



Exploring Shakespeare Speaking Old and Modern Georgian

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Abstract

William Shakespeare's global impact has been profound, which has been furthered especially through local translations of his works. In Georgia, the translations of Shakespeare's works were utilised for political means amid the Georgian linguistic revival in the 19th and 20th centuries. Discussing the linguistic impact of Shakespeare on the development of the Georgian language, this essay underscores how several translators, including the renowned Georgian translator Ivane Machabeli, used William Shakespeare as a model for linguistic reformation and the development of the Georgian tongue.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Georgian translations, history, culture, literature

Introduction

It appears that Shakespeare's translations emerged within almost the same period in the Black Sea region, beginning with the mid-19th c. and leaving a tremendous trail on the social and political cultures, and education. The early period of Shakespeare's introduction to Georgia started in 1841, with D. Kipiani's¹ translation of *Romeo and Juliet* (from Roskovshenko and Katkov's Russian translation). In Ukraine, despite being forbidden by tsarist censorship, P. Kulish's translations in the late 19th century were published in Western

¹ Georgian nobleman Dimitri Kipiani (1814-1887) was a statesman, publicist, writer and translator.

Ukraine (Kolomiyets, 2020, p. 45). In Türkiye, *Othello* became the first play translated into Turkish from an abridged French version and published in 1876, however, Shakespeare was staged in Istanbul as early as 1842 (Öğütçü, 2023, p. 84). Bulgarian society received Shakespeare's translations during the second half of the nineteenth century, with *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* being the two most favoured tragedies on the national stage (Shurbanov, 2005, p. 315). The first Romanian translations of Shakespeare emerged from the middle of the nineteenth century, *Hamlet* in 1840, *Julius Caesar* in 1847, and in 1848 *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Milică, 2012, p. 23). The studies exploring the role of Shakespeare's translations in national culture and education ascertain their advancing and progressive impact and acknowledge his unwavering popularity over centuries.

Public Engagement in Early Shakespeare Translations in Georgia

Shakespearean translations in Georgian narrate about the historical, cultural and social life of Georgia. The liberating ideas from the Russian Empire initiated in the 19th c. by the new generation permeated the public atmosphere (Leonidze et al 1969, pp. 3, 5; Gamezardashvili, 1972, pp. 7-10; Mansvetashvili, 1936). Translations of the Shakespearean dramas could not but influence the Western-oriented socio-political outlook of Georgians. On 28 May 1841, the Georgian poet N. Baratashvili wrote to his uncle, poet Gr. Orbeliani, and stated that "Georgian literature was enriched with a good translation of Shakespeare's tragedy by Kipiani" (Leonidze et al., 1969, p. 176). The text of this translation is currently preserved in the National Centre of Manuscripts (S Fund №. 2677). Although the first translation garnered public interest, Kipiani, dissatisfied with the quality, retranslated *Romeo and Juliet* during 1841-1859 from the French version, translated by Benjamin LaRoche (1856), and published in the "Ciskari" journal in 1859 (No. 5, 6). Since both translations were in prose, Shakespeare's drama could not be fully reproduced.

The first translations of Shakespeare reflected not only the lack of translation methodology but also the problem of language deterioration in artistic style, and the presence of Russicisms. However, there was a willingness and desire in society to revive the literary traditions that had reached their peak during the Renaissance in the 12th century. At the same time, society tried to revive the theatre as a cultural centre for the liberation movement, for which the social and political angles of Shakespeare's themes were alluring. The period of Shakespeare's translations from the 1840s to the late 1880s reflects a fully-fledged social activity against the soft power imposed between 1844 and 1853 by the English-educated Crown Prince Vorontsov, who replaced the harsh military rule of the empire and left aftershocks of his assimilative policy. In 1881, the Tsarist government's trustee of the Caucasian School District, K. Janowski, completely banned the teaching of the Georgian language in schools. This prohibition had an extremely negative impact on the language's development. The recordings of the first translations assert the wide social engagement in Shakespeare's translations. In 1844 a nobleman Eristavi translated *Othello*, but both the translator and the translation remained unknown (Chkheidze, 2003, p.33). Posing a paradox, around 1856 a fifth-grade student M. Pavlenishvili translated *Hamlet* (Chkheidze, 1985, p. 272). In 1858, Georgian writer L. Ardaziani published a translation of *Hamlet* in the "Ciskari" journal (№. 5, 6, 7, 8). The translation was in prose, based on Plevoy's Russian translation, resulting in an abundance of Russian calques. In 1871 the

newspaper “Droeba” reported that an unknown person translated *King Lear* (Chelidze 1966, p. 264). Some translations have never been published, e.g. the newspaper “Iveria” of 24 March 1888 reported that Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* was translated into Georgian by A. Purtseladze, but it was used only for the theatre performance.

Shakespeare inspired writers and translators in the soviet times as well. The famous writer K. Gamsakhurdia published part of *Hamlet*’s translation but instead of finishing, he featured many of the *Hamletian* themes in his trilogy, *Abduction of the Moon* (written in 1926-1933), addressing concerns of national cultural identity under the totalitarian regime (Tevzadze, p. 38, 63, 74).

***King Lear*’s First Georgian translation**

I. Chavchavadze² (1837-1907) was a Georgian statesman of many talents, lawyer by education, founder and manager of the Georgian nobility bank, education charity founder, publisher, writer, poet and the leading ideologist of liberation from the Russia’s Tsarist regime for over 45 years until his assassination. Studying at St. Petersburg University in 1857 -1861, he was well acquainted with the Russian revolutionary ideas and democratic thought, as well as with the European history and literature (Ingoroqva, 1957, p. 31). Chavchavadze wanted to translate *King Lear* since he was a student. In 1859, temporarily returning from St. Petersburg to Georgia, he staged the tragedy and played the role of Lear himself on the stage of the Tbilisi Gymnasium.

In April 1861, 24-year-old Chavchavadze sent from Petersburg his highly academic critical review of the translation: “A few words about Revaz Shalva’s dze Eristavi’s ‘Translation of ‘Mad’ by Kozlov”, published in the “Ciskari” journal. Chavchavadze’s translational critique can be assessed as an advanced theoretical approach to the essence and purpose of literary translation and its role in national and global cultures. It reflects that Chavchavadze acknowledged the role of the Medieval Georgian translators.³ We can argue that his review indirectly heralded more advanced translations of Shakespeare in Georgia. The review immediately sparked debates on language, literature, colonialism, and serfdom. Although these debates grew into a generational conflict, they broke a long-standing silence and sought solutions. The review outlines five principles of translation: 1. literary translation stands as art; 2. translation shall produce a similar copy to the original; 3. the translator shall observe the linguistic differences between the source and target texts; 4. a poetic translation shall harmoniously combine thought and rhythm; 5. a translator shall select a worthwhile literary text. Moreover, Chavchavadze called for language modernization, criticizing the heavily archaic style and register. The language deterioration was largely caused by the

² In 1987, the Holy Synod of the Georgian Church reviewed Ilia Chavchavadze’s merits before the nation and the church and ruled: “Ilia Chavchavadze should be canonized and called Ilia the Righteous.” https://www.orthodoxy.ge/tveni/ivlisi/20-ilia_martali.htm

³ The Iviron Georgian Monastery was built in 980-983 on the Mount Athos by Ioane the Athonite. His son, Ekvtime (Euthymius the Athonite, 955–1024) was venerated as saint. George the Hagiorite (Giorgi the Athonite, 1009-1965), and Ephrem Mtsire became exiles from the Iviron Georgian Monastery and served at the Black Mountain near Antioch, died in 1101/3). They were monks, philosophers, theologians, theoreticians and translators (Khintibidze, 2000, p.14) whose translations of the theological literature, patristic and ecclesiastical texts laid foundations to the cultural and scholarly advancement of Georgia, and its renaissance period. Theoretical principles to Ephrem Mtsire’s postulations were formulated by D. Tvaltvadze (2009:19).

social and political problems that also aligned with Shakespeare's themes. Burjanadze (1992, p. 279) believes that the social problems in *King Lear* attracted Chavchavadze's attention, prompting him to begin translating it with I. Machabeli. Having a thorough knowledge of foreign languages and being proficient in English, Machabeli undoubtedly played a significant role in the translation process. While Chavchavadze had translation experience, he did not have a command of English, but as Ingoroqva (1963, p. 395) posits, "Chavchavadze was so enamoured with the work of translation that he even studied English to get to know Shakespeare's text in the original". The translators agreed to translate Shakespeare's iambic pentameter into Georgian fourteen-syllable white verse. Machabeli skilfully bridged the vast linguistic gap between the fundamentally different Georgian and English languages. In all his later translations, he replaced Shakespeare's ten-syllable lines with Georgian fourteen-syllable lines, recognizing that the English language, being monosyllabic, can convey more information in a single line than the Georgian language. Machabeli succeeded in preserving the dynamic nature inherent in Shakespeare's dialogues, skilfully capturing the wordplay and ambiguity characteristic of Shakespeare. "Bakhtioni" newspaper №. 19 of 1922 published Chavchavadze's letters (p. 2) of 1877 titled "Documents and Memoirs" which reflect his intention to arrange public readings to increase its popularity before staging. *King Lear* was printed as a separate book in 1877: "Georgian Literature. Book four. *King Lear*. Tragedy of William Shakespeare. from English. Translated by Ilia Chavchavadze and Ivane Machabli. Tbilisi. Ekvtime Kheladze printing house. 1877". The final editing of the translation was also undertaken by Chavchavadze. In 1878 the Almanac magazine published G. Tumanishvili's critical review, calling on the translators of *King Lear* to convey its social themes accurately and emphatically. Tumanishvili approved of Shakespeare's translation directly from English, admitting however, that with no command of English, he compared the Georgian translation to the Russian version to determine its accuracy (Burjanadze 1992, p. 279).

As Kiasashvili observes (1972, pp. 229-230), in 1879, Chavchavadze invited Kipiani, among other members of the intelligentsia, to play the role of *King Lear*. Before consenting, Kipiani read six different editions of *King Lear* in various languages and then asked Chavchavadze to allow him to re-translate *King Lear*'s speech acts. After a disagreement, Chavchavadze selected Kipiani's son to play the role. In the 1886 newspaper "Iveria" reported that Machabeli started translating *Othello*. Machabeli continued the language modernization initiated by Chavchavadze. His translations of Shakespeare had the greatest impact on overcoming archaic language, successfully merging the literary and vernacular languages (Burjanadze 1992, p. 272).

Soon after the enforced Sovietization, Georgian theatres staged *Hamlet* (1925), followed by *Othello* in 1938, shortly after the Great Purges of 1937. From the 1960s, Georgian theatres continued to use Shakespearean productions as a response to political atrocities. *Julius Caesar*, *Richard III*, *King Lear*, and *Othello* were directed with anti-regime interpretations (Bokuchava, 2018, p. 6). The cultural and political reinterpretations of Shakespeare's heritage prompted social reactions, provoking the audience into discussions of the localized political narratives of the dramas. Ultimately, Shakespeare's plays have played a significant role in national self-determination and fostering a progressive vision.

Georgia in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*

In 1872, Kipiani translated *Merchant of Venice* and published it in the journal “Mnatobi” (№3, pp. 1-54, № 4 pp. 1-64). The journal notified the reader, that Kipiani translated the play from the English original, which was edited by Routledge and published by H. Stanton in London in 1857. In 1873 *Merchant of Venice* premiered not in Tbilisi, or Kutaisi, but in the village of Bandza in Samegrelo, Western Georgia. To quote Orlovskaya (2013: 184), “Droeba” newspaper №16 of 1873 published a brief review of Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice* translated by Kipiani. Despite it being staged in the village, Shakespeare's play attracted public attention. Another announcement about the performance of *The Merchant of Venice* appeared in the journal “Kolkhetis Ciskari” with the indication of the exact date: 16 April, 1873 (Kiasashvili, 1972, p. 282). Formally, it is considered to be the first Shakespeare's performance. In 1878 *The Merchant of Venice* was staged in Tbilisi. As Jologua (2007:391) quotes E. Gabashvili's “Memoirs for the Anniversary of Kote Kipiani”, Kipiani's house was filled with young Georgians, where the host himself conducted casting and performed the functions of a producer. We believe that the interest towards *The Merchant of Venice* was high since Shakespeare (2010, p. 19) mentions ancient Georgia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ACT 1. SC. 2. The dialogue between Bassanio and Antonio, brings up a comparison between Belmont and Colchis: in Colchis, Jason went in search of the golden fleece, and in Belmont, they went in search of Portia's heart:

Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.

The analysis of Kipiani and Chelidze's translations evidence that they omit this particular poetic imagery comparing Portia's hair to the golden fleece, losing the romantic mood:

Back translation from Kipiani translation (1872, p. 10)	Back translation from Chelidze's translation (1951. p. 160)
<p>And Belmont is now turned into Colchis, Where many Jasons come to earn the gold-weaving ram. Oh, Antonio! If I only had enough power to rival them! But something makes me feel that I will definitely win.</p>	<p>This makes Belmont look like Colchis, And many Jasons have tried their luck there, and won. Oh, Antonio, I was given the opportunity to appear there as a rival! I have a feeling that I will win.</p>

Shakespeare in Georgian prose and poetry

Shakespearean motifs continuously appear in Georgian literature. Georgian writers referred to Shakespeare to describe political turmoil or to reflect on the Tsarist and Soviet regimes. Their use of Shakespearean references often served as a subterfuge to mask their anti-colonial sentiments and evade censorship. In 1915 young Galaktion Tabidze refers to the *King Lear* in his poem *Mary*, which relates to the European Renaissance, Romanticism, and Symbolism at the time. Integrating supra-logical and symbolic dimensions, Tabidze applies various stylistic devices, elements of mystification and symbolism, to form his poetic visualizations:

XII stanza

ქარი და წვიმის წვეთები ხშირი
წყდებოდნენ, როგორც მწყდებოდა გული,
და... მე ავტირდი, ვით მეფე ღირი,
ღირი, ყველასგან მიტოვებული.
The wind and rain's outpouring drench,
Stormed and stopped, as my heartbeats ceased,
And I could not help but weep,
As poor Lear, the abandoned king (translated by K. Beridze)

During the purges of 1937, Simon Chikovani's poem *By the Sea* written that same year, incorporated the theme of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a symbol to reflect the reality of his homeland. Chikovani's plot intertwines three spaces and realities: the mythical Colchis, the Shakespearean literary space, and the contemporary space of the poet. This threefold world translates into implicatures and puzzles rather than a uniform image or composition. The poem's three-dimensional space shifts from Colchis to the Prince of Denmark; however, Chikovani avoids mentioning the name 'Hamlet', referring only to the author in the opening line (Chikovani, 1950, p. 468):

Georgian text, stanza 1

მე შექსპირივით მივენდობი მხოლოდ მონოლოგს,
ავიღებ ხელში კოლხიდაში ნაპოვნ ნიჟარას,
ვიტყვი მილოცე, მეოცნებე გევხარ მოლოზონს,
შენმა ღუღუნმა ნაფიქრალი ზღვასთან მიჯარა.

Literal translation:

I trust only the monologue like Shakespeare,
I will take the seashell found in Colchis,
I say pray for me, as you seem to be a dreaming nun,
Your chanting leaned against the thoughtful sea. (translated by K. Beridze)

While abstracting Hamlet himself, Chikovani generalizes his character, turning the tragedy into a universal one, comparable to the tragedy of the Kingdom of Georgia, its history and the evolving future. Thus, the perception of the tragic experience flows from the local to the global, from the imaginary to the real, and from the isolated to the international. In his poetic vision, Chikovani refers to Shakespeare to legitimize the literary-imaginative drama as a universal tragedy and then to extrapolate it to Georgian reality. He therefore corroborates Shakespeare's authorship to transcend the time-space limits and transform two dramatic episodes of encroachment on the kingdom into one whole. Chikovani interconnects the

Shakespearean and Georgian threads in each line, from stanza to stanza. His seashell “narrates” the story of the skull of Yorick, and at the same time, it interconnects the fate of the Prince of Denmark and his kingdom to Georgia. The takeover of power by a neighbouring country alludes to the demise of the Georgian kingdom, and its annexation and incorporation by the Tsarist Empire between 1801 and 1811. This “narrative”, as an Ariadne thread to the actual meaning, is the author’s manoeuvre to veil his message from the Soviet censors through the versified doublespeak. He simultaneously disguises and exposes the significance of the misfortune of the two kingdoms. The noise of the sea in the shell brings the echoes of the voices, and the noise of life and people embedded in the Yorik’s skull, a symbol of the drama, as a continuum in the new, non-literary Georgian reality, in-between the ruins of the kingdom and the hegemony of the foreign regime. The Shakespearean allusion combines two inter-reflexing symbols: the skull and the shell. The two concepts merge and form two chronotopes. The dialecticism of the real and unreal kingdoms, sharing the same destiny confronts the multimodality of evil.

N. Dumbadze’s novel *The Law of Eternity* (1982), depicts the harsh truth about the totalitarian era, which had already penetrated consciousness and art. His critical description of the daily life in Tbilisi represents the Soviet interpretation of *Othello* in the amateurish theatre. Othello copies Hamlet’s controversial phrase from Act 1, Scene 2, which continues with a political irony, where Cassio suddenly “becomes” a politically engaged opponent of the Soviet dictatorship: Othello: ‘Frailty, thy name is woman! Desdemona, you prefer that Trotskyist Cassio to me?’ (Dumbadze, 2021, p. 336). Referring to Shakespeare, and relating it to L. Trotsky, Dumbadze pointed out the absurdity of the totalitarian ideology that dictated ridiculous, irrelevant and malicious norms to the art and culture. Shakespeare’s heroes in Dumbadze’s novel evoke the elevated spirit of classical literature, juxtaposing it with social realism, where, instead of the multiple associations, the state-controlled unions of writers, artists, musicians and the like, made them feel more and more dependent to the state officers through state commissioning, competitions, exhibitions and prizes resulting in art that lacked artistic merit.

Retranslations of Shakespeare in Georgia

Around 1964 and 1965, when Rustaveli Theatre decided to stage *King Lear*, the language of Machabeli’s translations was considered archaic for the audience, and the producers invited V. Chelidze as an editor. As Chelidze (1966, p. 265) notes, he was assigned to edit *King Lear* translated by Chavchavadze and Machabeli. Editing the archaic language and transforming it into his contemporary register turned out to be hard enough, Chelidze opted to re-translate the drama 100 years later. As he notes, he had two goals: to modernize the language and to keep up with the conceptual accuracy of the translation.

Gachechiladze (1965, p. 123), who laid the foundations for the theoretical principles of the realistic method of literary translation, published an article in the International Journal “Babel”, comparing Machabeli’s translations to the works of art. We consider that the article appeared as a reaction to those, Chelidze included, who advocated for a new translation of Shakespeare in the post-Machabeli era:

The language of the Machabeli translation sounds almost as obsolete as that of

the Gospels. Some even go the length of calling for a new translation of Shakespeare. But that would be as pointless as attempting a new translations of Gospels into modern Georgian, and this for two reasons, firstly, because old Georgian translations, like other productions of art, have come to occupy a place of their own in Georgian literary history and they bear the hallmark of the uniquely individual style of the translators. To be sure, any piece of literature may be translated anew, yet no one can disregard the priority of the earlier translations and none but grudging cavillers would relegate to oblivion the work of the trailblazers in the field, whose faults as well as merits serve as guiding landmarks to new translators.

Chelidze (1966, p. 264) notes that Shakespeare's jubilee days were celebrated in Georgia even under the communist regime. For example, his translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was staged at the Rustaveli Theatre specifically for the anniversary. In the same year, it was published in the journal *Soviet Art*. To draw a parallel with the perception and interpretations of Shakespeare in the socialist camp countries, in 1965, a politically sensitive time, as the brief thaw following Stalin's death had ended, the "plebeian" *Hamlet* marked a radical departure from the traditional romantic portrayals of the Danish prince on the Bulgarian stage (Shurbanov and Sokolova, 2012, p. 94). Kolomiyets points out that "literary translation served both as a powerful guardian instrument aimed at the protection of the Ukrainian language from Russification and degradation, as well as a gateway for the Ukrainian people to European cultural and civilizational values" (2020, p. 56). Torkut writes that Ukrainian film director and author of the book "William Shakespeare, Our Contemporary" Kozintsev "considered his *Hamlet* to be a direct response to contemporary Soviet reality" (2020, p. 128). In 1992, the director M. Tumanishvili conceived *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a therapeutic act for an audience who were depressed by the civil war in Georgia. The performance symbolized the era of liberation from Soviet rule (Bokuchava, 2018, p. 12). Simultaneously, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was staged during a difficult historical period for the country, drawing parallels to political conflicts. Since the 2000s, Shakespeare's theatrical performances have been reviving public values, a sense of justice, and civic consciousness. Despite the centuries-old distance, Shakespeare has always remained a modern author in Georgia, retaining the power to provide insights into contemporary reality.

King Lear in Recent Georgian Translations

When Chelidze decided to create his own version 100 years later since the first classical translation emerged, he had two goals: to modernize the language and to achieve conceptual accuracy of the translation. (1966, p. 265). He aimed to correct the conceptual accuracy of the translation, and he probably had in mind the errors that we observed when we compared his translations with the original and the first Georgian translations. For instance, the remark "This is nothing, fool" is made by the Duke of Kent in response to Fool (Shakespeare, 1997, p. 35). In Chavchavadze and Machabeli's translation a quid pro quo occurs as the remark is made by King Lear instead of the Duke of Kent: 'ლორი - მაგ მათრეში აზრი არ არის' (Chavchavadze and Machabeli, 1874, p. 58). Back translation: 'King Lear - There is no sense in this improvised verse'. This 'swap' of characters is amended by Chelidze.

In the next passage, Chavchavadze and Machabeli interpret the phrase “All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with” as though King Lear gave away all the titles he was born with. Chelidze’s interpretation suggests Fool pointing out that since King Lear has given away all his titles and possessions, the only thing he has left is his inherent foolishness:

Shakespeare:

KING LEAR: Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool: All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with (Shakespeare, 1997, p. 37).

Translation by Chavchavadz and Machabeli (1874, p. 60):

ლირი - მასხარასაც მეძახი, შე ურცხო?

ხუმარა - მაგ სახელის გარდა, რაც დედის მუცლიდან სახელი და ხარისხი დაგეცა, სულ სხვას გაუბოძე და მა რაღა დაგიძახო?

Back translation:

King Lear: Do you call me a clown, you shameless one?

Fool: Apart from the titles and honorifics that were yours from your mother’s womb, you gave away everything to others. What else should I call you?

Chelidze’s (1966, p. 36) interpretation of the Fool’s reply follows the original, but also reveals the influence of the first translation: “სხვა სახელი და ხარისხი, რაც კი რამ გეზადა, სულ გააჩუქე, ეს კი დედის მუცლიდან დაგეცა”, which back translates as: ‘Any other titles and honorifics, whatever it was, you gave away as a gift, and this is what was yours from your mother’s womb’.

Shakespeare depicts the Fool as both smart and sarcastic, he subtly criticizes King Lear for the actions that he perceives as foolish and self-defeating. Fool’s metaphorical expression: “thou borest thy ass on thy back o’er the dirt” means that by giving away valuable possessions without careful consideration, King Lear ended up in a worse position (‘carrying the donkey on his back through the mud’):

Fool: Why, after I have cut the egg i’ the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i’ the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thy ass on thy back o’er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so. (Shakespeare, 1997, p. 38)

Both Chavchavadze and Machabeli’s, and Chelidze’s translations retain the metaphor, as well as the semantic and pragmatic meaning of the original. However, Chelidze’s translation (1966, p. 37): “მაშინ ვირი მოიკიდე ზურგზე და ლაფში გაიყვანე” (back-translated as: ‘then put the donkey on the back and pull it into the dirt’) is in Standard Georgian and thus free from the dialectal form that is used in the translation by Chavchavadze and Machabeli (1874, p. 61): “მეფეს ვირი ზურგზედ აკიდეს და ტალახში გაგაყვანეს” (back translation: “They hung you on the king the donkey and made you crawl in the mud”; “გაგაყვანეს” is a stratified verb form in the passive voice, used mainly in Kartli, part of Georgia where Machabeli came from, and Kakheti, Chavchavadze’s native region. Observably, theory and practice of Shakespearean translation in Georgia tend to favour translations into modern language while incorporating subtle archaisms.

Shakespeare’s translations reflect the variation of terms denoting aristocratic titles in the Georgian language from the 19th century to the present day. The translation of the titles and

forms of address is related to the problem of finding cultural equivalents. There are three dukes present in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Duke of Burgundy, Duke of Cornwall, and Duke of Albany. Since the British title 'duke' has no fully equivalent correspondence in Georgian, Chavchavadze and Machabeli replaced it with the functional equivalent "მთავარი" ["mt'avari"] which was also adopted later by Chelidze. His translational decision retains the archaic form which became obsolete ever since the demise of serfhood in Georgia. In Gemazashvili's translation of *King Lear* of 2012 "mt'avari" is shifted with the form "ჰერცოგი" ["hercogi"], a term adopted from Russian. From the terminological point of view, the translation of the "duke" as "mt'avari" by Chelidze in 1994-1995 indicates that the term might not be in common use in the Georgian of that period. Contemporary Georgian uses "hercogi" and "hercoginia" for "Duke" and "Duchess", which are used in Gemazashvili's translation. However, these terms are controversial from linguistic and cultural points of view.⁴ The terms in Russian were derived from the German title 'Herzog' and its feminine counterpart 'Herzogin'. However, the German feminine form "Herzogin" was added to the Russian marker of gender "-иня" to it. Hence, borrowing the title "hercoginia" with the double German-Russian suffixation is not linguistically reasonable. From the cultural and semantic points of view, "Herzog" cannot be considered an equivalent term to the British 'Duke' in modern Georgian. Moreover, we find the term "duke" in Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's (1658- 1725) fable "A Duke and a Noble", which proves the existence of this form of title in the Georgian language. Presumably, Shakespeare's translations into Georgian, performed over the past three centuries, are a rich source of diachronic observations on the language.

Georgian Scholarship about Shakespeare

One of the most outstanding researchers of Shakespeare, N. Kiasashvili, Georgian scholar and talented translator of Joyce's *Ulysses*, was an honorary member of the International Shakespeare Association since 1971, and Head of the 20th c. Western Literature Research Centre at Tbilisi State University. In 1968 he authored the monograph *In the World of Shakespeare*, relying on Ed. Chambers' *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (1930) and other classic works. Kiasashvili's retrospective monograph takes the reader to travel in the Shakespeare's times. Quoting John Dover Wilson, author of *Life in Shakespeare's England*, Kiasashvili (1968, pp. 22-23) describes the fascination of non-British visitors with the theatres of the 16th c. London. Tragedies and comedies were performed every day at the Theatre, Rose, Swan, Hope, and Fortune theatres. The life and career of the young playwright William Shakespeare, who had gained fame with his poetry and became associated with the Globe Theatre (Kiasashvili, 1968, p. 33). An interesting parallel can be drawn between the perspectives of *Othello's* perception of Soviet Georgia and the modern-day postcolonial outlook. N. Kiasashvili (1968, p. 94-97) delved into

⁴ Etymologically, the title 'Duke' was established in Byzantine under the influence of the Latin 'dux'. In Byzantium, 'great duke' referred to the 'commander of the naval forces'. The feminine form 'Duchess' became established in late Middle English (c. 1150-1450) around 100 BC from French, which in turn borrowed from medieval Latin. In German, the term 'Herzog' appears much later, originating from Middle High South German (1200-1500) and referring to a military commander, without the implication of 'commander of the naval forces'.

Othello's personal virtues, describing him as a respected great commander, a heroic defender of Venice, who was well aware of his own value in society. However, he also knew that he received nothing but thanks and great honour from the Signoria and citizens of Venice. Othello does not perceive the essence of public evil with the Hamletian clarity, and does not notice the specific individuals who carry this evil in the form of Iagos, who feel hatred towards him. Being a royal descendant, Othello generously forgives people who consider him kinless. Comparably, to quote A. Loomba, Shakespeare's *Othello* "is not just about race in general but about a black man isolated from other black people. His loneliness is an integral feature of the play's racial politics. Shakespeare's Othello is about the African in Europe and not the African in Africa" (2013, p. 148). In a similar vein, Shakespeare has become a prominent figure in Georgia and has been utilized to scrutinise racial and socio-political challenges the country faces.

The reason why the literary legacy of William Shakespeare has solidified his position as a revered figure in the world of literature is because his works have transcended time and culture, resonating with audiences across the globe, especially through translations through which audiences from various countries have been reached by breaking through language barriers and cultural differences. The reason why Shakespeare holds special significance in Georgia is through social resistance, liberation movements, and artistic revivals. The translation of Shakespeare's works into the Georgian language has played a crucial role in shaping the country's cultural landscape. By making Shakespeare's works accessible and relatable to Georgian audiences, translators have brought the timeless themes of love, power, and betrayal closer to the hearts of local readers and theatregoers.

Conclusion

Shakespeare's translations brought about changes and enrichment to the Georgian language. By blending literary and vernacular elements and departing from the scholastic style of old Georgians, the Shakespearean translations proved to be successful, in the realm of the overall development of the language. This was particularly significant during a time when the Russian Empire attempted to suppress the Georgian language in schools as part of their assimilation efforts. Simultaneously, as Georgian culture was gradually breaking free from the influences of the Russian Empire, the translation of Shakespeare's dramas played a pivotal role in restoring Georgian culture to its inherent Western orientation.

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Appendix

The overview of the rest of Georgian scholarship on Shakespeare and his translations gives a rich bibliography, several of which are G. Gachechiladze's volumes *From Shakespeare to Galsworthy* (1967) and *William Shakespeare: Volume of Literary Works* (1964). As a literary translator, he translated Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. V. Chelidze (1968, 1987) and P. Chkheidze (1985, 2003, 2005, 2014) dedicated research to the life and translational methods of I. Machabeli.

The bibliography of Shakespeare's Georgian translations includes:

- Romeo and Juliet* by D. Kipiani (1841), V. Chelidze (1945, 1951, 1964)
- The Merchant of Venice* by D. Kipiani (1872), V. Chelidze (1951, 1964)
- The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, by D. Kipiani (1967), G. Gachechiladze (1955-1964)
- Hamlet* by I. Machabeli (1886), Zurgan Gemazashvili (2002, Tbilisi), Manana Antadze (Commissioned by R. Sturua in 2015)
- Othello* by I. Machabeli (1888), Zurgan Gemazashvili (2002)
- Macbeth* by I. Machabeli (1892), Zurgan Gemazashvili (2005), Manana Antadze (1918)
- Richard III by I. Machabeli (1893); *Julius Caesar* by I. Machabeli (1896), Manana Antadze (Commissioned by R. Sturua in 2015, published in 1918)
- Antony and Cleopatra* by I. Machabeli (1928); *Coriolanus*, I. Machabeli (1898)
- King Lear* by I. Chavchavadze and I. Machabeli (1873), V. Chelidze (1966), Zurgan Gemazashvili (2012, Tbilisi), Manana Antadze (1918), *King Henry V* by G. Gachechiladze (1955-1964)
- Henry VI* by G. Jabashvili (1964)
- King John* by G. Gachechiladze (1955-1964)
- The Winter's Tale* by Z. Gamsakhurdia (1965)
- Pericles, King of Tyre* by T. Eristavi (1966)
- As You Like It* by M. Karchava & N. Sakvarelidze (1966)
- Titus Andronicus* by Medea Zaalishvili (1983) *Venus and Adonis* by Medea Zaalishvili (2014)
- Sonnets* by G. Gachechiladze (1956), R. Tabukashvili (1968), Al. Elerdashvili (2014)