to my heart, why should I cast aside my mourning
dress, (I replied), mother

- 72 არ მხარია, როცა გავიხარებ, მე თვითონ გავიხდი მეტი
ar mixaria, roca gavixareb, me tviton gavixdi metki
nothing cheers me, but if I should feel happy again, I will myself cast aside
my mourning dress (I said)
- 73 აი, გავიხარე, დედა, ეხლა გენაცვალე
ai, gavixare, deda, exla, genacvale
now, could I become happy, Mother, now, genacvale
(?) (?)

1.3 Reported dialogue as indexing communality

Durkheim (1915), Van Gennep (1924), Radcliffe-Brown (1964), Feld (1982) and many other anthropologists argued that the function of ritual weeping by those left behind is to affirm the existence of social bonds between the living. In the case where the social tissue is threatened by the departure of a person, the social structure is knit together again by sharing emotion and common culture. The Georgian “xmit naġirlebi” also simultaneously combine several purposes: They allow people to overtly express feelings of sadness on the occasion of death, they reaffirm strong expressions of sorrow as a woman's activity — and they bind the community together by sharing grief and reaffirming its moral values. They not only claim social bonding but stage it as a drama of different voices in interaction with one another. A community of the living and the dead is animated in lamentation (to use Goffman's term 1981). Let's again have a look at some lines which show animated dialogue in sequence 1.

Tamara's speech is quoted by Ciala in line 25. In lines 27 and 28 Ciala directly quotes her own speech. Directly reported dialogue is an involvement strategy (Tannen 1989). To be exact, we should say “constructed dialogue” or “animated dialogue”; there is no claim and no evidence that real dialogues are being accurately reported. Constructing dialogues is an effective strategy for animating the imagined speakers in a specific way.

The voicing used in lamentation performances can be understood in terms of Soviet cultural semiotics (Bakhtin 1981, Voloshinov 1978), which analyzed the functions of direct and indirect quotation in fiction. Voloshinov (1978: 153) distinguished two types of reported speech in fiction. The type which works with indirect quotation is said to be concerned with the stylistic homogeneity of a text. The other type individualizes the language of characters and also the language of the teller. He refers to this as relativistic individualism and finds examples in the works of Fedor Dostoevski and Andrej Belyi. Characters are identified through their own quoted speech, through direct citation. Direct citation permits ellipses, omissions and a variety of other emotive tendencies

which would be lost in indirect quotation. He demonstrates this, among other examples, by the exclamation, "What an achievement", which in indirect quotation one would have to transform into the clumsy phrase, "She said that it was a real achievement...". Direct quotation evokes "manner of speech", not only individually, but also typologically. It is "speech about speech, utterance about utterance" (Voloshinov 1973:115).

Tannen (1989), Brünner (1991), Günthner (1997, 1999) and Couper-Kuhlen (1999) have shown that reported dialogue can contain verbal and intonational characterizations through which — on the basis of stereotypes — images of persons, social groups, etc. are transmitted. By the 'polyphonic layering of voices' (Bakhtin 1981) protagonists are implicitly stylized and evaluated. The speaker anchors the voices in a storyworld and animates them in a way that corresponds to her current intention.

As a specificity, lamentations contain quotations of deceased persons as we saw in sequence 2. For example, in lines 60, 62, 63 Ciala animates her husband's voice in a dialogue with herself. This way, laments dramatize again and again aspects of their life with the deceased. In a sense they dramatize their memory. Throughout the text the voices of the deceased are intertwined with those of the living. Thereby a community of the living with the dead is indexicalized. The existence of this community is one of the basic religious convictions of most Georgians. It is conversationally (re)created.

The lamentation sequences discussed so far show how much community members mutually reinforce one another in lamentation dialogues. The death of a person is taken as an occasion to praise each other, to remind each other of good times spent together, to strengthen the common bonds. Ritual wailing imports collective reassurance of the group into the disrupted domestic sphere. This function, which is frequently conjured up by anthropologists like van Gennep and many others, is activated by concrete performance strategies. Repetition, reported dialogue and imagery are among the most important involvement strategies of lamentation.

2. Communicating emotions

The language and communication of emotions have seldom been focused on in modern linguistics. They have been declared a psychological question about which we linguists have little to say. Only recently has the dogma that emotions are internal, irrational and spontaneous been exposed and questioned (e.g.,

Irvine 1982, Wierzbicka 1986, 1987, Lutz/Abu-Lughod 1990, Ochs/Schieffelin 1989, Günthner 1997, Niemeyer/Dirven 1997). As Irvine (1990) points out, two of linguistics' most stellar figures, Jakobson (1960) and Sapir (1921, 1927), thought otherwise: Affect, or emotion, according to them, was a fundamental dimension of human life and a factor cross-cutting all levels of linguistic organization (1990:126). Anthropological linguists, such as Irvine (1982, 1990), Ochs and Schieffelin (1989), Besnier (1990), Fiehler (1990), Caffi and Janney (1994) and the contributors to Niemeyer and Dirven (1997), have begun trying to find a new place for emotional discourse within linguistics. They consider themselves well-placed in a solid linguistic tradition. For Sapir, an important question was how much the communication of emotions is culturally constructed and culturally variable. He thought that the communication of personality and emotional states is culturally organized in a speech community.

By studying the emotion work²³ carried out in mourning rituals we obtain a perspective from which to view the individual (female-male), interaction, societal norms, and social structure. It allows us to inspect the relation among emotive experience, emotion management, feeling rules, actual behavior and ideology (Hochschild 1979:551). Such an interactive perspective on emotion work and emotion performance in Georgian mourning rituals also provides a way to observe the reproduction of societal arrangements between the sexes.

The death of a human being has always been an event which arouses strong feelings. But historically and cross-culturally these feelings have not been the same (Stubbe 1985). The internal states of the persons left behind are diverse, and so are the external, conventionalized ways of expressing grief (the latter are the central point of interest in anthropological linguistics). The study of oral genres and of registers is a convenient way to look at emotional performance and the way it is gendered. With Ochs and Schieffelin (1989:7) we take affect to be a broader term than emotion, to include feelings, moods, dispositions, and attitudes associated with persons and/or situations. Sadness is an emotion which combines with other affects. Our particular concern as anthropological linguists is to study the conventional display of emotion and affect through semiotic means and by understanding its social meaning; we are not concerned with the 'truth' of feelings. We are very concerned with how cultural masculinity or femininity is made accountable by performing certain affects.

A few authors (e.g., Feld 1982, Urban 1988) point out that while the vocal and verbal styles of ritual keening and lamenting are interculturally different, they display common semiotic features and share in common certain resem-

blances with what we call “wailing” and “crying”, and there are many icons and indices associated with bowing and being lowered into the ground:

As a semiotic device, wailing is linked to affect, just as at the core one assumes ‘crying’ as a formal device is linked to ‘sadness’ (Urban 1988: 386).

As well in Georgia, cries of grief and appeals to the deceased occur. They are spoken or sung in lines (pulse units), using crying sounds, voice changes, drawn-out sighs, slowly falling intonation contours with integrated peaks, bowed bodily postures and an expressive lexicon. In comparison to the examples discussed in the literature (e.g., by Urban on Amerindian Brazilian ritual wailing 1991: 148 ff) Georgian laments are much richer in their poeiticity. They contrast in detail a desolate present with an idyllic past, praise the deceased person and those present, giving detailed descriptions of pain and also of scenes from the shared former life, show a complex management of address and intertextuality by reporting numerous dialogues in which either the deceased, other deceased friends and relatives or those present are involved. They implore the deceased to deliver several messages from them to the dead persons whom she/he will soon meet. Lamenting women involve themselves in a moving and line-structured dialogue about life on earth and in the hereafter.

Ritual wailing fulfills many functions simultaneously. First of all, it helps to communalize and structure feelings evoked by the death of a person. Death, with its finality and inexplicability, is one of the strongest emotional experiences of mankind (Ariès 1988), one which is, however, differently externalized and worked out in each culture. Societies create “feeling rules” (Hochschild 1979, 1983) as the aspect of ideology that deals with emotion. If a close person dies, “feeling rules” demand sadness; there are cultural appropriateness standards for this. In Georgia (as well as in many other cultures) sadness is practiced in a symbolically stronger way by women than by men. It is women who stay with the sick during their transition from life to death. It is obligatory that a woman sit at the bedside of a dying person. Society uses this “liminal” phase (van Gennep 1960, Turner 1969: 94–130) to reproduce its gender order. In Georgia being-a-woman is not only associated with the liminal phase of giving life but also with accompanying it to the end. Rituals of transition (and other rituals), however, fulfill no instrumental functions, but have many-layered social functions. These interconnected functions likewise combine with affects. We see these affects as social indexicals. Along with Hochschild (1979, 1983), Urban (1988, 1991) and many other anthropologists and linguists (e.g., Fiehler 1990: 96), we assume that the ritualization of affect touches many levels simultaneously.

Also Heller (1980) criticizes naturalistic emotion- and need theories which view human emotional life in terms of a few organically-anchored, substantively fixed strivings. In agreement with ethology, she argues that mankind has only residual traces of an organically anchored instinct system. Human drive- and emotion potentials are, to the contrary, formable: They have embodied very different forms of action historically. In human beings, emotions, needs and embodied symbols are transmitted together in comprehensible interpretive patterns. As well grief is not simply a biophysical reaction, but rather transmitted through the social-psychological orientational patterns of the culture and includes specific linkages which we will call, following Urban, “meta-affects”.

Urban described one (and only this one) meta-affect for wailing in Amerindian Brazil as follows:

That is to say, one emotion (sadness) points to or ‘comments upon’ another emotion (the desire for social acceptance). Seen in the context of social action, ritual wailing involves the signaling by one actor of a feeling of grief. But the signal is emitted in a way that other actors consider appropriate. Hence the sadness itself is rendered socially intelligible, and it is through this intelligible sadness that the basic intelligibility and acceptability of the social actor emerges. Thus, an actor’s own affect must be controlled as a means of signaling who one is. In short, affect becomes meta-affect. (1988: 386)

I assume a higher degree of complexity and greater diversity of meta-affects in the case of ritual mourning. I conceptualize such dispositions as meta-affects, which in the case of ritual coming to terms with a death are also of affective significance for the community. With the term “meta-affect” I emphasize the affective dimension of the aspects of gender, religion, regional identity, morality, social hierarchy, and communality, which are important in the ritual process. I would like here to focus on the affective perspective; obviously each of the named phenomenal domains could also be viewed from a different perspective, e.g., purely text analytically or functionally. Functions suggest an instrumental perspective. Affects suggest the perspective of embodied performance. Meta-affects have indexical values which are all linked.

The indexical associations we already discussed influence the affect management and performance in the complex of mourning. One affect comments on another: they are all interconnected. Gender politics, e.g., takes on the Gestalt of a specific affect management and performance. It has an influence on the production of empathy, religion, social hierarchy, community and regional identity, and conversely as well.

White (1990) points to the fact that there are prototype schemata for emotive discourse which give an indication of the types of inferential paths that make emotional speech a moral idiom. Specific emotions, such as grief, designate interactive scenarios with known evaluative and behavioral implications. The formalized emotional discourse of lamentation promotes social harmony with all its implications of recreating tradition.

3. The Dialectic of distance and involvement

Georgian lamentations meet a high standard of oral poetry, combining verbal art and social purposes. To meet such a high standard of poetic performance demands emotion work. We would be mistaken in regarding lamentation as a form of letting oneself go. There is a dialectic between a certain degree of distancing that is necessary to perform the ritual and the involvement it creates for the audience present.

Emotion work in Georgian ways of managing grief starts with ritualization. Beginning at the first moment after recognizing the death of a person, feelings begin to be formed in accord with cultural conventions. According to Leach (1968, 1976) and many other anthropologists, a form of behavior is considered ritual if it is stereotypical and, within the framework of cultural conventions, in itself powerful, however ineffective in a rational, technical sense.²⁴ In rituals a second symbolic layer succeeds denotative meanings. The way a ritual is performed carries the most significant social and emotional meaning. A ritual becomes empty if the linkage to the corresponding emotions is lost, as was already established by Durkheim (1915/1965).

Before we look again at a lamentation sequence, we take into consideration what lamenters tell us about their art. In 1998, a couple of women aged from 50 to 70 in Muxrani 1998 told us that they performed *xmit naṭirlebi* when their hearts burned very much (*guli zalian dameco*). One of the women, *ženia*, put it like this:

My nephew, he was 12 years old when he died. To put it simply, I cried and cried. Nobody could make me silent. Nobody, no, everybody wanted to lament, but I let no one. I wanted to lament alone. And I wanted all the time to keep standing on my feet. All the time crying and lamenting and shedding tears. All the time my tears were running. People tried to stop me, but I couldn't.

Lamentation is presented as a physical need. She cannot but lament. All the wailers we talked with told us that it must "come from heart". They strongly entertained the ideology of the naturalness of behaviour thereby implicitly confirming Durkheim's thesis. Performance aspects are also taken into consideration. Standing on one's feet while lamenting is more highly estimated than sitting or even lying. She refers to physical reactions (tears were running) but also to her efforts.

3.1 Poetic strategies

Although (and because) the lamenter's "heart burns" she struggles with wording. Georgian dirges are not only rituals, they also have a strong artistic dimension, which consists in specific "sound and sense strategies". In her book *Talking Voices* Deborah Tannen writes that conversational involvement is created by the simultaneous forces of music (sound and rhythm), on the one hand, and of mutual participation in sensemaking, on the other (1989: 135).

Poeticity is an important sound strategy. It is by no means only found in the canonical, written text, but rather everywhere where a conspicuous artistic/stylistic orientation becomes evident. Syntactical, semantic and intonational parallelisms, recurrences of formulae, assonances, specific rhythms and melodies, line structures and expressive metaphors above all characterize the performance of dirges as poetic in Georgia. Here a concept of poetry is fundamental which goes back to Roman Jakobson (1960). The latter presented in various articles his basic thesis that poeticity consists in a focus on wording and a principle of equivalence of formal structures. The recognition of the same evokes a sense of aesthetic pleasure. Poeticity varies in intensity.

It is quite easy to identify a line structure in the dirges because of the special exclamation intonation. With Hymes (1981), I view speaking in lines as characteristic of a poetic structure. It points to the prosodic similarity of the lines, to a patterned intonational contour.

Lamentations demand this specific style of presentation, which is found in no other genre. Stylization is in this case a form of body politics. As a lamenter a woman enters into the suffering and at the same time acts it out for the community in a beautiful style.

The special style of the lamentation consists in clusters of icons, which are firmly associated with grief in the discourse history:

In fact, the relationships among styles within the broader configuration of culture are grounded in similarity as well as difference. Ritual wailing and

origin myth telling are constructed from features that occur elsewhere, features that have indexical values in those other styles. Ritual wailing and origin myth telling, so to speak, import those features in order simultaneously to sneak in their associated values. In this way, they become, in effect, clusters of icons through which one looks out at the larger history of discourse and draws the indexically relevant meanings into the present (Urban 1991: 120).

Not only in dirges, but in the everyday codes, drawn-out syllables, faltering voices, singsong lines with downward tonal slopes, repeated callings, formulae and crying breaks are associated with intense grief. This potential is exploited in dirges.

The downward melody stylizes grief and mourning, on the one hand, and secures, on the other, a line structure; repetition facilitates text creation and guarantees a certain automatism for both the performer and her public. The melody makes the text easier to memorize.

Every Georgian region has its own lament melody, although there are strong similarities among them. People have told me that listening to the melody of their own region awakens much stronger feelings of sadness than listening to an unfamiliar wailing melody.²⁵ There are also other differences in singing style. Our data from Megrelian mourning chants, for example, show an extensive use of a creaky voice which the other laments do not show.

I will not go into every detail of the poetic structure of the text, but I would like to point to the many alliterations and sound parallelisms, as, e.g., the /ara/-group (veřara, ařar ici, rařa, ařar icit and ar vici) in 2, 3, 7, the anadiplose in 12 und 13 (stoveb), and in 15–16, 52–53, 55–56, 56–57, 67–68 etc., the epiphora, e.g., with genacvale in 1, 6, 7 etc., with (v)iqavi(t) in 45, 47, 50, and the line endings with deda/mother in 22, 28, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, etc. It is evident that the wording has a value in itself.

There are also many double- and triple structures, as, e.g., in lines 5, 16, 25 or in 31, 36, 43, 44, 50, 55, 56, etc. Reduplications and three-part structures dramatize what is being said and give it a rhythmic effect.

The orientation of the performer to the community is preserved especially through the aesthetics of the text. No mourner can simply draw back within herself. Her social attention always remains dominant through the demands of the form.

The fact that people later discuss the performances in other contexts can be seen as a further device for its artistic dimension. When a death is spoken about, Georgian people necessarily also talk about the excellence of the oral lament performances presented on that occasion. Excellence is judged by the perfect fulfillment of the generic norms, and originality is judged by the creativity used

within the given presentation.²⁶ Both should be optimally matched. Relatives thank the performers of the best and saddest laments.

3.2 Literary strategies: Detailing and imagery

Lamentations are not only poetical, but also literary. The ethnolinguist Bright (1982) holds that the term “literature” should be reserved for texts which are regarded as possessing value in a society, which are preserved, repeated and handed down in similar forms. Not only stories from the life of the deceased, but also conceptions of the afterworld are continually celebrated in a consistent form in Georgia mourning rituals.

A major form of creating conversational involvement in sensemaking is organized by imagery: the power of images to communicate meanings and emotions resides in their ability to evoke scenes, as we will see in an excerpt from a lament. Also details, like reported dialogues, create vivid pictures, and understanding is derived from scenes in which people are placed in relation to each other. Individual imagination thereby becomes group imagination. Thus, a collective memory of the time spent together is not only organized but celebrated. The lamenting women play a big role in creating and celebrating social memory. The particularity and familiarity of details such as those communicated in the dialogue with Eliko (starting in line 80) is very moving.

We will look at conversational detailing and imagery as strategies of giving the text a literary quality. The lamenting women describe the life of the deceased in vivid images. Details and imagery play an essential role in making the *xmit nařirlebi* easy to memorize.

Ciala praises her mother Mariam for doing everything for her children. In line 77 she uses a conventional, but powerful metaphor to communicate her mother's engagement for her children. The commentary in line 78 does not belong to the wailing. In line 80 the dialogue with Eliko starts which we will examine closely.

In line 80 Ciala suddenly addresses Eliko, who is in the audience. She opens up a special dialogue with her. She first speaks about her in the third person and then addresses her directly. Ciala talks about her life with Eliko, about their school days. Now the speech is presumably directed at the entire group. She tells that they shared a room (82). Eliko says something which could not be made out. Ciala tells that Eliko came from a rich family, hers was poor (84, 86). The contrast is also iconized on the level of wording: She uses three adjectives to characterize Eliko's situation and only two (one adjective and one inflected

Sequence 3

- 76 C: არაფერს არ გვაკლებდა თავისი გაჭირებული ჯანით
arapers ar gvaklebdā, tavisi gačirvebuli čanit
she wanted us to lack nothing, with her limited strength
- 77 ხორცებს მოიღებდა და ჩვენ მძიერს არ დაგვტოვებდა
xorcebs moiglebdā da čven mšiers ar dagvovebdā,
she would have cut off her own flesh for us so that we would not go hungry
- 78 ?: [არის გასასვლელი, გასასვლელი არის, დიდი ადგილია, გაივლის
aris gasavleli, gasavleli aris, didi adgilia, gavlis
one can certainly get through here, there is enough space, you can get through
- 79 ?: [(? ?)]
- 80 C: თორემ ელიკომ კარგად იცის, პო ელიკო?
torem elikom kargad icis, ho eliko?
Eliko also knows that well, isn't that so, Eliko?
- 81 ერთად ვსწავლობდით, ერთად ვცხოვრობდით მე და ელიკო
ertad vsčavlobdit, ertad včxovrobdit me da eliko
we learned together, lived together, me and Eliko
- 82 ერთ ოთახში ვცხოვრობდით
ert otaxši včxovrobdit
we lived in one room
- 83 E: [(?)]
- 84 C: [ელიკო შექვლებული ოჯახიდან იყო, განებიერებული, მდიდარი ოჯახიდან
eliko šexlebuli ožaxidan ičo, ga nebivrebuli, mididari ožaxidan
Eliko came from a well-to-do family, pampered, from a rich family
- 85 ?: [(?)]
- 86 C: მე საწყალი ოჯახიდან ვიყავი, ვეჭირდა
me sačqali ožaxidan viqavi, gvčirda
I came from a poor family, it was hard for us
- 87 E: [ო, კარგი ერთი...
o, kargi erti...
oh, that.
- 88 C: [რა არის დასამალი, ელიკო,
ra aris dasamali, eliko,
what is there to hide here, Eliko,
- 89 E: [შენ გენაცვალე
šen genacvale
let me take on the burden of your suffering
- 90 C: [მაგის დედა და დედაჩემი ერთად ჩამოდიოდნენ ხელზე და ერთად
გვხახულობდნენ
magis deda da dedačemi ertad čamodiodnen xolme da ertad
gvnaxulobdnen
her mother and my mother always came to visit us together
- 91 რა სიცილე კისკისი, ელიკო, ნეტა იმ დროს, ნეტა იმ დროს რო
გავგვზავებდნენ
ra sicil kiskisi, eliko, neča im dros, neča im dros, ro gagvgzavnidnen
what laughter, Eliko, those were times, those were times when they sent us out ((to get this and that))
- 92 ერთხელ 'პივაზე' გავგვზავნეს მე და ელიკო
ertxel pivaze gagvgzavnes me da eliko,
once they sent us out to get beer, me and Eliko

- 93 მაშინ სად ვცხოვრობდით, ელიკო, საბურთალოზე?
mašin sad včxovrobdit, eliko, saburtaloze?
where did we live then, Eliko, in Saburtalo?
- 94 E: ზემელზე, ზემელზე
zemelze, zemelze
on Semmel Street, on Semmel Street
- 95 C: რამდენი გვითხრეს? ბევრი გვითხრეს მთავრანეთი, და
ramdeni gvixres? bevri gvixres, moitaneto, da
how much did they tell us? we should bring back a lot of ((beer)), and
- 96 ვაიმე დედა, შენც ხომ გიყვარდა სიცილა, უნდა გავაციხო
vaime, deda, šenc xom gičvarda sicili, unda gavacino
Oh, God, mother, you always liked to laugh. I must people laugh
- 97 E: [(?)]
- 98 C: რა მუცლის ხეთქვა გმართებთ მეთქი, მე უთხარა, ამდენი რომ დალიოთ,
ამის დედა,
ra muclis xetkva gmagtebt metki, me utxari, amdeni rom daliot,
HEHE amis deda,
you deserved that your bellies will burst, I said, if you drink so much beer,
- 99 [სიცილი და კისკისი უღვით ისეთი, ნეტა იმ დროს, დედა! დაურბოდი
sicili da kiskisi edgat iseti, neča im dros, deda: davrbodit
she laughed and giggled so, those were times, mother, we walked along
- 100 ?: [HE HE HE (? ?)]

verb) to characterize hers. In line 89 Eliko utters one of the central formulae in dirges. We do not only take semantics into account (the wish to suffer for the other person) but also the role the utterance plays in context: Here it is important that Eliko gets actively involved in lamenting.

In line 90 Ciala points out that Eliko's mother and her own came together to visit them. After stating differences, she now focuses their togetherness. This again contains the implicit message: Eliko's mother didn't bother about differences in wealth. Money didn't play an important role. Eliko's short objection in line 87 can be understood in the sense that it is not worth mentioning their not paying attention to the wealth difference. In line 91 Ciala evokes the shared joy of the past.

The detailing leads up to telling her mother (and the audience) that they were once sent out for beer (92) and to asking about the street where they lived; Eliko answers that question (Semmel street, 94). The question in line 93 goes along with a shift in address. Again and again in the recollections images of her mother and their social life are evoked. In line 98 Ciala cites her own words. Then she informs the audience about her mother's laughing and giggling. In the middle of the line she shifts address again, reminding her mother of the

wonderful times they had together. Here, laughter occurs in the middle of a lamentation. For a moment the past good times win over the sad present moment.

Especially the details give the narrative a touch of intimacy that everybody present is allowed to share. Going into details enables Ciala, Eliko and the audience to refer to their memories and construct images of scenes: people in relation to one another and engaged in recognizable activities. Detailing evidently belongs to the strategies of creating involvement. It is implicitly evaluative. Ciala states explicitly that Eliko's family made no distinctions based on wealth. But she also implicitly shows the way Eliko's family ignored differences which are considered important by many people, not only in Georgia. In lamentation we find both implicit and explicit evaluations of persons, activities and situations. Tannen (1989) suggests that images are more convincing and easier to memorize than abstract propositions. Internal evaluation by images, details and reported dialogues is more persuasive than external evaluation. The dialogue with Eliko is especially rich in details:

In line 101 Eliko adds concrete details to the remembering. Ciala continues the evoked image of walking in the streets of Tbilisi. Now there is a lot of turn taking. In line 105 Ciala addresses her mother again. Tamara joins in the joy of memorizing. Lines 107 to 110 in particular show how naturally the deceased aunt Maro is integrated into the dialogue just by talking to her. Religious bonds to the departed are not merely asserted in Georgian dirges, but rather created in speech. The story of what they experienced together with Eliko and her mother continues as a dialogue in which many concrete scenes are evoked. In line 117 the evocation of memories shifts again to cries of grief addressed to her mother. Ciala thanks her mother, and Eliko as well, for everything they have done for her. The relational work which mourners perform is evident here. Ciala repeats the memory of wearing Eliko's dress and coat as a question to her mother. Eliko's crying shows her being moved by the memories she contributed to herself.

From line 123 onwards Ciala sums up what she already made clear: Her mother did everything for her. Tamara adds under which difficult conditions Mariams activities took place.

As can be seen, laments play an important role for women's social life in Georgia. They act out their attachment to the deceased and to those living, create moving dramas to make everybody share similar feelings, thereby shaping morals and memory.

Sequence 4

- 101 E: [ლენინის მოედანზე ფეხით ავედი, ფეხსაცმელითა
leninis moedanze pexit avedit, plošebita
we went to Lenin Square on foot wearing house slippers
- 102 C: [მთელი რუსთაველი ხელში გვეჭირა, თქვენც გიხაროდათ
mteli rustaveli xelši gvečira, tkvenc giarodat
all the way along Rustaveli we held hands, and you were also happy,
- 103 ? : [(?)
- 104 E: [იცინოდით, კისკისობდით
icinodit, kiskisobdit
laughed, giggled
- 105 C: [მთელი ცხოვრება ერთად გავატარეთ, დედა
mteli cxovreba ertad gavataret, deda
(? ?)
we lived together all our lives, mother
- 106 T: [რა კარგია ახალგაზრდობა რამდენ რამეს გაიხსენებს კაცი
ra kargia axalgazrdoba. ramden rames gaixsenebs kaci
how wonderful youth is, how many memories cleave to it.
- 107 E: [მამინ უფრო სჯობდა მარო დედა, ახალგაზრდა იყავით
mašin upro sjobda, maro deida, axalgazrda iqavit
it was better then, Aunt Maro, you were young then
- 108 C: [(?)
- 109 E: [გაჭირვებას ვერა გრძნობდით, ვერა
gačirvebas vera grznobdit, vera
you did not feel the difficulties,
- 110 T: [თქვენც ბავშვები იყავით
tkbenc bavšvebi iqavit
and you were children
- 111 C: [ჩამოვიდოდნენ, რამე ჰქონდა ჩამოგვატანდნენ
čamovidodnen, rame hkonda čamogvitannden
they came, if they had something, brought it to us
- 112 ? : [(?)
- 113 E: [დაგვიწერავდნენ, ეს გააკეთეთ საღამოზე ბადრიჯანი მოიტანეთ
dagviceravdnen, es gaaketet saŋamoze, badrižani moitanet
they wrote, do this and that in the evening, go out and get aubergines.
- 114 ? : [(?)
დაგვაწვედებოდა ხოლმე, ჩვენ გავცვივდებოდით, ისევ ესენი გააკეთებდნენ
dagvavičqdeboda xolme, čven gavcvivdebodit, isev eseni gaaketebdnen
we forgot that once, but ran out of the house and they were forced to do everything
- 115 : [და ესენი დაგვახვედრებდნენ ხოლმე
da eseni dagvaxvedrebdnen xolme
when we came back everything was already prepared for us
- 116 C: [დაგვახვედრებდნენ ხოლმე
dagvaxvedrebdnen xolme
everything was already prepared for us
- 117 : [H::: დედა რამდენჯერ ელიკოს კაბით მივლია, დედა,
deda ramdenžer elikos kabit mivlia, deda,
Mother, how many times I wore Eliko's dress, mother

- 118 E: [ვაიმე] ვაიმე
vaimeh vaimeh
alas alas
- 119 C: [რამდენჯერ ელიკის პალტოთი მივლია დედა.
ramdenjer elikos palṭoti mivlia, deda,
how many times I wore Eliko's coat. mother,
- 120 E: [%%%%%%%%%%]
- 121 C: [გენაცვალე დედა, მე მაინც მაღლობელი ვიყავი შენი, შენ მეტი არ შეგეძლოა.
genacvale, de::da, me mainc madlobeli viqavi šeni, šen meti ar šegezlo,
dear mother, still I was grateful to you, you could not have done more for us.
- 122 E: [%%%%%%%%%%]
- 123 C: შენ სულაც არ გემღორები. დედა, იმიტომ რომ რაც შეგეძლოა.
šen sulac ar gemḏurebi, deda, imiṭom rom, rac šegezlo,
I am not mad at you, mother, because you did everything for us
- 124 [ჩვენ არაფერს არ გვაკლებდი
čven arapers ar gvaklebdī
that you could, we lacked nothing

Concluding remarks

In contrast to Greece, Russia or Sicily, in rural Georgia laments still enjoy a high reputation. Like Greek lamentations (Alexiou 1974, Caraveli 1980, 1986, Seremetakis 1991), Georgian dirges are still seen as unofficial forms of religious expression. For one thing, during Communist rule the practice of religion was not in favor in the USSR and, for another, the currently very popular Georgian Orthodox Church assigns women only background positions and functions. In the unofficial folk religion, however, women have a very significant status as “artists of pain” and mediators between the living and the dead.

The genre is, however, tied to a high form of privacy. Women’s verbal art is revealed in a private realm and emerges for a very sad reason. The most beautiful and creative formulations are lodged in the memory of the people as momentarily or as permanently as the occurrence of death itself.

The genre of lamentation shows the connection of emotion, religion, gender and culture. The above-mentioned affects and functions are all linked. Analyzing the culturally defined and socially situated activity of lamentation we may discover how the attribution of gendered emotion creates cultural knowledge about the desirability or undesirability of activities. “Doing Gender” (ethnomethodologically speaking) in the case of mourning rituals is multi-dimensional.

The gravity of the loss to the community is worked out in laments. The social hierarchy of a village is thereby reproduced in a lament’s performance. However, as we saw, social hierarchy has not only to do with authority and power, but also with social popularity. Lamentation does not just reproduce the socioeconomical order of a community. To the contrary, it reflects much more the social influence of the deceased person. In a sense it can be seen as a counter discourse. For example, in praising qualities of a dead husband women communicate what they see as a good husband’s acting. In lauding a mother’s deeds they make them visible for everybody. The lamenters’ moral standards are mostly in line with common Georgian value orders. Insofar the dirges are far from being revolutionary. They just allow forms of renegotiating or correcting these values. For example, male alcoholism is practically quite accepted in everyday life. By praising men who did not drink wailers can take their chance to implicitly criticize certain behaviors.

I have presented an approach which combines text analysis and ethnography of communication. Understanding a culture depends on using all the data which the natives dispose of.

I would like to finish my article by citing the words of Dell Hymes (1981) about native American ethnopoetics, which I consider also true for my kind of work (especially in Germany, where linguistic anthropology is not an established academic field):

There is linguistics in this [book], and that will put some people off. ‘Too technical’, they will say. Perhaps such people would be amused to know that many linguists will not regard the work as linguistics. ‘Not theoretical’, they will say, meaning not part of a certain school of grammar. And many folklorists and anthropologists are likely to say, ‘too linguistic’ and ‘too literary’ both, whereas professors of literature are likely to say, ‘anthropological’ or ‘folklore’, not ‘literature’ at all. But there is no help for it. As with Beowulf and The tale of Genji, the material requires some understanding of the way of life. Within that way of life, it has in part a role that in English can only be called that of ‘literature’. Within that way of life, and now, I hope, within others, it offers some of the rewards and joys of literature. And if linguistics is the study of language, not grammar alone, then the study of these materials adds to what is known about language. (1981:5)

Transcription conventions

%	crying
(-)	one hyphen indicates a short pause
(- -)	two hyphens indicate a longer pause (less than half a second)
(0.5)	pause of half a second; long pauses are counted in half seconds
(?was that so?)	indicates uncertain transcription
(? ?)	points to an incomprehensible utterance
...[.....	shows overlap; two simultaneous voices
...[.....	
=	latching of an utterance by a speaker; no interruption
H	audible exhalation
'H	audible inhalation
?	high rising intonation
:	falling intonation
ˆ	ongoing (slightly rising) intonation ("more to come")
:	indicates that preceding sound is elongated
(...)	crying
blabla	fat print means louder and higher
((sits down))	non-verbal actions or comments

Appendix

Lamentation for Grandmother Mariam (Maro), Muxrani (Kartli) 1994²⁷

Aunt Tamari, relatives and neighbors of the deceased enter bringing flowers.

- 1 Tamari: როგორ გამზადებულხარ, [მარო დეიდა, გენაცვალე]
rogor gamzadebulxar, maro deida, genacvale
how beautifully you have prepared yourself, Aunt Maro, genacvale
- 2 Ciala: [ვევარა, თამარა დეიდა, აღარ იცი რაღა ქნა, ქალი,
verara, tamara deida, arar ici rara kna, kalo,
no, Aunt Tamari, you don't know what you are doing,
woman,
- 3 [ამდენი პატივისცემა, აღარ ვიცი რა ვქნათ, თამარა დეიდა, უიმე,
amdeni pativiscema, arar vici ra vknat, tamara deida, uime,
so much deference, I don't know what we could do, Aunt Tamara, oh my,
- 4 T: [?]
- 5 C: [ყოველ დღე, ყოველ საღამოს, ყოველ დილას
qovel dre, qovel sašamos, qovel dilas
everyday, every evening, every morning
- 6 T: [მაინც გამზადებულხარ, გენაცვალე,
mainc gamzadebulxar, genacvale,
but you have prepared yourself, genacvale,
- 7 C: [არ ვიცი რა გასამოვნო, გენაცვალე,
ar vici ra gasiamovno, genacvale
I do not know what pleasure I could give you, genacvale,
- 8 T: [დიდი გვარის ხალხი ხართ
didi gvaris xalxi xart
you come from a large clan
- 9 იქ შემოგხვდებით ჩვენი ბიძაშვილები, სულ კარგები გვაყავს იქა.
ik šemogxvdebat čveni bižašvilebi, sul kargebi gvqavs ika.
there you will meet our cousins, all the good are there.
- 10 გენაცვალე ჩემი დედაც შემოგხვდება, იცო, რა კეთილი, ქალი იყო
genacvale, čemi dedac šemogxvdeba, ici ra ketili kali iqo
genacvale, you will also meet my mother there, you know how good natured
she was
- 11 'H: ეს ვაჟილები ყველას გაუნაწილე, აგრემც შემოგველე, შენა
'H: es gvavilebi qvelas gaunačile, agrenc šemogevle, šena
share these flowers with everyone there, I implore you, you
- 12 ბარეამ გული მტკივა, რომ ამ კაი შვილებსა სტოვებ
baream guli mtkiva, rom am kai švilebsa šoveb
but my heart aches that you are leaving your dear children
- 13 სტოვებ და მიდიხარ
šoveb da midixar
you are leaving them and going away from them

- 14 ამათი ცქერა ღარს ერთ რამედა,
amati c'kera ħars ert ramedā,
it means so much to look at them,
- 15 C: [შენ გაახარე] შენ
[šen gaixare, šen,
you should have joy, you,
- 16 T: [შენ კი თვალაც დაგრნა და გულაც დაგრნა შენ შვილებზედა]%%
[šen ki tvalic dagrēa da gulic dagrēa šen švilebzedā]%%
you, however, have left not only your eyes, but also your heart with your children
- 17 'H: მარუს, შენი ჭირბეჭ არ ვიცი კარგი ბევრი ჭირილი
'H: marus, šeni č'irime, ar vici kargi, bevri č'irili
Marus, let me bear your suffering. I cannot cry well and much
- 18 რა წყალში ჩავეარდე
ra čqalში č'avvarde
into what water should I throw myself
- 19 [მინდა ბევრი რამე ვთხრა
minda bevri rame gitxra
I would like to say so many things to you
- 20 C: [გახარე, თამარა დედა შენ შვილებსა და შვილიშვილებში
gaixare, tamara deida šen švilebsa da švilišvilebში
may you be happy. Aunt Tamara, about your children and grandchildren
- 21 გაგახაროს ღმერთმა
gagaxaros ħmertma
God give you joy
- 22 დედა, რამდენ პატივსა გცემს შენი ბიძაშვილი, დედა
deda, ramden paťvsa gcems šeni bižašvili, deda
Mother, how many favors your cousin has been doing for you, mother
- 23 დღე და ღამე აქ არის თამარა,
dne da ħame ak aris tamara,
Tamara is here day and night,
- 24 დედა ავადაც იყავი, რომ რამეცა მთხოვდა ეს დაღლილი დაქანცული ქალი
deda avadac iqavi, rom rameca mtxovda es dařilil dakanculi kali
during mother's illness this exhausted woman asked me if she could also
- 25 შენთან დავრჩები, შვილი, შენ გვერდით დავრჩები
šentan davrčebi, švilo, šen gverdit davrčebio
stay with you at night, child, I would stay with you (she said)
- 26 და მე არ ვუშვებდი
da me ar vušvebdi
but I did not let her
- 27 თამარა დედა დაღლილი ხარ, ქალი წავი სახლში
tamara deida, dařilil ħar, kalo, čadi sařliში,
Aunt Tamara, you are tired, woman, go home,
- 28 დამხებე ქალი თავა, რა გინდა ჩემთან ერთად მყოფი დედა
damanebe kalo tavi, ra ginda čemtan ertad merki deda
leave me, woman, you do not need to stay (I said) mother
- 29 [როს გადავუხადო დედა ეს პატივისცემა, ქალი
[ros gadavuxado, deda, es paťviscema, kalo
how can I, mother, pay back this honor, woman
- 30 ?:
[?]
- 31 C: თქვენს გვარს ვხატავდე დედა, ჩუგაშვილების %გვარს ვხატავდე დედა,
tkvens gvars venacvale, deda, čuguašvilebis %gvars venacvale, deda,
I like your clan, mother, the Tshuguashvilis clan, mother,

- 32 კაი გვარის ქალი ხარ, ქალი ხუ გამოცდები მაგ გვარში, დედა==
kai gvaris kali ħar, kalo, nu gamocqdebi mag gvarში, deda==,
your clan is good, woman, you must not leave this clan, mother,
- 33 ?:
[?]
- 34 C: აღარავინ არ დარჩა ჩუგუაანთში, რომ არ მოვიდა და არ მოვიკითხა, დედა
araravin ar darča čuguaantში, rom ar movida da ar mogikitxā, deda
there is no one in Tshuguaanis who would not come and express sympathy, mother
- 35 ყველამ ცრემლები დაგაყარა, დედა
qvelam cremlebi dagaqara, deda
everyone showered you with tears, mother
- 36 კარგი იყავი, ჭკვიანი ქალი იყავი, ყველას უყვარდი, დედა,
kargi iqavi, čkviani kali iqavi, qvelas uqvardi, deda,
you were a good, wise woman, everyone liked you, mother
- 37 [გახაცვალე] დედა, მაგ ტკბილ განში, დედა
[gač'cvalē] deda, mag tkbil gānში, deda
genacvale, deda mag tkbil gānში, deda
genacvale mother, I like your nice character, mother
- 38 T: [შენ გახაცვალე, ბიჭო, რად დაგვტოვე
[šen gač'cvalē, bič'o, rad dagvtove
you, you our dearest, why did you leave us
- 39 (? ?)
- ((Near the head of the deceased is a small table; on it are arranged a candle, a cup of wheat and the photos of previously deceased relatives and neighbors, among them as well a photo of Tengiz, the choirmaster of Muxrani, who sang very well, played musical instruments, and died at age 50. It is customary that people also mourn these photos; people also used to mourn the deceased's garments, but now only photos are wept over. Aunt Tamara was also related to Tengiz; all the Tshuguashvilis were proud of Tengiz and liked him very much. Now Ciala turns to his photo and mourns for him. She thereby reminds the relatives of him and attempts to tell them thereby that the others have also experienced the same or a still worse misfortune.))
- 40 C: ვაიმე [თენგიზ თენგიზ, შენ მოგიკვდეს დედაშვილა თენგიზ
vaime, tengiz, tengiz, šen mogikvdes deidašvili, tengiz
oh my, Tengiz, Tengiz, your cousin ought to die, Tengiz
- 41 ?:
[?]
- 42 T: რა კარგი ხარ, ბიჭო,
ra kargi ħar, bič'o,
how good you are, boy
- 43 C: თენგიზ ჩვენ რაღა ვართ ცოცხლები შენს მერე თენგიზ გენაცვალე
tengiz, řven rada vart cocxlebi šens mere tengiz genacvale
Tengiz, why are we still living after your death Tengiz genacvale
- 44 რაღა ვართ ცოცხლები, თენგიზ, რატომ არ დავიხოცენით შენს მერე
rada vart cocxlebi, tengiz, raťom ar davixocēnit šens mere
why we are still alive, why didn't we also die when you died
- 45 [თენგიზ, გენაცვალე ჩვენ ხომ თანატოლები ვიყავით,
[tengiz, genacvale, řven xom tanaťolebi viqavit,
Tengiz, genacvale, we were the very same age,
- 46 ?:
[?]
- 47 C: პირველ კლასში ერთად ვიყავით, გაჯობებულები ვიყავით, რომელი
pirvel klassი ერთად viqavit, gač'ibrebuli viqavit, romeli vač'obebdit
we went to first class together and emulated each other (in good learning)

- 48 სწავლაში თენგიზ.
šavlaši, tengiz.
tried to learn better than the others, Tengiz.
- 49 ვნაცვალე თენგიზ, ოქრო იყავი
genacvale, tengiz, okro iqavi
my dear, good soul, Tengiz, you were gold
- 50 T: [ქველიანი კარგი, გამგებნიანი იყავი, ყველაფერში კარგი იყავი
čqviani, kargi, gamgebiani iqavi, qvelaperši kargi iqavi
you were wise, good, understanding, you were good at everything
- 51 C: [გამგებნიანი იყო და შეგნებულად და გველაფერა.
gamgebianic iqo da šegnebulic da qvelaperi,
he was understanding and tactful and everything,
- 52 თენგიზ, შენი ჭირიმე, რატომ ცოცხალი არა ხარ ეხლა, რატო
tengiz, šeni čirime, rašom cocxali ara xar exla, rašo
Tengiz, let me hear your suffering, why are you not alive now, why
- 53 [რატო ცოცხალი არა ხარ და არ გუგუნებ, თენგიზ, შენი ჭირიმე
rašo cocxali ara xar da ar guguneb, tengiz, šeni čirime
why are you not alive so that you could roar, Tengiz,
let me hear your suffering
- 54 ?:
[?]
- 55 C: თენგიზ, ვნაცვალე შენმა სიკვდილმა, ვანუას სიკვდილმა, ლენას სიკვდილმა
tengiz, genacvale, šenma siqvdilma, vanuas siqvdilma, lenas siqvdilma
Tengiz, genacvale, your death, Vanua's death, Lena's death,
- 56 სუველას სიკვდილმა ჩემი ქმრის სიკვდილმა არ იმოქმედა დედაჩემის
გულზე?
suqvelas siqvdilma, čemi kmris siqvdilma ar imokmeda dedačemis gulze?
all your deaths, has the death of my husband left no traces in my mother's
heart?
- 57 არ იმოქმედა?
ar imokmeda?
has not affected her?
- 58 ნაკლებად პატივსაცემდა, დედა, ჩემი ქმარი?
naklebad pašivsa gcemda, deda, čemi kmari?
did my husband respect you less, mother, my husband?
- 59 როგორ უყვარდა, როგორ უყვარდა ჩემს ქმარს
rogor uqvarda, rogor uqvarda čems kmars
how much, how much my husband liked you
- 60 ცალ პატივი ეცი დედას, პატივი ეცი
cial, pašivi eci dedas, pašivi eci
Ciala, do 'something good for mother, do 'something good for her
- 61 ვეტყოდი, კაცო, რაღა პატივი ეცე?
vetqodi, kaco, raša pašivi vce?
then I said to him, man, what could I still do for her?
- 62 პატივი ეცი, არ მომსვენებდა, რომ ჩამოვიდოდა, ერთი წუთი მოსვენებას
არ მომცემდა
pašivi eci, ar momasvenebda, rom čamovidoda, eri čuti mosvenebas
ar momcemda
do something good for her, he did not give me a moment's rest when
mother visited us
- 63 [პატივი ეცი, გნაცვალე
pašivi eci, genacvale
do something good for her, genacvale
- 64 ?:
[?]

- 65 C: ეხლა რომ ცოცხალი ყოფილიყავი, დედა: ეხლა რომ ცოცხალი
ყოფილიყავი
exla rom cocxali qopiliqo, deda: exla rom cocxali qopiliqo,
if he were alive now, mother, if he were alive now,
- 66 რა პატივისცემასი იქნებოდა, დედა, ვინმეს დაიკლიდა, ვნაცვალე, დედა,
რადმეს?
ra pašiviscemasi iknebodi, deda, vinmes daaclida, genacvale, deda,
raimes?
he would have done everything for you, mommy, would he have had
someone else do that, mother?
- 67 შენ უბედური რომ ვიყავი, დედა, იმიტომ გვეკოდებოდა,
ubeduri rom viqavi, deda, imišom gecodebodi hoo,
you pitied me, mother, because I was unhappy, didn't you
- 68 იმტომ გვეკოდებოდა, უპატრონო რომ ვიყავი, დედა:
imitom gecodebodi, upatrono rom viqavi, deda:
because I was unhappy, I had no one to care for me, mother
- 69 %როგორი %ქმარი %დავკარგე დედა, მეთორმეტე წელიწადია შავები არ
გამიხდა ტანთან, დედა % % % % %
%rogori %kmari %davrarge, deda, metirmete čeličadia šavebi ar
gamixdia tanidan, deda % % % % %
what a husband I have lost, mother, for twelve years I have worn mourning
dress
- 70 %დედა, %გავიხადე %მადებელი მკუბნებოდნენ
%deda, %gaxade %šavebio, meubnebodnen
mother, I should put aside my mourning dress, so they said to me
- 71 ჩემ გულს არაფერი უხარია, რატომ გავიხადე მეთქი, დედა
čem guls araperi uxaria, rašom gavixado metki, deda
nothing can bring cheer to my heart, why should I cast aside my mourning
dress, (I replied), mother
- 72 არ მიხარია, როცა გავიხარებ, მე თვითონ გავიხდი მეთქი
ar mixaria, roca gavixareb, me tviton gavixdi metki
nothing cheers me, but if I should feel happy again, I will myself cast aside
my mourning dress (I said)
- 73 აი, გავიხარე დედა, ეხლა გნაცვალე % % % % %
ai, gavixare, deda, exla, genacvale % % % % %
now, could I become happy, Mother, now, genacvale
(?)
- 74 დედა, შენი ჭირიმე, დედა, დედა % % % % % დედა, ჩვენ მამა არ გვიყვს დედა,
ეს იყო მამაც ეს იყო
deda, šeni čirime, deda, deda, % % % % % deda, čven mama ar gqvavs, deda
es iqo, mamac es iqo
- 75 Mother, I should take on the burden of your suffering, mother, mother,
mother, we have no father, she was mother, she was father to us
- 76 არაფერს არ გვაკლებდა თავისი გაჭირებული ფაჩით
arapers ar gvaklebd, tavisi gačirvebuli fačit
she wanted us to lack nothing, with her limited strength
- 77 ხორცებს მოიგლეჭდა და ჩვენ მშვიერს არ დაგვიტოვებდა
xorcebs moiglečda da čven mšiers ar dagvovebda,
she would have cut off her own flesh for us so that we would not go
hungry

- 78 ? : [არის გასასვლელი, გასასვლელი არის დიდი ადგილია. ვაიქლის
aris gasasvleli, gasasvleli aris, didi adgilia, gavlis
one can certainly get through here, there is enough space, you can get
through
- 79 ? : [(? ?)
- 80 C : თორემ ელიკომ კარგად იცის, მი ელიკო?
torem elikom kargad icis, ho eliko?
Eliko also knows that well, isn't that so, Eliko?
- 81 : ერთად ვსწავლობდით ერთად ვცხოვრობდით მე და ელიკო
ertad vsçavlobdit, ertad vçxovrobdit me da eliko
we learned together, lived together, me and Eliko
- 82 : [ერთ ოთახში ვცხოვრობდით
ert otaxši vçxovrobdit
we lived in one room
- 83 E : [(?)
- 84 C : [ელიკო შეძლებული ოჯახიდან იყო, განებვრებული მდიდარი ოჯახიდან
eliko šezlebuli ojaxidan iqo, ganebivrebuli, mididari ojaxidan
Eliko came from a well-to-do family, pampered, from a rich family
- 85 ? : [(?)
- 86 C : მე საწყალი ოჯახიდან ვიყავი, ვიჭირდა
me saçqali ojaxidan viçavi, gviçirda
I came from a poor family, it was hard for us
- 87 E : [ო, კარგი ერთი.
o, kargi erti.
oh, that.
- 88 C : [რა არის დასამალი, ელიკო.
ra aris dasamali, eliko,
what is there to hide here, Eliko,
- 89 E : [შენ გნაცვალე
šen genacvale
let me take on the burden of your suffering
- 90 C : [მაგის დედა და დედაჩემი ერთად ჩამოვიდნენ ხელზე და ერთად
გნახულობდნენ
magis deda da dedaçemi ertad çamovidnen xolme da ertad
gvnaxulobdnen
her mother and my mother always came to visit us together
- 91 : რა სიკვდი კისკისი! ელიკო, ნეტა იმ დროს, ნეტა იმ დროს, რო
გაგვზავნიდნენ
ra sicil kiskisi, eliko, neça im dros, neça im dros, ro gagvgzavniidnen
what laughter, Eliko, those were times, those were times when they sent us
out ((to get this and that))
- 92 : ერთხელ "პივაზე" გაგვზავნეს მე და ელიკო
ertxel pivaze gagvgzavnes me da eliko,
once they sent us out to get beer, me and Eliko
- 93 : [მაშინ სად ვცხოვრობდით, ელიკო, საბურთალოსზე?
mašin sad vçxovrobdit, eliko, saburtaloze?
where did we live then, Eliko, in Saburtalo?
- 94 E : [ზემელზე, ზემელზე
zemelze, zemelze
on Semmel Street, on Semmel Street
- 95 C : რამდენი გვითხრეს? ბევრი გვითხრეს მოიტანეთო და
ramdeni gvixres? bevri gvixres, moitaneto, da
how much did they tell us? we should bring back a lot of ((beer)), and
- 96 : ვამბე დედა, შენც ხომ გიყვარდა სიცილი, უნდა გავაიციხო
vaime, deda, šenc xom giçvarda sicili, unda gavacino
Oh, God, mother, you always liked to laugh, I must make people laugh
- 97 E : [(?)
- 98 C : რა მუცლის ხეთქვა გმართებთ მეთქი, მე უთხარი, ამდენი რომ დავლიოთ, HEHE
ამის დედა,
ra muclis xetkva gmagtebt metki, me utxari, amdeni rom dalioთ, HEHE
amis deda,
you deserved that your bellies will burst, I said, if you drink so much beer,
- 99 : [სიცილი და კისკისი ედგათ ისეთი, ნეტა იმ დროს, დედა! დავრობდით
sicili da kiskisi edgat iseti, neça im dros, deda: davrobdit
she laughed and giggled so, those were times, mother, we walked along
- 100 ? : [HE HE HE (? ?)
- 101 E : [ლენინის მოედანზე ფეხით ავედიო, ფეხსაცმელითა
leninis moedanze pexit avedit, plošebita
we went to Lenin Square on foot wearing house slippers
- 102 C : [მოვლი რუსთაველი ხელში გვეჭირა, თქვენც ვიხაროდით
mteli rustaveli xelši gveçira, tkvenc giçarodათ
all the way along Rustaveli we held hands, and you were also happy.
- 103 ? : [(?)
- 104 E : [იცინოდით, კისკისობდით
icinodit, kiskisobdit
laughed, giggled
- 105 C : [მოვლიცხოვრება ერთად გავატარეთ, დედა
mteli çxovreba ertad gavaçaret, deda
(? ?)
we lived together all our lives, mother
- 106 T : [რა კარგია ახალგაზრდობა, რამდენ რამეს ვაიხსენებს, კაცი
ra kargia axalgazrdoთ, ramden rames vaixsenebs kaci
how wonderful youth is, how many memories cleave to it.
- 107 E : [მაშინ უფრო სჯობდა, მარო დეიდა, ახალგაზრდა იყავით
mašin upro sçobda, maro deida, axalgazrda iqavit
it was better then, Aunt Maro, you were young then
- 108 C : [(?)
- 109 E : ვაჭირვებას ვერა ვრძობდით, ვერა
gaçirveბას vera grçnobdit, vera
you did not feel the difficulties,
- 110 T : თქვენც ბავშვები იყავით
tkbenc bavšvebi iqavit
and you were children
- 111 C : ჩამოვიდოდნენ, რამე ჰქონდა ჩამოგვიტანდნენ
çamovidodnen, rame hkonda çamogviçandnen
they came, if they had something, brought it to us
- 112 ? : [(?)
- 113 E : დავიწერავდნენ, ეს გააკეთეთ საღამოზე, ბადრიჯანი მოიტანეთ
dagviçravdnen, es gaaketet sařamoze, badriçani moitanet.
they wrote, do this and that in the evening, go out and get aubergines.

- 114 ? (?)
დაგვაიწყებოდა ხოლმე ჩვენ გავცივდებოდით, ისევ ესენი გააკეთებდნენ
dagvaviçqdeboda xolme, çven gavgvivedbodit, isev eseni gaaketebdnen
we forgot that once, but ran out of the house and they were forced to do
everything
- 115 და ესენი დაგვახვედრებდნენ ხოლმე
da eseni dagvaxvedrebdnen xolme
when we came back everything was already prepared for us
- 116 C: დაგვახვედრებდნენ ხოლმე
dagvaxvedrebdnen xolme%
everything was already prepared for us
- 117 [H::::: დედა რამდენჯერ ელიკოს კაბით მივლია, დედა,
[H::::: deda ramdenjer elikos kabit mivlia, deda,
Mother, how many times I wore Eliko's dress, mother
- 118 E: ვეიმეჰ ვეიმეჰ %%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%
vaimeh vaimeh
alas alas
- 119 C: [რამდენჯერ ელიკოს პალტოთი მივლია დედა
ramdenjer elikos paloti mivlia, deda,
how many times I wore Eliko's coat, mother,
- 120 E: [%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%
121 C: [გენაცვალე, დედა, მე მაინც მაღლობელი ვიყავი შენა, შენ მეტი არ შეგეძლო.
genacvale, de:::da, me mainc madlobeli viçavi ſeni, ſen meṭi ar ſegeçlo,
dear mother, still I was grateful to you, you could not have done more for
us.
- 122 E: [%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%
123 C: შენ სულაც არ გემძურება, დედა, იმიტომ რომ, რაც შეგეძლო,
ſen sulac ar gemdurebi, deda, imiṭom rom, rac ſegeçlo,
I am not mad at you, mother, because you did everything for us,
- 124 [ჩვენ არაფერს არ გვაკლებდი
çven arapers ar gvaklebdit
that you could, we lacked nothing
- 125 T: [ქმარი თავზე არ უდგა ამ საცოდავს, უქმროდ გავზარდათ ამ საცოდავმა
kmari tavze ar edga am sacodavs, ukmrod gazarḁat am sacodavma
she had no husband, poor thing, without a husband she raised you, poor
thing

Notes

* I am grateful to Elza Gabedava for help with the Georgian language and her continuing co-work.

1. See Mills (1991) and Grima (1991) on a similar role of suffering in women's performance in South Asian folklore.
 2. See Kyratzis and Cahill in this volume.
 3. "Moṭirali" means female wailer, "moṭiralebi" is plural.
 4. Drinking toasts also demand emotion work and emotional performance by men, as is described in Kotthoff (1995b), but wailing is not a component of this work. Toasts are often delivered in a pathetic keying.
 5. This functional ascription is found throughout the rich literature on mourning rituals (Malinowski 1925, van Gennep 1960, Feld 1982, Stubbe 1985).
 6. In order to maintain contact with the dead, food is placed on graves. The people of Georgia bring food and drink to their dead on all religious holidays; in Eastern regions they bring xašlama, a porridge made from cooked veal and mutton. The dead receive forty days' provisions for their journey into the afterlife; that is, they are customarily brought a plate of food on the second, seventh, and fortieth days, and also a year after death. Wine is poured over the grave. In addition, mourners carry a burning candle. Later, there is at least one commemorative day per year.
 7. I taught German language and linguistics for six semesters as a lecturer of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) at a university in Tbilisi (1988–1991). I first did not go to Georgia with the intention of researching ritual communication. The unusually rich variety of oral poetic rituals became accessible to me only gradually (Kotthoff 1993, 1995a,b). Later, I integrated my interests into research projects.
 8. Every region in the Caucasus has its own ritual peculiarities (Cocaniçe 1991, Nakaſiçe 1993, Kotthoff 2000a). Thus, e.g., in Xevsuretia horses are integrated into the burial ritual. A horse is decorated (=equipped for the journey) and carries all the food that the deceased person is given in the grave (for use on the coming journey in the afterlife). The deceased is supposed to use the horse in the hereafter. After the burial the horse is given to a close relative. The latter may only use the horse for riding and must give it dignified treatment, since it is in the religious belief already serving in the hereafter. Lamenters also cry over a carpet which holds the clothes of the deceased.
- Nakaſiçe (1993) differentiates four forms of lamentation for Xevsuretia: three forms of lamentation with words and one without words. The forms with words are classified as *xaxilit ṭirili* (wailing with shouting), *datvliṭ ṭirili* (wailing with reason) and *xmit ṭirili* (wailing with voice). *Xmit ṭirili* is the most widespread form, the one dealt with in this article. *Datvliṭ ṭirili* consists mainly of reproaches to the deceased for having left their relatives. They are sung especially in the first hours after the death. *Xaxilit ṭirili* is only expressed by the sisters of the deceased.
- Each region has its own norms for dressing the deceased and its own semiotics of *culinaria*. Meat is forbidden during the period of mourning in many regions and is likewise not offered in the "kelexi," the mourning meal. Each region is, on the one hand, convinced that its way of treating the dead is superior to the customary forms of other regions, on the other hand, multicultural Georgia practices great tolerance in accepting others' customs.

Regional identity is extremely strong in Georgia. Even in Tbilisi a person who already belongs to the second generation living there is still introduced as a Mingrelian or a Kachetian. In laments the deceased person's region of origin is constantly referred to.

It is beyond the scope of this article to go into the many peculiarities of the Georgian regions. It will only be maintained that mourning rituals are viewed as a central element of regional identity, which is thereby confirmed.

9. See, e.g., Kotthoff (1995 a, b) for other Georgian ethno-poetic genres which communicate moral values.

10. Bergmann/Luckmann (1994) and Günthner/Knoblach (1995) define genres as communicative forms with a high degree of stability. Members of societies develop recurrent orientations to communicative patterns which can lead to speech genres. Stabilized communicative genres which contain evaluative judgements about people and human activities are considered genres of moral communication. Morals are understood in Durkheim's sense (1915) as what people do for the community and has a community-oriented meaning which can be evaluated according to the criteria of good and evil.

11. According to Stubbe these forms of self-flagellation are found in many cultures. The practice of savagely lacerating one's face, likewise mentioned in Stubbe's study, is also found in Georgia.

12. In November 1995 a symposium was held at the University of Paderborn on the topic of "The Gender of Gestures — Grief" (the articles are edited by Gisela Ecker 1999). The symposium also confirmed that there is a gender-specific division of labor in rites, images, symbols and art representations of grief (= female).

13. Caraveli (1986) describes a similar function for Greek lamentations.

14. She alludes to the common metaphors of travelling. She means: prepared for the long journey into the hereafter.

15. "Uime" or "vaimē" is an interjection of pain.

16. She means that she will stay in contact with her children.

17. In Georgian it is possible, by adding an "o" to the last word in a phrase, to indicate that speech is being quoted. Quoting in the second or third person is marked by this morpheme.

18. Quotations in the first person are marked with "metki".

19. What is meant is that they should both watch over Mariam at night during her illness.

20. Literally the phrase means "pay honor to mother;" in practice it means that she should do something for her mother.

21. "By 'emotion work' I refer to the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling. To 'work on' an emotion or feeling is, for our purposes, the same as 'to manage' an emotion or to do 'deep acting'" (Hochschild 1979:561). Hochschild (1979:558) speaks of "deep acting" and "surface acting" in regard to "emotion work." Both are subject to socio-cultural rules and gender. 'Surface acting' and 'deep acting' are combined in lamentation.

22. See also van Gennep (1960), Turner (1969), Werlen (1984) and Senft (1987) on rituality. There are, of course, many different positions on what constitutes rituality; a discussion of this would exceed the scope of this article.

23. We also taped some cross-cultural lamentations. See for the management of regional style differences in Georgian wailing Kotthoff 2000a.

24. Wienold (1971) discusses excellence and originality as general evaluative criteria for poetic texts.

25. Recorded by Nina Maxarashvili who kindly provided us with the cassette.

26. Important metaphor for crying.

27. She means herself; formula.

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