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# STATE CULTURAL POLICIES IN GEORGIA'S SMALL BOOK MARKET. CASE OF THE TRANSLATION GRANT PROGRAM "GEORGIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION" (2010-2018)

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**Abstract.** *This paper analyses translation support in the Georgian literary field by studying the case of the translation grant program "Georgian Literature in Translation" (2010-2018). Accordingly, it offers a quantitative and qualitative study of the selection of translation projects that have received grants from the Georgian National Book Center as of 2010, when the translation policy program was first launched. This study will consider a) which authors are being promoted by the state and which titles are being translated; b) which publishing houses have benefited the most from these subsidies; and c) which target languages are used in said projects, relying on the frameworks of the sociology of translation (Heilbron and Sapiro). The hypotheses of this paper are 1) that there is a strong impact of the Frankfurt Book Fair and an increase of state-supported translations; 2) a great role of German as a target language in these projects; and 3) relatively active translation flows in the region where Georgia is located. Fieldwork from the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair will serve as a complementary source, as well as the interviews that I have conducted with agents of the Georgian literary field.*

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**Keywords:** *Georgian literature, literary field, translation support policies, Frankfurt Book Fair, literary circulation, small book markets.*

**Valstybinė kultūros politika Gruzijos mažų knygų rinkoje.  
Vertimo dotacijų programos „Gruzinių literatūros vertimai“ atvejis  
(2010–2018)**

**Santrauka.** *Straipsnyje analizuojama vertimams teikiama parama Gruzijos literatūriniam lauke tiriant 2010–2018 m. dotacijų programą „Gruzijos literatūros vertimai“. Pateikiamas kiekybinis ir kokybinis atrinktų vertimo projektų, inicijuotų su Gruzijos nacionalinio knygų centro parama pradedant nuo 2010 m., tyrimas. Straipsnyje orientuojamasi į kelis aspektus: a) kuriuos autorius remia valstybė ir kokie kūriniai verčiami; b) kurios leidyklos gavo daugiausia naudos iš aptariamų subsidijų; c) remiantis vertimo sociologija (Heilbron, Sapiro), į kokias kalbas nukreipti projektiniai vertimai. Straipsnio hipotezės: 1) esama stipraus Frankfurto knygų mugės poveikio ir padidėjusio valstybės remiamų vertimų skaičiaus; 2) projektuose didelį vaidmenį atlieka vokiečių kalba; 3) Gruzija patenka į regioną, kur vykdoma daug vertimų. Tyrimas papildomas stebėjimo duomenimis, surinktais 2018 m. Frankfurto knygų mugėje, ir pokalbiais su agentais, dirbančiais Gruzijos literatūriniam lauke.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *gruzinių literatūra, literatūros laukas, vertimų skatinimo politika, Frankfurto knygų mugė, literatūrinė sklaida, mažosios knygų rinkos.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to analyse the small book market in the Georgian literary field through the lens of the Translation Grant Program “Georgian Literature in Translation,” from 2010 to 2018.<sup>1</sup> Through this case study, which has not been the object of scholarly attention so far, I will analyse state cultural policies as strategies that may play a counterbalancing role for small literatures in the global literary market by supporting literary translation into foreign languages. The study covers the period from 2010, when the translation support program first launched, to 2018, the year when Georgian literature was Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, and one year before the Georgian National

1 This analysis is part of an ongoing thesis project, *The Circulation of Georgian Literature: Between the Local and the Global (1995–2020)*, at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC), supervised by Diana Roig-Sanz (UOC) and Harsha Ram (University of California in Berkeley).

Book Center (GNBC), the institution in charge of the program, was closed and substituted. Thus, I will show some preliminary results of my analysis of a dataset of titles with translation grants that the Georgian National Book Center developed during its years of operation. The dataset of grant-recipient translations includes some data for 2019, as well. However, the title of this article solely includes the period from 2010 to 2018 given that 2019 only registered four entries. Since the dataset is not up to date, we cannot consider these very few entries as representative of the whole 2019 period.

The main hypotheses of this paper are that 1) the Frankfurt Book Fair has had a huge impact and thus yielded an increase in the number of translated books from Georgian literature since the announcement, in 2013, of Georgia's Guest of Honour Status (the Georgian National Book Center began to focus in this regard in 2015<sup>2</sup>; hence, there is an increase between 2013 and 2015, but especially around 2018); 2) translations to the German have an especially active role; and 3) there are significant translation flows in the region where Georgia is located, concretely the Caucasian – Black Sea region.

The size of a literary market can be determined by considering several factors. Indeed, one of these factors is country population, as mentioned by the editors of this special issue. The Georgian book market fits the small-market definition (less than 10 million inhabitants), since it currently houses a population of 3.7 million<sup>3</sup>. More precisely, however, the number of speakers of a given language may determine the size of its book market. In terms of potential reader of Georgian, there is no definitive data regarding language speakers, but some data (from non-official sources) that we can find on the Internet account for 4 million speakers in 2017 (who speak Georgian as a first or second language). From a different point of view, quantitative data on the publishing field of a country or language community (number and size of publishing houses, published titles, print runs, etc.) can also hint at the size of a book market. In a small country like Georgia, the numbers are usually low, and profits from this business are rare, with just a few exceptions (9% of large companies dominate 80% of the market).<sup>4</sup>

- 2 Interview with Maia Danelia, former deputy director of the Georgian National Book Center, conducted May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- 3 National Statistics Office of Georgia. [Accessed 13 January 2020] Accessible through Internet <<https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/316/population-and-demography>>
- 4 For precise data on the publishing field see METREVELI, Medea (Dir.); LURSMANASHVILI, Natia (Ed.) (n.d.) *Georgian Book Market Research 2013-2015*. Prepared by the ACT (Analysis and Consulting Team). Tbilisi: Georgian National Book Center.

However, in the globalisation context, we cannot limit our considerations on the size of a literary market to its number of speakers. Today, the book market is engulfed in a global phenomenon, and we need to consider how the local, the global, and the regional interact through transnational networks thanks to translation processes, which are asymmetrical.<sup>5</sup> Small literatures export literary titles less frequently than their larger counterparts.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the highly specific dynamics of the region where Georgia is located need to be taken into account: Georgia is surrounded by other countries with small literary markets. Thus, we must reflect upon the relationships within the region, not only in comparison to large or more hegemonic markets, but in terms of the region's own circulation flows and shared processes. These considerations may also help decenter the notion of the global by drawing attention to the regional.

The difficulties that small book markets experience due to major financial pressures<sup>7</sup> and the lower status of certain languages in the global context, bring the institutions of their literary markets to engage in counter-strategies and to struggle against non-translation.<sup>8</sup> Translation support policies have become common practice among *peripheral* and *semi-peripheral literatures*,<sup>9</sup> especially over the last three decades.<sup>10</sup> Ondřej Vimr, who studies the case of Czech and Scandinavian literatures, has shown the significance of translations for cultural diplomacy and for the projection of countries' international images since the interwar period, becoming an even more active and refined tool to overcome asymmetries in international relations today.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Jack McMartin and

5 HEILBRON, Johan. "Towards a Sociology of Translation. Book Translation as a Cultural World-System". *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2(4), 1999, p. 429–444.

6 The place of smaller and less powerful literatures has been theorized from different perspectives: from the notion of *minor literatures* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1985) and the *core-periphery* model (Wallerstein, 1974, 1980, 1989, 2004; Heilbron and Sapiro, 2007), as well as the term *less translated languages* (Branchadell and West, 2005). I will address this issue in my upcoming work.

7 KOVAČ, Miha. "Small is beautiful: the role of book Industries in small European countries". *Knygotyra*, 54, 2010, p. 279–290.

8 VIMR, Ondřej. "Supply-driven translation: compensating for lack of demand". Rajendra Chitnis (ed.): *Translating the Literatures of Small European Nations*, Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2019, p. 47–67.

9 HEILBRON, Johan. "Towards a Sociology of Translation. Book Translation as a Cultural World-System". *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2(4), 1999, p. 429–444.

10 VIMR, Ondřej. "Supply-driven translation: compensating for lack of demand". 2019.

11 Ibid.

Daniela Szpilbarg have shown the positive impact of these strategies for Dutch<sup>12</sup> and Argentine<sup>13</sup> literatures.

Georgian translation policies also developed as a response to global circumstances. The role of subsidies for translation and the Guest of Honour Status at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2018 were strongly interrelated and have played a pivotal role in the increase of Georgian literary exports. Accordingly, over the last few years, Georgian literature has gained notable visibilization for a literature of its size.

In Georgia, cultural policy did not take root until 2013, when the concept of cultural policy developed with a special commission created to this end, along with a cultural strategy (which, in turn, was not approved until 2014, and came into effect in 2016).<sup>14</sup> Although the literary and publishing field has taken great strides since the 1990s, financial support and political cultural strategies were lacking before 2013,<sup>15</sup> meaning that improvements in the public sphere have been far more delayed. However, translation support in Georgia took root in 2010, with a Translation Program under Medea Metreveli for the promotion of Georgian literature abroad that opened within the Ministry of Culture. Four years later, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia founded the Georgian National Book Center and appointed Metreveli as the director of this institution, which remained open for five years. In 2019, the State first announced that this institution would be replaced for the National Foundation

- 12 MCMARTIN, Jack. *Book to book: Flanders in the Transnational Literary Field*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation] KU Leuven, 2019.
- 13 SZPILBARG, Daniela. "Las políticas de traducción de libros. El caso del Programa Sur en la Argentina". In Casanovas, I., Gómez, M. G. y Rico, E. J. (eds.), *Actas de las III Jornadas de Investigación en Edición, Cultura y Comunicación*. Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2015.
- 14 For more precise information see GUNIA-KUZNETSOVA, Nino. "Country Profile: Georgia". *Compendium: cultural policies and trends. Association of the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends*, 19th edition, 2018 [Accessed 13 January 2020] Access through Internet <<http://www.culturalpolicies.net>>.
- 15 PIRALISHVILI, Zaza et al. *Qartuli kulturis dghevandeli mdgomareoba da misi ganvitarebis koncepcia*. [Current situation of Georgian culture and the conception of its development] [Accessed 13 January 2020] Access through Internet <<http://cultureandsports.gov.ge/getfile/4ab061bf-c9df-4601-bb69-b0f9a30e305e/>.aspx>. Zaza Piralishvili is a Georgian philosopher and former politician of the Free Democrats Party. The context of the text is not clear, but it seems to have inspired the later cultural policy and strategic plan. In 2012, the government of Mikheil Saakashvili ended, and the Georgian Dream coalition won the election. Zaza Piralishvili was a member of the Free Democrats, included in this coalition. There are not many other documents focused on cultural policy issues prior to 2013.

for Georgian Literature, with the scholar and literary critic Irma Ratiani as its director.<sup>16</sup> However, the Writers' House of Georgia is the institution to which the Translation Support Program was finally delegated. The Georgian National Book Center supported both the translation of Georgian literature abroad and the translation of foreign literature by Georgian publishers. Only one of the datasets with the list of granted projects was available on its website, the one for foreign publishers, and only from 2010 to mid-2017.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. PROGRAM ANALYSIS FOR “GEORGIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION” (2010-2018)

2.1. SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY. In this section, I will focus on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the dataset for all translation projects with grants from the Georgian National Book Center since 2010, presenting a few of my preliminary results. This dataset was built by the Georgian National Book Center over its years of operation (2014-2019), and I completed it according to the needs of this analysis. My aim is to visualize trends in the selection of works with translation support and to provide answers to certain questions, such as which source and target publishing houses benefited from these translation grants most often, which target languages were more active in the process, whether these languages are *central* or *peripheral* in the world-system of translation and if some of them have a special role in triggering new translations. It must be noted that even though this dataset is exhaustive enough regarding the entries, it is still inaccurate and heterogeneous. Moreover, the information for each translation project is quite limited (e.g., highly relevant information like genre, source publishing house, and source publishing date were not included in the original version of the dataset), requiring significant efforts to identify certain relevant details (e.g., the original publishing house or date and the original title—an essential piece when it comes to determining whether different translations have the same source title). For this reason, I made some corrections and attempted to complete the information as much as possible in order to yield some preliminary results and working hypotheses.

With this source, we are solely dealing with grant-recipient projects, and not with all translated books. However, when it comes to small or less translated

16 Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia [online announcement (20/06/2019)]. Accessible through Internet <<https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=9193&clang=eng>> [Accessed on 14 January 2020].

17 For the more recent period, I asked the Georgian National Book Center to send it to me.

literatures, a significant chunk of the translations depends on state grants and support policies. Therefore, we can take this dataset of grant-recipient projects as a representative of what is being translated. While it would be interesting to determine which portion of translated books receive grants and what the relationships and differences between translations in general and granted translations might be, there is no reliable and exhaustive source compiling data on all translations yet.<sup>18</sup>

Due to the shortage in data and because of my specific research interests, I added several fields to the dataset. On the one hand, I used the following categories from the original dataset: author's name and last name (though I unified them, as they were separate in the original); title (generally in English, as originally entered by the Georgian National Book Center, although the language is not unified and, in some cases, titles are listed in German, but never in any other language), target country, target language, translation publication date, target publishing house, and translator. The categories I added for this analysis are as follows: author's gender, genre, source publishing house, source publishing date, and classification according to Heilbron's<sup>19</sup> *world-system of translation*.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, I use some data from the interviews that I carried out with Georgian publishers between October 2018 and May 2019 as complementary sources.

2.2. TRENDS IN STATE-SUPPORTED TRANSLATION IN GEORGIA SINCE 2010. From 2010 to 2019, a total of 301 publications in foreign countries received grants from the Georgian State. Among these projects, only fifty-four were carried out before 2015: indeed, the Georgian National Book Center saw a spike in its work following the announcement of its Guest of Honour Status for the Frankfurt Book Fair 2018. Since then, 246 translations received grants, according to the data. Among them, 142 were translations into German. Notably, the most recent three-year period saw a clear surge in translation grants: between 2017 and the beginning of 2019, the Georgian National Book Center issued more grants for projects (165) than in the entire previous six-year period (2010-2016) (136). However, we should keep in mind that 2019

18 It is well known that *Index Translationum* is not exhaustive enough, especially for the recent period. There is an online catalogue called *Georgian Titles in Translation* on the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, which is a good project, but is neither exhaustive, nor up to date, nor normalized (the authors and titles are written in the target language). Moreover, the available filters are limited. I will use this source in my upcoming work.

19 HEILBRON, Johan. "Towards a Sociology of Translation. Book Translation as a Cultural World-System".

20 In addition, some other fields were added, but I have not used them for this analysis, and they will be used in my upcoming work.

only registered four entries: clearly, the most recent figures have not been updated, meaning that real figures are likely higher.

Regarding the translation process, although Georgian cultural institutions claim that almost no indirect translation is involved in the export of Georgian literature, there is no concrete information on the matter, and I received no response when I prodded the Georgian National Book Center in this regard. However, the application form includes a question on whether the translation will involve direct or indirect translation, and justifications are required when choosing indirect translation.

Translations from Georgian literature appear to be increasing notably. If we look at grant-recipient translations and their evolution, we may gauge overall perceptions of translations. The increase in state-supported translations is clear (Figure 1), climbing steadily from 2010 to 2015 (tripling from 2012 to 2013), then decreasing slightly in 2016 compared to the previous year, only to recover to 2015 levels in 2017. Translations peaked in 2018, when Georgian literature was the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Because of this milestone, ninety translation projects to the German language received grants. We cannot yet speak to trends following 2018, given our insufficient data on 2019. The budget increased for the application period following the book fair, prioritizing projects in Germany in response to the valuable opportunity that Georgian literature and institutions enjoyed given Georgia’s Guest of Honour status in Germany.<sup>21</sup>

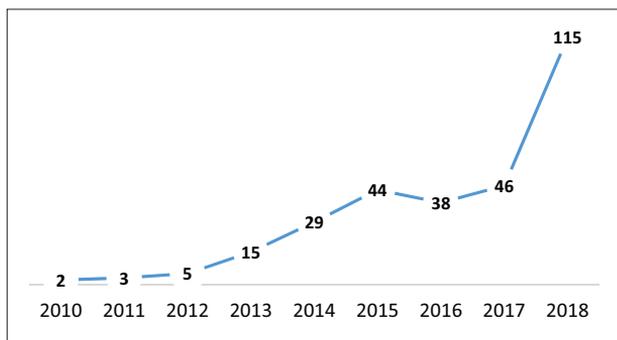


FIGURE 1. State-supported translation projects from the Georgian into foreign languages (number of projects per year)

As in the rest of the globe, prose is Georgian literature’s dominant genre, and the novel specifically receives most translation grants (121), which may

21 Interview with Maia Danelia conducted May 28th, 2019.

also imply that foreign publishers apply for translation grants for novels to the Georgian National Book Center more frequently than for other genres. Within prose, stories and short stories are the second-most popular publications (36). Poetry is the second most popular genre (37) but is much less present than prose. Meanwhile, drama is very underrepresented in the selection (only 3 projects), though it may circulate through other channels (i.e. theatres abroad).

#### 2.2.1. SOURCE AND TARGET PUBLISHING HOUSES.

Regarding source-title publishers, about twenty-three publishing houses held the rights to the titles that received translation grants. Among them, the publishing house holding the rights to the most grant-recipient titles was Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House. The Georgian National Book Center has supported seventy translation projects for thirty-five different titles from this publishing house. The current director of this publishing house, Tina Mamulashvili, was among the most active Georgian publishers in Frankfurt Book Fair's events and speeches. She also appeared in periodical publications.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, she was among Georgia's initial promoters for Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair.<sup>23</sup>

Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House was established as such in 1999, even though it had already published several books in 1998. The editor, Bakur Sulakauri, left the publishing house Diogene, which he had co-founded, because of some disagreements with his fellow co-founders regarding publishing policies and financial management issues. Thus, Sulakauri opened his own publishing house alongside Tina Mamulashvili.<sup>24</sup> Nowadays Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House stands among the biggest publishing houses in Georgia and is perhaps the most active, successful, and consecrated (in Pierre Bourdieu's terms<sup>25</sup>). Interestingly, this publishing house does not publish poetry.

One outstanding phenomenon regarding Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House is that some titles received translation grants only after being acquired by Bakur Sulakauri, even when first printed by other publishing houses. This illustrates Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House's increased power over the last two decades.

22 As an example, the online version of the article that appeared in the Book Fair edition of *The Bookseller* on the October 10th, 2018. [Accessed on 14 January 2020] <<https://www.thebookseller.com/news/georgia-my-mind-871941>>

23 Interview with Tina Mamulashvili, on October 10th at Frankfurt Book Fair. I will address this issue in my upcoming work.

24 KEKELIDZE, Giorgi. "Sami gamomcemlobis ambavi" (The story of three publishing houses). *Tabula*. [Electronic Newspapers] [Accessed 13 January 2020] Access through Internet <<http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/57611-sami-gamomcemlobis-ambavi>>

25 BOURDIEU, Pierre. "A conservative revolution in publishing", *Translation Studies*, 1 (2), 1999, 123–153.

In contrast, *Siesta*, the second most active publishing house, is smaller and mainly literary. *Siesta* held the rights to state-supported translation projects on about fifteen occasions, with eight different titles. Unlike Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House, *Siesta* prioritized poetry for many years, but recently had to stop printing this genre because of the losses involved.<sup>26</sup> According to some Georgian publishers, if a publishing house wishes to publish poetry, it needs to compensate its losses by publishing other books that can guarantee profits (e.g., bestsellers and textbooks).<sup>27</sup> The publishing house *Intelekti* engages in this practice and, according to the publishers and translators I spoke to,<sup>28</sup> is the only publishing house in Georgia that publishes poetry regularly. This press seems to have gained remarkable relevance of late. Its titles have been supported for translation since 2014 (on eight occasions, for seven titles), holding third place among source publishing houses with the most grant-receiving titles.

As for the target publishing houses, the German POP Verlag and the American Dalkey Archive Press have benefited the most from Georgian National Book Center's state support. The former has translated sixteen projects with the support of the Georgian National Book Center, while the latter has carried out fifteen projects.

If we observe the trends for these two publishing houses, we may note that five of the translation projects taken on by Dalkey Archive Press were sourced from Bakur Sulakauri, while none of the projects by POP Verlag have drawn from this publishing house as its source.<sup>29</sup>

The profiles of both target publishing houses seem quite different in terms of what they translate. From the Georgian language, Dalkey Archive Press has exclusively translated prose, including five short-story projects in general anthologies (the annual project *Best European Fiction*), while seven titles are novels. POP Verlag appears more balanced in terms of genre, with six poetry projects and six prose projects (one anthology in each genre and, among prose titles, only one novel). The remaining titles are either in other genres or not successfully identified. Another difference is that Dalkey Archive Press has been present since the beginning, receiving its first grant in 2010, while POP Verlag has only been active since 2015 (perhaps due to Georgia's *Guest of Honour*

26 Interview with Ketevan Kighuradze, editor of *Siesta* Publishing House, during the Frankfurt Book Fair 2018.

27 Interview with Zviad Kvaratskhelia, editor of *Intelekti*, conducted May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

28 Interview with translator Ani Kopaliani, conducted 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019

29 In fact, I have not been able to identify some of the source editions for POP Verlag, since some of the source titles for the projects are manifold (anthologies), but especially because most of them have titles on which I could not find enough information.

Status at the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair, the year that the more intense work for this status began). Besides, Dalkey Archive Press translated the most contemporary titles, while the range in POP Verlag was much wider.

POP Verlag's editor, Traian Pop, is a poet himself and German-Romanian, which perhaps explains his motivation to translate poetry and offer the German reader literature from East European, post-communist countries' and peripheral or minor language literatures, together with literature from some central languages. POP Verlag's foreign literature lines include the following, as listed on their website: Albanian, Asiatic, German-Romanian, English, French, Italian, East European, Romanian, Russian, Sorbian (a Slavic minority language in Germany), and Turkish literature.

Meanwhile, Dalkey Archive Press is known for publishing avant-garde and lesser known works and for being a non-profit press with a penchant for contemporary, international literature. In an interview that can be read on their website, the founder, John O'Brien stated: "from the start, I wanted the magazine<sup>30</sup> to break down the artificial barriers that exist among countries and cultures. It was my view then and now that one can't properly come to terms with contemporary writing without seeing it in an international context, and it's also my view that Americans generally don't want to know anything about the world outside the United States unless they are planning a vacation [...] I wanted the books to represent what was happening around the world rather than more or less being confined to the United States."<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, Gisèle Sapiro states that in the USA "most translations (around 80% in 2008) are published either by non-profit presses which mention it as part of their mission [...] or by small independent trade publishers."<sup>32</sup> These kinds of small and non-profit presses could not survive without state grants and cultural foundations' support. Indeed, translation-support programs, like the one in Georgia, certainly provide motivation.

2.2.2. MOST-TRANSLATED AUTHORS AND TITLES. The projects that received translation grants from 2010 to the beginning of 2019 were written by 116 different authors. The most frequently translated authors under the grant programme were Aka Morchiladze (sixteen times); Zaza Burchuladze,

30 He refers to the *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, a magazine that he ran during the five years that preceded the creation of Dalkey Archive Press.

31 *An Interview with John O'Brien*. [Accessed 13 January 2020] Access through Internet <<http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/interview-with-john-obrien>>

32 SAPIRO, Gisèle. "Globalization and cultural diversity in the book market: The case of literary translations in the US and in France", *Poetics*, 38(4), 2010, 419–439.

Otar Chiladze and Dato Turashvili (ten times); and Mikheil Javakhishvili and Guram Odisharia (nine times). Among them, only Mikhail Javakhishvili is a classical author (1880-1937), while the remainder can be said to be contemporary<sup>33</sup> authors, though Otar Chiladze was part of an older generation (1933-2009) and was considered one of the best Georgian great writers of the twentieth century. There is no doubt about the remarkable role that Zaza Burchuladze, Dato Turashvili and, especially, Aka Morchiladze have played in the contemporary Georgian literary field. Especially Dato Turashvili and Aka Morchiladze, together with Lasha Bugadze were among the most active representatives of Georgian literature at the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair. Indeed, Tina Mamulashvili referred to them as “the established trio” in an interview with The Bookseller.<sup>34</sup> However, Lasha Bugadze is much more active as a dramatist than as a prose writer, and as mentioned above, drama is very underrepresented in the selection of grant-receiving translations.

If we look more closely at the four with the highest numbers, aiming at establishing some initial ideas for the elaboration of a *habitus*,<sup>35</sup> we can see that most of them have similar profiles. Aka Morchiladze and Dato Turashvili were born the same year (1966), while Zaza Burchuladze is a bit younger (1973). All three were born in Tbilisi, the capital city. However, Otar Chiladze’s profile is different. In fact, unlike the others, he wrote mostly in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and his works were translated already during the Soviet period. Otar Chiladze, born in 1933 in Sighnaghi, in the region of Kakheti, rather than in the capital, belongs to a different generation. The other three are almost always published by Bakur Sulakauri. In addition, currently, Zaza Burchuladze and Aka Morchiladze live in foreign countries: Morchiladze has lived in the UK and other countries while Burchuladze lives in Germany.

There is no doubt that the most well-known contemporary Georgian author today is Aka Morchiladze, who, as mentioned, was one of the most active authors at the Frankfurt Book Fair representing Georgia as the Guest of Honour, together with the German-language Georgian writer Nino Kharatishvili, both

33 In my thesis project I have not established a criterion for the categories of classical and contemporary yet, but in this case all the authors said to be contemporary have written at least one book during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

34 Online version of the article that appeared in the Book Fair edition of The Bookseller on the October 10th, 2018: [Accessed on 14 January 2020] <<https://www.thebookseller.com/news/georgia-my-mind-871941>>

35 BOURDIEU, Pierre. *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique: Précédé de «Trois études d'ethnologie kabyle»*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972; BOURDIEU, Pierre. *Les règles de l'art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire*. Paris: Seuil, 1992.

of whom gave speeches at the opening ceremony. Aka Morchiladze is mainly a novelist and has received the SABA prize (the most relevant Georgian literary prize today) more than anyone else: seven times, with the last one in 2019.

However, if we look at the most translated titles within the framework of the grant program, the title we find most often is not by Aka Morchiladze but by Dato Turashvili, a highly popular author in Georgia as well. The title *Flight from the USSR* tells the story, based on historical events, of a group of young people who hijack an airplane in an attempt to escape the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup> This is among Georgia's best-known contemporary titles. As a hypothesis for further research, it seems that revising events from the Soviet period from a contemporary point of view is perhaps one of the most popular topics in contemporary Georgian literature. In fact, this book was listed among Georgia's best-sellers in 2015.<sup>37</sup> The book was also successfully adapted to a play (2001).

A title by Aka Morchiladze, *Journey to Karabakh*, does appear as the second most translated one. It was one of the first titles that Bakur Sulakauri published in the 1990s, after self-publishing in 1992. According to the Georgian National Book Center, it portrays "the emotional condition of an entire generation and the absurdity of the conflicts in the Caucasus. A book about the tricky business of finding and defining liberty."<sup>38</sup> This theme peppers contemporary Georgian literature, and this book was among the first to touch upon it, doing so in the early independent period, even before the contemporary publishing field started to develop. A common trait between these two titles are the adaptations: like the title by Dato Turashvili, this book has been adapted as well, in this case to cinema (2005).

A remarkable fact here is that, among the translation projects that have received grants from 2010 to the beginning of 2019, 79 percent are written by men and only 21 percent by women. Thus, fifty-three source titles were by a female author, while 202 were by a male author. Among the remaining forty-six, the author field was empty, because twenty-nine of the listed publications are anthologies, likely with both male and female authors (I have not checked this yet), or for other reasons that I have not yet identified and been unable to complete. In fact, women were absent in the dataset throughout its first years of operation and only started to appear when the total amount of translation grants

36 Georgian National Book Center [Accessed 14 January 2020] <<http://book.gov.ge/en/book/flight-from-the-ussr-/27>>

37 METREVELI, Medea (Dir.); LURSMANASHVILI, Natia (Ed.) (n.d.) *Georgian Book Market Research 2013–2015*.

38 Georgian National Book Centre's commentary on the book: [Accessed on 23 July 2020] <<http://book.gov.ge/en/book/journey-to-jarabakh/242>>

increased as of 2015. When I analysed Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House's 2017 catalogue,<sup>39</sup> the unequal distribution among genders stood out as well. Thus, it is more likely that gender inequity does not stem from the Georgian National Book Center specifically, but from more general gender inequalities in society.

In the future, the role of female authors in anthologies would be worth exploring. For now, we can see that four of the mentioned anthologies are exclusively dedicated to female writers. In this sense, there has been an effort to make their writing visible in Georgian literary translation, though this effort only appears strong in Germany: three of the anthologies were published there, while one was published in the United Kingdom.

2.2.3. MOST ACTIVE TARGET LANGUAGES. Twenty-nine different target languages have benefited from the Georgian National Book Center's translation support. German dominance is one of the clearest trends: the number of grants to the German encompasses 150 out of 301: almost 50 percent. Together with English, German has dominated the target-language scene since 2010, though the Georgian National Book Center only received two German applications over its first few years of operation, which registered very low numbers in general. But it has been rising gradually since then, surging in 2017 and reaching a peak in 2018.

The second most active target language is English, which has twenty-nine projects listed. Besides that, three bilingual English-German editions were published in 2018. Indeed, in the grant's first years of existence, English was more active than German. German surpassed English only in 2014, perhaps due to preparations for Georgia's Guest of Honour status at the Frankfurt Book Fair, which may likewise reflect German publishers' interest in Georgian literature as of said year, with increased support for German publishers on behalf of the Georgian National Book Center for the same reason. German translations have increased since 2016, with twelve grant-recipient projects that year and twenty-nine in 2017, peaking in 2018 with eighty-seven books.<sup>40</sup>

Italian occupies the third place on the list, with fifteen projects. This language appeared on the dataset for the first time in 2013 and has published between one and four translations per year. Five of these publications were

39 An analysis that was done within the framework of my MA Thesis "La recepció de la literatura contemporània georgiana a la Geòrgia postsoviètica" (2017) at the Open University of Catalonia, supervised by Diana Roig-Sanz.

40 I have not counted bilingual editions in these figures. In contrast, I have included projects that do not appear to be translations but books on Georgia in German, because I do not have enough data to confirm whether they are translations or not. Thus, we can only take these numbers as preliminary results.

translated by Nunu Geladze. Remarkably, she also initiated certain projects and served as compiler on some occasions. She has played an important role not only as a translator, but also as a *cultural mediator*.<sup>41</sup>

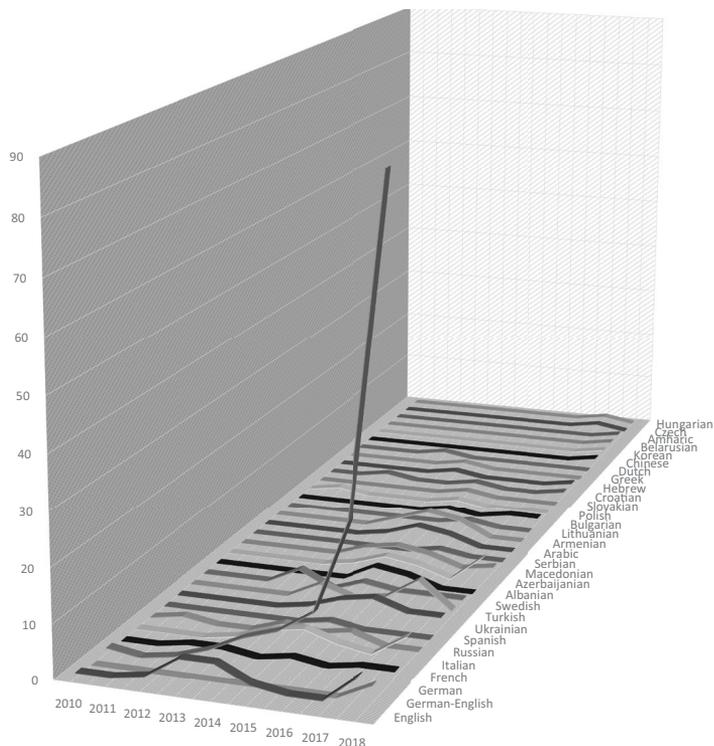


FIGURE 2. Evolution of Target Languages by Year (2010-2018)

After Italian, Turkish is the most active language in terms of translated Georgian literature with Georgian National Book Center's support. Thirteen translations to the Turkish have received grants. This language was first supported in 2014 with three titles and has published between one and three titles per year since. Ukrainian follows, with twelve translations in sum, the first appearing in 2014. Armenia is also relatively active, with nine translations.

<sup>41</sup> For the notion of cultural mediators see ROIG-SANZ, Diana; MEYLAERTS, Reine. *Literary Translation and Cultural Mediators in Peripheral Cultures. Custom Officers or Smugglers?* London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. I will focus on the notion of cultural mediators in Georgia in my upcoming work.

Translator Anahit Bostanjan's role as a *cultural mediator* deserves to be highlighted. She translated seven of the nine grant-recipient projects. In this vein, while literary exchanges would appear active between Armenia and Georgia, in the post-Soviet period, Armenian literature has not been translated into Georgian as frequently as the other way around.<sup>42</sup> This fact may precisely be due to the differences in their translation policies (Armenia started supporting translation much more recently).<sup>43</sup>

After Armenian, Azerbaijanian follows, with eight projects. Both countries neighbour Georgia in the Caucasus, reinforcing the idea of a Caucasus-Black Sea regional space of circulation proposed in the introduction of this paper, which would yield concepts of World Literature<sup>44</sup> and cultural transfer<sup>45</sup> between those considered peripheral or semi-peripheral spaces.<sup>46</sup> This would formulate units of analysis beyond the local and the global – terms we cannot take for granted.

Swedish and Macedonian also boast eight translations each. Russian comes next, together with Arabic, with six grant-recipient translations each. Chinese, Korean, Belarusian, and Amharic appeared for the first and only time in 2018, probably due to Georgia's Guest of Honour Status in 2018. They translated mostly short stories (and only Belarus translated poetry). As for the Chinese and Korean, state institutions published the translations (China Translation and Publishing House and Literature Translation Institute of Korea). A contemporary author was translated to Chinese; classical, nineteenth-century authors were published in Belarusian and Amharic; and an anthology was published in Korean.<sup>47</sup> Whether these new target languages will continue translating Georgian literature remains to be seen.

42 Interview with publisher within the framework of my fieldwork at the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair.

43 In 2016, according to the interview with publisher in Frankfurt Book Fair 2018 (October 12<sup>th</sup>). This difference between Armenian and Georgian policies was also mentioned in the interview with Ketikighuradze, conducted May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

44 DAMROSCH, David. *What is world literature?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

45 ESPAGNE, Michel; WERNER, Michael. "La construction d'une référence culturelle allemande en France: genèse et histoire (1750–1914)". *Annales ESC*, 1987, p. 969–992.

46 WALLERSTEIN, Immanuel (1974–1989) *The Modern World-System*, vol. 1–3; WALLERSTEIN, Immanuel. *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004; HEILBRON, Johan. "Towards a Sociology of Translation. Book Translation as a Cultural World-System", 1999; HEILBRON, Johan; SAPIRO, Gisèle. "Outline for a Sociology of Translation: Current Issues and Future Prospects". In Michaela Wolf & Alexandra Fukari (eds.), *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007, p. 93–107.

47 I have not been able to find which authors and titles this anthology includes.

Hungarian, Czech, Dutch, Greek, Slovakian, Lithuanian, Spanish, and Serbian appear in the dataset but once, most of them after 2014, while Dutch appeared in 2013. I have not detected any significant pattern on what kinds of book they translated, but it can be said that the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair diversified the range of target languages that year. However, the latter language may not be related to the Frankfurt Book Fair, since work toward the Guest of Honour Status started later. In fact, some Georgian titles were translated to the Dutch from 2006 on (data on earlier periods is insufficient) without these subsidies.<sup>48</sup> This fact brings us to reflect upon the relationships between peripheral or less translated languages, not only in the region around Georgia, but also among other minor literatures in Europe.

While the tendency is to translate more contemporary authors and mostly prose, the Hebrew case stands out. Three titles were translated in 2014, 2018, and 2019, and all three are poetry, while two are epic poetry. Translation efforts to the Hebrew have focused on classical works: the medieval epic poetry by Shota Rustaveli was first, followed by an anthology of multiple authors<sup>49</sup> and another epic poem by nineteenth-century poet Vazha Pshavela.

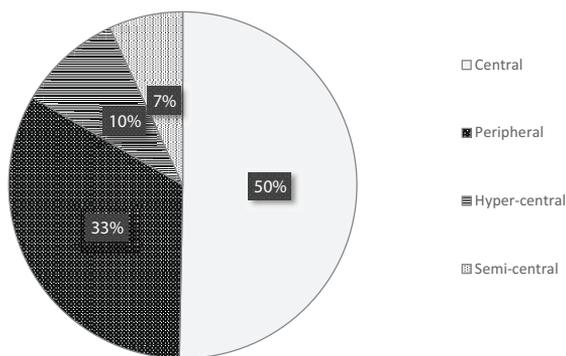


FIGURE 3. Centrality of target languages for GNBC-supported foreign translation publishing projects of Georgian literature

If we look at the centrality of target languages (Figure 3), according to the dataset, more than half of the supported translations are into central languages,<sup>50</sup>

48 Data from the online catalogue of the *Georgian Titles in Translation* in the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [Accessed 13 January 2020] Access through Internet <<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/ec/ka/euro/search.html>>

49 I do not have data at this stage on which authors includes this anthology.

50 HEILBRON, Johan. "Towards a Sociology of Translation. Book Translation as a Cultural World-System", 1999.

most of which can be attributed to the German's outstanding role: of the 156 translations into central languages, 150 are to the German, and the remaining six are French. Arguably, the most important factor here is Georgia's Guest of Honour Status at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2018. Peripheral languages are the second most active category. Indeed, this category includes more diversity of languages. The semi-central and hyper-central categories are both lower, though the latter was slightly more active (10%) than the former (7%).

According to Heilbron, "the more central a language is in the translation system, the more it has the capacity to function as an intermediary language or a vehicular language, that is, as a means of communication between language groups which are themselves peripheral or semi-peripheral."<sup>51</sup> Central languages have often been attributed with endowing specific titles or authors with symbolic capital, with new translations into other languages as a result. However, this movement does not appear highly manifest in this analysis, and the data does not seem to reinforce the idea either. For example, while the Frankfurt Book Fair can be said to have played a mediating role in the internationalization of Georgian literature, there does not seem to be a concrete itinerary with titles going from German translations into other languages. In contrast, it would seem that inter-peripheral relations occur often enough that they do not require mediation from central languages. Regarding this issue, we may study the trajectories of a selection of three of the most translated titles and their trajectories: *ADIBAS* (2009), *Journey to Karabakh* (1992) and *Flight from the USSR* (2008).

According to the available data, one of the most frequent titles on the list, *ADIBAS*,<sup>52</sup> by Zaza Burchuladze, has only been translated with the support of the Georgian National Book Center, making it a good example for our purposes. This title was first translated into Russian and into Polish in 2011. Only after, in 2013, did it become available for English readers. Later, it was translated to the Italian in 2014, with the most recent iteration in the German, together with the Macedonian, in 2015. The fact that Russian and Polish were first, and both are peripheral or semi-peripheral languages today,<sup>53</sup> would reinforce the idea of inter-peripheral relations. However, we do not know which of these two

51 HEILBRON, Johan. "Structure and Dynamics of the World System of Translation" UNESCO International Symposium 'Translation and Cultural Mediation', February 22–23, 2010 <[https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/1611/1611\\_a2015n9/1611\\_a2015n9a4/Heilbron.pdf](https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/1611/1611_a2015n9/1611_a2015n9a4/Heilbron.pdf)>

52 It holds the third position, following *Journey to Karabakh*.

53 HEILBRON, Johan. "Structure and Dynamics of the World System of Translation" UNESCO International Symposium 'Translation and Cultural Mediation', February 22–23, 2010 <[https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/1611/1611\\_a2015n9/1611\\_a2015n9a4/Heilbron.pdf](https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/1611/1611_a2015n9/1611_a2015n9a4/Heilbron.pdf)>

translations was first, and we should keep in mind that Russian has historically been considered the dominant language in Eastern European, post-Soviet, and Caucasus nations in general. Thus, our conclusions would vary in one case or the other.

As for *Journey to Karabakh* by Aka Morchiladze, it also first appeared supported by the Georgian state in the English language in 2013. However, this book was already translated into Italian in 2010 without a subsidy, being the only one among the three books analysed here that was first translated without support. Later, it was translated into Arabic in Egypt, as well as into Macedonian, Albanian, and Bulgarian in 2015, and into Serbian in 2016. Only in 2018 was it translated to the German, together with the Croatian.

The case of *Flight from the USSR* by the author Dato Turashvili is interesting, too. This title was first translated into peripheral and semi-peripheral languages like Croatian in 2012, Dutch and Italian in 2013, and only later into other languages such as Armenian, Greek, and German in 2014, and into Azerbaijani, Arabic, Albanian, and English in 2015.

Therefore, these cases question the idea of central languages triggering new translations. Though German is the most active target language, its role in the circulation process was not meaningful as a vehicular language in the case of the most translated titles like *Journey to Karabakh*, *ADIBAS* or *Flight from the USSR*. Nor was the role of English, which is often seen as a language that triggers translations into other languages. On the contrary, the cases in this article would reinforce the role of peripheral languages and inter-peripheral exchanges.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In this article, I have argued that the size of a literature or a book market is not only related to its features at the local level but also remarkably dependent on its literary exports and role in the transnational literary field. Over the last few decades, translation support policies have become a common strategy for small literary markets to overcome asymmetries,<sup>54</sup> and these kinds of subsidies also have had an impact on increasing the visibility of Georgian literature. Accordingly, I approached the issue of small book markets through the case of the Translation Grant Program “Georgian Literature in Translation” and have provided a glance at cultural policies and translation support practices in Georgia, following a portion of Georgian literature’s translation paths to foreign languages.

<sup>54</sup> VIMR, Ondřej. “Supply-driven translation: compensating for lack of demand”, 2019.

My analysis shows that the increase in translation support in Georgia, especially since 2014, is clearly related to Georgia's Guest of Honour Status at the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair, while foreign publishers have also shown more interest thanks to Georgia's translation subsidies. In this line, I have shown that English, a *hyper-central* language, and especially German, a *central* language, have received more Georgian literature than other languages, with the support of a Georgian state literary institution.<sup>55</sup>

In this case, central and peripheral languages have proven the most active category of target languages. While the former ones stand out because of the great role of German language, the latter are especially interesting, as they can hint at inter-peripheral relations. Moreover, the cases analysed in this paper challenge the idea of central languages triggering new translations, because these titles appeared first translated into *peripheral* languages, and only after into the central ones.<sup>56</sup>

The impact of the Frankfurt Book Fair can be gauged from another perspective: the diversification of target languages. Some new target languages appeared for the first time in 2018, the year that Georgia was the Guest of Honor at the Frankfurt Book Fair.<sup>57</sup>

In parallel, some aspects of Georgia's national literary field have also been highlighted in this analysis, like the symbolic power of the publishing house Bakur Sulakauri, as proven by the data. This is the Georgian publishing house to have benefited the most from these state grants. Bakur Sulakauri Publishing Houses's strong presence as a source publishing house on the list of translation grants coincides with its strong presence in the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair. Meanwhile, on the target side, my analysis has shown that some non-profit publishing houses have played a very important role in the circulation of Georgian literature, specifically into central languages.<sup>58</sup> Finally, this study has found that

55 To know the role of central languages on general trends of literary export of Georgian literature, that is to say, including non-subsidized projects, will require further research.

56 This is a highly interesting line to explore, because, as noted in ROIG-SANZ, Diana; MEYLAERTS Reine. "General Introduction. Literary Translation and Cultural Mediators. Toward and Agent and Process-Oriented Approach". In ROIG-SANZ, Diana and MEYLAERTS, Reine. *Literary Translation and Cultural Mediators in Peripheral Cultures. Custom Officers or Smugglers?* 2018, researchers have focused mainly on central literatures or on the relations between central and peripheral literatures, while inter-peripheral literary exchange still needs to be addressed.

57 Whether these effects will last longer or be short lived remains to be seen.

58 An interesting line to explore is the role of these publishers as cultural mediators, as well as that of translators. This will be addressed in my upcoming work.

the circulation of Georgian literature is relatively active in the region where this country is located, reinforcing the idea that there may be a regional circulation space for literary exchange within the Caucasus or the Black Sea region.<sup>59</sup>

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59 While this article only dealt with a selection of translation projects (the subsidized ones), the relatively active flows in this vein are meaningful, but require further research (i.e. exploring all translation projects carried out in the region).

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