

Ukrainian Literature in the Academic Space of Tbilisi State University: The History of Teaching and the Transformation of Paradigms

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Abstract: *This article examines the history of teaching Ukrainian literature at Tbilisi State University from the 1940s to the present. Drawing on archival documents, curricula, textbooks, scholarly works, and other primary sources, it analyzes the principal stages in the establishment and institutional development of Ukrainian literature as a field of study. Particular attention is paid to the impact of Soviet educational and scholarly policy, under which Ukrainian literature was initially taught within the frameworks of Russian Studies and the 'Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR.' The article highlights the roles of Mikheil Kintsurashvili, Tengiz Buachidze, and Otari Bakanidze in the formation of the academic tradition of Georgian Ukrainian Studies and in the training of professional Ukrainianists.*

The study reveals the contradictory nature of this process. On the one hand, within a policy aimed at bringing peoples closer together and creating a unified cultural and political space defined by communist ideology, the Soviet system established institutional foundations for the teaching and study of Ukrainian literature; on the other hand, it confined its study and interpretation within a Soviet ideological paradigm in which national literatures were conceived as constituent parts of a unified multinational Soviet literature. The article analyzes the transformation of this legacy in the post-Soviet period, the de-ideologization of teaching, the institutional strengthening of Ukrainian Studies, and the expansion of the range of authors and problems studied. It demonstrates that, at the present stage, the teaching of Ukrainian literature at TSU combines the preservation of a historically established academic tradition with its critical reassessment through contemporary comparative, cultural-studies, and postcolonial approaches.

Keywords: *Teaching Ukrainian Literature; Tbilisi State University; Georgian Ukrainian Studies; Academic Tradition; Soviet Educational Policy; Postcolonial Transformation.*

Introduction

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University is a major academic center

for the teaching and study of Ukrainian literature in Georgia. Since the 1940s, an academic tradition of teaching and researching Ukrainian

literature has gradually taken shape and developed there. The history of this process is complex and multifaceted and is closely connected with the political, ideological, and educational changes that occurred in the Georgian academic sphere at different historical stages.

The study is based on archival and other primary sources documenting the academic tradition and institutional history of Georgian Ukrainian Studies. Materials and documents preserved in the Central Archive of Contemporary History of the National Archives of Georgia, the Manuscripts Department of the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature, and the archives of the former Department of National Literatures, Literary Relations and Translation and the Center for Ukrainian Studies at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University have been analyzed. The source base is supplemented by publications preserved in the private libraries of prominent Georgian scholars, some of which have now become bibliographic rarities. These materials are examined in light of contemporary approaches in Soviet studies, Slavic studies, and colonial and postcolonial studies, making it possible to identify the principal stages in the development of the teaching of Ukrainian literature and their transformation within the Georgian academic sphere. The study considers the specific features of the teaching process: the factors that shaped the emergence of Ukrainian literature as a subject of instruction;

the disciplines within which it developed; the authors, themes, and problems represented in curricula and those left outside them; in other words, the ways in which Soviet ideology determined the selection and interpretation of material. Particular attention is devoted to the professional training of instructors who taught Ukrainian literature at different periods and to their connections with Ukrainian academic and cultural circles. From this perspective, the article examines which disciplinary specialists initially combined their primary fields with the teaching of Ukrainian literature and how a professional community of Ukrainianists emerged in Georgia. It also seeks to establish how the academic legacy formed during the Soviet period was transformed after the collapse of the USSR: what was retained, what was revised, and what new content entered the teaching and study of Ukrainian literature.

The Soviet Period: The Formation of a Tradition and the Origins of Teaching Ukrainian Literature

The formation of a tradition of teaching Ukrainian literature in Georgia was closely connected with Soviet educational, scholarly, and cultural policy, which was inherently contradictory: on the one hand, it created institutional opportunities for the study of national cultures and literatures; on the other, it placed their development and interpretation

within Soviet ideological frameworks. To understand this contradiction, the specific character of the Soviet Union as an imperial system must be taken into account. The prominent Slavic scholar Terry Martin described this feature of Soviet nationality policy through the concept of the 'Affirmative Action Empire,' referring to state support, within an imperial political system, for the development of the national languages, cultures, education, and corresponding institutions of non-Russian peoples. Contemporary Slavic studies also regard the creation of research centers and academic structures as one of the institutional outcomes of the 'Affirmative Action Empire'¹.

It is within this contradictory historical context that the development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies and the formation of the tradition of teaching Ukrainian literature in Georgia's educational sphere – a tradition now more than eight decades old – should be considered.

The history of Georgian Ukrainian Studies originates in Georgian Slavic Studies. In Soviet Georgia, Slavic Studies as a scholarly and educational field primarily encompassed the study and teaching of Russian language and literature, Russian history, and Russian-Georgian and Georgian-Russian historical and literary relations. Its institutional foundations were laid at Tbilisi State University: Russian-language instruction began in 1924-1925, and in 1930 the Department of the History

of Russian Language and Literature was established; in 1938 it was divided into two independent departments, Russian Language and the History of Russian Literature. This institutional strengthening of Russian Studies was directly connected with Soviet cultural policy and the process of creating a common cultural space. As Irine Modebadze and Tatiana Megrelishvili observe: «После советизации активно начинается процесс создания общего культурного поля. Государственная машина способствует обретению русистикой приоритетного статуса»².

Professor Otar Bakanidze, the founder of the Georgian school of Ukrainian Studies, briefly notes in his work on the history of Ukrainian Studies at Tbilisi State University that Ukrainian literature began to be taught at the university as early as the 1940s and that the first instructor and specialist was Mikheil Kintsurashvili. Despite the particular importance of this information, Bakanidze does not discuss the issue in detail. Reconstructing the initial stage in the history of teaching Ukrainian literature therefore requires that this evidence be clarified and supplemented through archival materials³.

To reconstruct this early stage, the present study examined archival materials documenting the activities of the Department of the History of Russian Literature in the 1940s and 1950s, preserved in the Central Archive of Contemporary History of the National Archives of Georgia (Fond No. 473). The materials include

minutes of departmental meetings, work plans, and reports, whose evidence makes it possible to clarify Mikheil Kintsurashvili's role and the circumstances in which the teaching of Ukrainian literature began at Tbilisi State University. He studied at the Faculty of Philology of Kharkiv University. Soviet-period scholarship presents Kharkiv University at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century as one of the important connecting centers between Georgia and Ukraine⁴. M. Kintsurashvili was for many years a member of TSU's Department of the History of Russian Literature, within which the foundations for teaching Ukrainian literature were laid.

The archival materials documenting the work of the Department of the History of Russian Literature allow us to identify the principal teaching and research areas within which the study of Ukrainian literature later developed⁵. The department's teaching included chronologically organized courses on eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century Russian literature, as well as Russian folklore and other subjects. According to the 1943-1944 work plan, alongside research on literary history, one of the department's major scholarly areas was the study of Russian-Georgian literary relations⁶. Among the diverse forms of literary relations, particular attention was paid to literary translation. Thus, three interconnected areas gradually emerged in the department's work – literary history, literary relations, and

literary translation – which subsequently became important foundations for the teaching and study of Ukrainian literature.

Accordingly, the established model for researching and teaching Russian-Georgian literary relations was subsequently extended to relations with the literatures of other Soviet republics, including Ukraine. The establishment of Ukrainian literature within the Georgian Soviet academic sphere is a clear example of this process. Within the Department of Russian Literature, considerable attention came to be devoted to the study and teaching of the literatures of the peoples of the USSR and of literary relations. National literatures were studied within a Soviet cultural and ideological system that, especially from the 1930s onward, increasingly prescribed permissible themes and interpretive frameworks. In Richard Pipes's assessment, whereas in the 1920s Soviet censorship primarily determined what could not be published, from the 1930s it also dictated to authors what they 'had to write,' thereby sharply intensifying ideological uniformity in Soviet culture⁷.

Materials preserved in the National Archives indicate that Mikheil Kintsurashvili, an associate professor in the Department of the History of Russian Literature, probably began teaching the course 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR' at TSU's Faculty of Philology in 1944; Ukrainian literary history, together with Belarusian litera-

ture, formed one component of the course. At this stage, no archival or other documentary material has been found that would allow the precise content of the course – the range of authors, texts, and topics studied – to be established. Nor did a Georgian-language textbook on the history of Ukrainian literature exist at the time. Under these circumstances, some basis for reconstructing the likely content of the course is provided both by Kintsurashvili's own scholarly and translation activity and by the recollection of his former student, later one of the leading representatives of Georgian Ukrainian Studies, Professor Otar Bakanidze. In one interview, Bakanidze states: 'In the 1940s, the teaching of Ukrainian literature at TSU was entrusted specifically to Iasamani [Iasamani was M. Kintsurashvili's pseudonym]. He translated excellently from Ukrainian and brought his translations to his students⁸.' This recollection confirms that Kintsurashvili used his own translations in teaching. Given his scholarly interests, it may also be assumed that in shaping the course he drew on his own research on Ukrainian literature.

Mikheil Kintsurashvili's personal archive, preserved in the Manuscripts Department of the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature, contains an unpublished manuscript entitled 'From the History of the Literary Friendship of Ukraine and Georgia'. An authorial note states that the paper was presented on 12 March 1954 at an open meeting of

the Faculty of Philology of Tbilisi State University⁹. The manuscript provides further evidence that research on Ukrainian literature at TSU was also developing within the paradigm of literary-relations studies, which occupied an important place in Soviet literary scholarship.

After Mikheil Kintsurashvili's death, a new stage in the history of teaching Ukrainian literature began, associated with Tengiz Buachidze and Otar Bakanidze. Minutes No. 14 of the meeting of the Department of the History of Russian Literature on 4 February 1955 record that, following Kintsurashvili's death, his teaching hours for the 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR' had to be reassigned to another member of the department. The department resolved to entrust the course to senior lecturer Tengiz Buachidze: «В связи с тем, что доцент кафедры М. П. Кинцурашвили скончился, его часы по истории литературы народов СССР следует передать какому-нибудь члену кафедры. Постановили: передать часы по истории литературы народов СССР старшему преподавателю Т. П. Буачидзе»¹⁰.

Otar Bakanidze also joined the department's work that same year. In Minutes No. 28 of the departmental meeting of 23 June 1955, the head of the department, Professor Vano Shaduri, proposed the appointment of senior laboratory assistant Otar Bakanidze to the position of assistant: «Представлен на должность

ассистента ст. лаборант О. Баканидзе». The same document, in distributing the Department of the History of Russian Literature's teaching load, indicates that Bakanidze taught the course 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR' in the Georgian-language section of the Faculty of Philology. This marked the beginning of his many years of teaching and scholarship in Ukrainian Studies, which later became decisive for the teaching of Ukrainian literature and the institutional development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies at Tbilisi State University¹¹.

TSU archival materials show that the organization of the department's research work also involved assigning each member an annual research topic. At the meeting of the Department of the History of Russian Literature on 7 February 1955, senior lecturer Tengiz Buachidze was assigned «Курс лекций по истории украинской литературы» as his annual topic¹². This fact is significant for the history of teaching Ukrainian literature because it points to an attempt to give the course a more systematic and programmatically organized form.

The systematization of the Ukrainian literature course at TSU in the mid-1950s should also be viewed in the context of broader Soviet academic developments. As D. Tsyganov observes, the construction of an academic narrative of 'multinational Soviet literature' began as early as the late 1940s and was linked

to the production of academic histories of individual national literatures¹³. One important manifestation of this process was the systematization of the history of Ukrainian literature.

In this respect, 1954 is particularly noteworthy. The 300th anniversary of the Pereiaslav Rada was widely commemorated throughout the Soviet Union and was officially interpreted in Soviet discourse as the '300th anniversary of Ukraine's reunification with Russia'. Literature and scholarship occupied an important place in the jubilee campaign. As Serhy Yekelchuk demonstrates, the Soviet cultural policy of this period also influenced the principles governing the selection of Ukrainian national heritage and its canonical representation¹⁴.

In that same year, 1954, the Taras Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR published the first volume of «История украинской литературы» – «Дооктябрьская литература». Prepared by a distinguished collective of scholars, the volume presented Ukrainian literary history according to a chronological-historical principle, while its periodization followed the Marxist scheme of Soviet literary historiography: the literary process was conceptualized from the era of feudalism, through the development of capitalist relations and imperialism, to the era of proletarian revolution. National literary history was thus structured according to the succession of socio-economic formations¹⁵.

This publication occupied an important place in the teaching of Ukrainian literature at TSU and became a major resource for instructional practice. The Ukrainian section of «Программа по истории украинской и белорусской литературы», compiled and published by Tengiz Buachidze in 1956, was based on the 1954 academic «История украинской литературы». Consequently, the programmatic systematization of the Ukrainian literature course at TSU was connected with the same academic and methodological model within which the scholarly canon of Ukrainian literary history was being formed in Soviet Ukraine at the time.

This fact acquires additional significance because the methodological curriculum «Программа курса „Литературы народов СССР”» intended for state universities was published in Moscow only in 1962, whereas a specialized curriculum in the history of Ukrainian and Belarusian literatures, authored by Tengiz Buachidze, already existed at TSU in 1956¹⁶. The available evidence therefore shows that by the mid-1950s the teaching of Ukrainian literature at TSU was already acquiring a systematic and programmatically organized character. The course was taught in both the Georgian – and Russian-language sections of the Faculty of Philology: Tengiz Buachidze taught the Russian-language course, while Otar Bakanidze taught the Georgian-language one.

Archival materials enable us to reconstruct chronologically the grad-

ual development of Ukrainian-literature teaching and to observe its relationship with the department's scholarly work. The documents show that annual research topics assigned to younger instructors were often directly connected with their courses and served the substantive preparation of those courses. Materials from the second half of the 1950s reveal more clearly the formation of the 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR' as an academic discipline, within which Ukrainian literature occupied a significant place. For example, Minutes No. 11 of the departmental meeting of 15 December 1958 state: «О. А. Баканидзе говорил об основных положениях своей годовой темы – Лекции по истории литературы народов СССР (Часть I). Работа представлена на грузинском языке, в ней говорится об украинской и белорусской литературе древнего периода»¹⁷. This entry shows that by the end of the 1950s Bakanidze was already working systematically on a lecture course in the 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR,' whose section on the early period included Ukrainian and Belarusian literatures.

To understand the history of teaching Ukrainian literature, it is also important to consider the professional profiles and cultural-academic experience of the specialists who taught the course at different stages. In the 1950s and 1960s, Otar Bakanidze and Tengiz Buachidze both researched and taught Ukrainian

literature, but a comparative analysis of their work reveals different research orientations. Ukrainian literature itself, Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations, and connections with Ukrainian scholarly and cultural circles came to occupy an increasingly important place in Bakanidze's research interests and gradually became the principal focus of his long professional career. For Buachidze, by contrast, the study and teaching of Ukrainian literature remained one strand of a broader professional activity, while his principal scholarly specialization was Russian literature.

Archival materials from the 1960s show that the young scholar Otar Bakanidze intensively and purposefully established ties with Ukrainian academic circles and research institutions, collaborated with Ukrainian writers and scholars, worked with archival materials, and actively used contemporary Ukrainian scholarly and critical literature in his research. In this respect, his professional trajectory differed from that of Georgian Slavists and Russianists for whom Ukrainian literature did not constitute an independent and systematic field of research and was addressed mainly within the broader frameworks of Slavic Studies, Russian Studies, or Soviet multinational literature. In Bakanidze's case, by contrast, the prospect emerged of establishing Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations as an independent professional field.

As a result of many years of work in Ukrainian archives and research

institutions, Otar Bakanidze identified and studied important primary sources that became the basis of his fundamental works on nineteenth – and twentieth-century Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations. His research increasingly displayed a tendency to study Ukrainian literature as a distinctive national literary tradition. Under the Soviet ideological system, in which national literatures were conceived as constituent parts of a unified multinational Soviet literature, such a research orientation acquired particular significance: demonstrating the historical and artistic distinctiveness of Ukrainian literature also implied articulating the specificity of Ukrainian cultural identity. In this respect, Bakanidze's long-term scholarly and pedagogical activity became an important stage in the formation of Georgian literary Ukrainian Studies as a professional field.

The Institutionalization of Georgian Ukrainian Studies: 1960-1991

During the so-called 'Thaw,' the intensification of cultural and scholarly ties between Georgia and Ukraine created new opportunities for teaching and researching Ukrainian literature. It was in this period that Georgian Ukrainian Studies gradually acquired the features of an independent academic field and the foundations were laid for its subsequent institutionalization.

From the second half of the 1960s, Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian cultural relations occupied an increasingly important place in Otar Bakanidze's research. In 1967-1968 he published the monographs *Ukrainian Theatre in Tbilisi* (1967) and *From the History of Georgian-Ukrainian Literary Relations* (1968). These and other works examined both the links of Georgian writers – Ilya Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli – with the Ukrainian cultural sphere and the relationship of Ukrainian cultural figures with Georgia and Georgian culture, including the history of Oleksandr Navrotsky's translation of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and Mykola Hulak's *Rustaveli studies*. A bilateral model for the study of Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations thus gradually took shape: on the one hand, the relationship of Ukrainian writers and cultural figures to Georgia and Georgian culture; on the other, the connections of Georgian authors with Ukrainian literature and culture. This approach continued the principles of literary-relations research developed in Professor Vano Shaduri's scholarly school, but in Bakanidze's work it gradually became the basis for systematic research focused specifically on Ukrainian material.

Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the monograph *Ukrainian Theatre in Tbilisi*, which examines the history of Ukrainian drama and theatre in Georgia through the lenses of reception and cultural contact. In Bakanidze's work of this period,

Ukrainian literature and culture increasingly emerge as an independent field of inquiry rather than merely as part of the broader concerns of Russian Studies or the 'Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR.' This tendency laid an important foundation for the subsequent professional and institutional development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

Cooperation between Tbilisi and Kyiv State Universities also intensified during this period. Student-exchange programs enabled Georgian students to receive training directly within the Ukrainian academic environment. As a result of this cooperation, a new generation of professional Ukrainianists gradually emerged in Georgia, creating an important basis for the field's further development and institutional strengthening.

Student exchange between Tbilisi State University and Kyiv State University in the 1960s and 1970s was an important form of academic cooperation and contributed substantially to the training of a new generation of Ukrainianists in Georgia. Georgian specialists educated in Kyiv subsequently pursued professional work in different areas. One group – Revaz Khvedelidze and Nuri Verd zadze – engaged in research and teaching and studied Georgian-Ukrainian literary and cultural relations, while literary translation occupied an important place in the work of Jaba Asatiani and Amiran Asanidze. Thus, within Georgian Ukrainian Studies, scholarly and pedagogical work developed in parallel with translation practice,

the two strands complementing one another.

Revaz Khvedelidze's research on Georgian and Ukrainian modernism, his studies of Rustaveli's reception in Ukrainian literature, and his work on the history and theory of Georgian-Ukrainian translation relations enriched the scholarly and teaching base of Georgian Ukrainian Studies with new material. Literary translations made directly from Ukrainian were another important part of this process: Jaba Asatiani translated Ukrainian prose into Georgian, while Amiran Asanidze worked for decades on a Georgian translation of Ivan Kotliarevsky's *Eneida*. This activity introduced Georgian readers to new texts of Ukrainian literature and simultaneously diversified the Georgian-language material available for teaching.

Thus, the scholarly, pedagogical, and translation activities of the new generation of Ukrainianists significantly expanded the possibilities for studying and teaching Ukrainian literature in Georgia and helped consolidate the professional and academic foundations of Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

An important event in the institutional development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies was the establishment of the 'Ukraine' Club at TSU in 1969. Otar Bakanidze conceived the idea during the Decade of Georgian Culture in Ukraine, and it was realized with the support of Ukrainian colleagues, writers, and intellectuals. The club aimed to popularize

Ukrainian literature and culture in Georgia and to deepen Georgian-Ukrainian cultural ties. Literary translation and the publication of bilingual Georgian-Ukrainian collections of Ukrainian poetry became one of its major activities; alongside the work of experienced translators, these volumes also published poetic translations by students of the Faculty of Philology. After the Department of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR, Literary Relations and Literary Translation was established in 1975, this work acquired a more systematic character, with students of the department actively participating in preparing the collections and translating Ukrainian poetry. Over the years, a number of notable bilingual collections of Ukrainian poetry in translation were published: Lesia Ukrainka, *Light! Light!* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 1971); Hryhorii Skovoroda, *A Benevolent Trace* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 1972); Ivan Franko, *The Stonecutters* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 1981); *God's Mercy: Poetry by Davit Guramishvili and Lesia Ukrainka* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 1996); Taras Shevchenko, *Kobzar* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 2014); *The Heavenly Language: Young Ukrainian Poets in Georgian* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 2016); and others.

Alongside their cultural significance, these publications also performed an important pedagogical function: they contributed to the professional training of young translators, created opportunities for comparative analysis of original and translated texts, and provided addi-

tional Georgian-language resources for courses on Ukrainian literature. The activities of the 'Ukraine' Club thus brought together the popularization of Ukrainian literature, the practice of literary translation, and the university's teaching and research work.

The scholarly and teaching profile of the Department of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR, Literary Relations and Literary Translation (headed by Professor Otar Bakanidze) combined the history of the literatures of the peoples of the USSR, literary relations, and the problems of literary translation. Ukrainian literature and the study of Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations occupied an important place in the department's work, while the history and theory of literary translation were added to its teaching agenda.

From its establishment, specialists educated in Ukraine also became involved in the department's work. Among them was Revaz Khvedelidze, for whom the history and theory of literary translation became one of the principal areas of scholarly and pedagogical interest, reflected in his academic theses: the Candidate dissertation *Rustaveli in Ukrainian Literature* (1972) and the doctoral dissertation *The Modernist Novella in Georgian and Ukrainian Literature* (2005). Thus, the study of translation relations was gradually added to the teaching of Ukrainian literature and research on Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations. Materials documenting the department's teaching show

that Georgian-Ukrainian literary and translation relations were also reflected in student research, with term papers and qualification theses prepared in this area¹⁸.

During the 1970s and 1980s, research on Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations expanded further. Otar Bakanidze published the monographs *Lesia Ukrainka* (1971), *Hryhorii Skovoroda* (1972), *Mykola Bazhan* (1974), *Maksym Rylsky* (1975), and *Georgian-Ukrainian Literary and Theatrical Relations* (1982). Given the scarcity of Georgian-language textbooks, these works served a pedagogical function in addition to their scholarly purpose. An interesting primary source for reconstructing the content of Bakanidze's courses is the textbook «Українська радянська література» (Kyiv, 1979), edited by P. Kononenko and V. Fashchenko and preserved in the library of the Center for Ukrainian Studies. Bakanidze's copy bears a commemorative inscription by V. Fashchenko dated 1980, while the text contains Bakanidze's annotations on Volodymyr Sosiura, Pavlo Tychyna, Oles Honchar, Ukrainian drama, and the Soviet-period literary process. This material suggests that Ukrainian-language scholarly and instructional publications were among the sources used by Bakanidze in preparing his Georgian-language lecture courses¹⁹.

An important stage in the systematization of teaching Ukrainian literature was Bakanidze's *Essays on the History of Ukrainian Literature*

(1985), which discussed major representatives of eighteenth – and nineteenth-century Ukrainian literature – Hryhorii Skovoroda, Ivan Kotliarevsky, Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko, Taras Shevchenko, Marko Vovchok, and others – as well as classics of Ukrainian drama. Unlike the author's earlier monographic studies, *Essays* represented an attempt to create systematic Georgian-language teaching material on the history of Ukrainian literature. Although its methodological and interpretive frameworks reflect the scholarly and ideological context of the period in which it was written, the scarcity of alternative Georgian-language teaching literature means that it retains pedagogical significance to this day. A number of themes established during this period – classics of Ukrainian literature, Georgian-Ukrainian literary and translation relations, Ukrainian theatre in Georgia, and Lesia Ukrainka and Georgia – were retained in post-Soviet curricula, although their methodological frameworks of interpretation gradually changed.

Post-Soviet Transformation

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the restoration of Georgia's independence fundamentally changed the country's academic and educational environment. The collapse of Soviet ideological frameworks placed the de-ideologization of research and teaching, the reassessment of established concepts and interpretive

models, and integration into the Western academic sphere on the agenda. These changes also affected the teaching of the literatures of the former Soviet republics: after the dissolution of the Soviet model of the 'Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR,' it became possible to conceptualize them as independent national literatures. The basis of Georgian-Ukrainian academic and cultural relations also changed – the Soviet ideological discourse of the 'friendship of peoples' was replaced by cultural and scholarly cooperation between two independent states. At the same time, post-Soviet transformation did not mean a complete rejection of the academic tradition established earlier: research on Georgian-Ukrainian historical and cultural relations continued, while its conceptual and methodological frameworks gradually changed.

In the post-Soviet period, both the name of the department and the concept underlying its work changed: the 'Department of the History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR, Literary Relations and Literary Translation' was renamed the 'Department of National Literatures, Literary Relations and Translation.' This change in name also reflected a conceptual shift – from the Soviet model of 'multinational literature' toward an emphasis on independent national literatures. It was within this department that the teaching of Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations continued at TSU's Faculty of Philology. In the

post-Soviet period, the department offered the BA program Literary Relations and Translation and the MA program Translation Studies; instruction was provided in Georgian- and Russian-language sections.

In the post-Soviet period, the teaching of Ukrainian literature became increasingly connected with issues of intercultural communication, dialogue between cultures, and literary translation. At the same time, analysis of curricula preserved in the department's archive and library shows that the change in ideological framework was not followed by a radical renewal of course content: a significant part of the subject matter and teaching literature continued the academic tradition established in the Soviet period, though now without its Soviet ideological context. One example is the MA course syllabus *Literary Relations (Ukrainian-Georgian: From Ancient Times to the Present)*, compiled by Professor Otar Bakanidze in 1999. A substantial part of the themes and issues in the syllabus drew on topics developed in earlier works by Bakanidze and Tengiz Buachidze. Thus, at the initial post-Soviet stage, change affected the ideological and interpretive framework of this legacy more than the substantive renewal of the curriculum itself.

The Russian-language section offered the course *History of East Slavic Literatures*, whose structure retained the principle developed in the 1960s–1980s of grouping individual national literatures within a broader regional bloc. The syllabus

compiled in 1997 by Professor Otar Bakanidze and Associate Professor Konstantine Kvachantiradze continued the earlier teaching model in this respect, although its content had already expanded. Alongside traditionally studied authors, the syllabus included representatives of the Ukrainian Sixtiers – Dmytro Pavlychko, Lina Kostenko, Borys Oliynyk, Ivan Drach, and Yurii Mushketyk – whose work had received comparatively less attention in Soviet-era courses. The 1997 syllabus therefore clearly reflects the specific character of the post-Soviet transitional stage: the previously established structural model was retained, while the range of authors and themes gradually expanded²⁰.

From 1997, the BA level also included the synthetic course *Literature of the Peoples of Eastern Europe and Transcaucasia*, authored by Associate Professor Revaz Khvedelidze. Among Eastern European literatures, the course covered the histories of Ukrainian and Belarusian literature, as well as their relations with Georgian literature. Ukrainian literature was taught chronologically and included early and modern literature, literary processes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the contemporary period; the Belarusian component was organized according to a similar principle. The curriculum thus retained the chronological and regional approach established in the preceding period. Soviet-era works were still listed as the principal teaching and methodologi-

cal literature, a circumstance explained by the absence of new Georgian-language textbooks. The creation of new teaching literature therefore remained one of the important needs of post-Soviet Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

Despite the difficulties of the post-Soviet period, an important stage in the history of teaching Ukrainian literature was the publication of the second (1997) and third (2004) volumes of Otar Bakanidze's *History of Ukrainian Literature*, which substantially alleviated the shortage of Georgian-language teaching literature. The second volume examines the life and work of Panas Myrny, Ivan Franko, Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky, and Lesia Ukrainka, while the third is devoted to twentieth-century Ukrainian literature and covers Pavlo Tychyna, Maksym Rylsky, Mykola Bazhan, Oleksandr Kornichuk, and Oles Honchar. The volumes retain a traditional historical-chronological approach to literary history; discussion of individual authors is accompanied by analysis of their connections with Georgia and Georgian culture. In this respect, the three-volume work continues the earlier research and teaching tradition of Georgian Ukrainian Studies while also providing a systematic Georgian-language resource on the history of Ukrainian literature.

From the perspective of contemporary Ukrainian Studies, the methodological and interpretive frameworks of the three-volume work require substantial reassessment: they

naturally reflect the approaches to literary scholarship and the principles of author selection characteristic of their period, some of which have been significantly revised in contemporary Ukrainian and international Ukrainian Studies. Nevertheless, in the absence of a new systematic Georgian-language textbook of comparable scope on the history of Ukrainian literature, Bakanidze's three volumes continue to retain both pedagogical value and importance as a source for the history of Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

Georgia's accession to the Bologna Process in 2005 led to large-scale reforms in higher education aimed at bringing the Georgian educational sphere closer to European standards. These changes affected both the structure and content of curricula and created a new institutional environment for the further transformation of teaching Ukrainian literature.

A new stage in the post-Soviet development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies began in 2007. The Institute of Ukrainian Studies (today the Professor Otar Bakanidze Center for Ukrainian Studies) was established at TSU's Faculty of Humanities, and the MA program Ukrainian Studies was launched. On the one hand, the program continued the academic tradition established at TSU – Ukrainian literature continued to be taught both as literary history and through the prism of Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations; on the other hand, its curriculum broadened and its interdisciplinary dimension was strengthened.

A major feature of the program was close cooperation with Ukrainian academic institutions – Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, the Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and the Institute of Ukrainian Studies. An interdisciplinary course, History of Ukraine and Prospects for Development, was added to the philological disciplines and was taught remotely from Kyiv by Academician Petro Kononenko.

The new institutional and academic environment significantly broadened the thematic scope of teaching and research on Ukrainian literature. Direct cooperation with Ukrainian research centers, internships undertaken there by Georgian students and researchers, and access to new scholarly literature made possible the systematic study of authors, movements, and cultural processes that had been underrepresented in Soviet teaching and scholarship or excluded for ideological reasons. Curricula and research gradually gave an important place to the repressed authors of the 'Executed Renaissance,' Ukrainian modernism and the avant-garde, émigré and dissident literature, samizdat, the underground, and postmodern writing. The range of authors and issues studied thus expanded, while the Soviet-era interpretive model of Ukrainian literary history was reassessed.

The expansion of the teaching and research agenda in Ukrainian literature was accompanied by methodological renewal. Interpreting previ-

ously understudied authors and literary phenomena required the adoption of new theoretical approaches: contemporary approaches to modernism, the avant-garde, and postmodernism, as well as methodologies drawn from colonial and postcolonial studies, gradually became established in Georgian Ukrainian Studies. Cooperation with Ukrainian academic centers and the professional training of a new generation of Georgian Ukrainianists played an important role in this process. Education and research internships in Ukraine enabled them to engage directly with contemporary Ukrainian literary scholarship, work with previously less accessible texts and archival materials, and integrate the knowledge acquired into research and teaching in Georgia.

Professional ties with the Ukrainian academic environment had played an important role since the early stages of Georgian Ukrainian Studies, but in the post-Soviet period they acquired particular importance for the field's thematic and methodological renewal. Despite socio-economic difficulties, cooperation continued with leading Ukrainian academic institutions – Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, the Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and the Institute of Ukrainian Studies. Two stages can be distinguished in the professional training and internship experience of Georgian Ukrainianists within this cooperation.

The first stage is associated with the 1990s. Nino Naskidashvili com-

pleted a BA program in Ukrainian Philology at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, while Gocha Kvantaliani undertook an internship at the same university's Department of Comparative Literature. Their subsequent dissertation research examined Pavlo Tychyna and Oles Honchar in relation to Georgian literature. These studies also introduced into Georgian Ukrainian Studies problems that had previously received little attention. Naskidashvili examined Soviet repression and Ukrainian literary processes of the 1930s, while Kvantaliani focused on the Soviet ideological context of the 1960s and anti-Soviet discourse. Their work may therefore be regarded as an early manifestation of the thematic renewal of Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

The second stage began in 2009 and is associated with systematic internships in Ukraine for students of the new MA program. Direct contact with the Ukrainian academic environment contributed to a further expansion of the research agenda of literary Ukrainian Studies in Georgia. Ukrainian Sixtiers and dissident literature (Sophio Chkhatarashvili), post-Soviet Ukrainian literature and Ukrainian postmodernism (Ivane Mchedeladze), as well as other issues that had previously been little studied or entirely unexamined in Georgian Ukrainian Studies, became subjects of research.

Importantly, the new research agenda did not remain confined to scholarly publications but was gradu-

ally integrated into courses in the Ukrainian Philology module of the revised MA program in Slavic Philology. These include Current Issues in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Ukrainian Literature, Problems in the Formation of Contemporary Ukrainian Literature, and Georgian-Ukrainian Literary Relations. The long-standing practice of training specialists and organizing internships in Ukraine thus became an important factor not only in the generational renewal of Georgian Ukrainian Studies but also in the transformation of its research and teaching paradigm.

At present, Ukrainian Philology is one of the modules within the MA program in Slavic Philology at TSU's Faculty of Humanities. On the one hand, the module continues the academic tradition of Ukrainian Studies established at TSU; on the other, it reflects the thematic and methodological renewal of the field. The range of authors and issues studied has expanded, and the findings of contemporary Georgian and Ukrainian scholarship in Ukrainian Studies have been integrated into the curriculum. Ukrainian literature is considered within a broad historical and cultural context, with particular attention to the formation and representation of Ukrainian national and cultural identity, Georgian-Ukrainian cultural relations, and the place of Ukrainian literature within European and world literary processes.

The research tradition of 'literary relations' formed during the Soviet

period retained an important place in Georgian Ukrainian Studies after the collapse of the USSR, although, as noted above, its interpretive framework changed substantially. Research on Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations is no longer limited to describing the history of direct contacts, influences, translations, and cultural connections. With the development of contemporary comparative literature, approaches drawn from imagology, cultural studies, memory studies, and trauma studies have become established in research and teaching, making it possible to conceptualize the relationship between Georgian and Ukrainian literatures within a broader historical and cultural context. Alongside direct literary connections, attention has also turned to typological parallels – thematic and semantic similarities in different national literatures generated by comparable historical experiences, cultural memories, and problems of identity, without presupposing direct literary contact. Thus, the traditional paradigm of ‘literary relations’ has not disappeared; it has expanded and been supplemented by the methods of contemporary comparative and cultural research.

Conclusion

The history of teaching Ukrainian literature at Tbilisi State University reveals a continuous but heterogeneous process. In the 1940s, it began within the institutional frameworks of Russian literature and the ‘Litera-

tures of the Peoples of the USSR’; during the 1950s-1980s, a programmatic, professional, and Georgian-language teaching base was gradually created; in the post-Soviet period, the de-ideologization of the Soviet legacy was accompanied by an expansion of the range of authors and problems studied and by methodological renewal in their interpretation.

The study also reveals the contradictory character of Soviet educational and scholarly policy: on the one hand, the system created institutional opportunities for teaching and researching Ukrainian literature; on the other, it determined its content and interpretation through Soviet ideological models. Within this same institutional space, however, the work of several generations of scholars and teachers – and especially Otar Bakanidze’s many years of scholarly and organizational activity – gradually established the teaching of Ukrainian literature as an independent academic field within Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

Post-Soviet transformation did not mean a complete rejection of the academic tradition formed earlier. The research direction of ‘literary relations’ was retained, but its interpretive framework changed and expanded: traditional historical and contact-oriented research was supplemented by approaches from contemporary comparative literature, imagology, cultural studies, memory and trauma studies, and colonial and postcolonial studies. At the same time, authors and literary phenomena

that had been understudied in the Soviet period or excluded for ideological reasons came to occupy an important place in teaching and research.

Thus, more than eight decades of teaching Ukrainian literature at TSU demonstrate not only the institutional development of the field but also the gradual transformation of an aca-

demic paradigm – from teaching initiated within the Soviet model of the ‘Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR’ to contemporary Ukrainian Studies, which approaches Ukrainian literature as part of an independent national culture while also situating it within European and world literary processes.

Notes

- ¹ E. Chkhaidze, „Migrations of the Russian Language and the State Academic Institutions: Notes on Its Cultivation and Depopularization in Georgia and Its Peripheries (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)”, *Bialorutenistyka Bialostocka*, Vol. 14, 2022, pp. 237-264.
- ² И. Модебадзе, Т. Мерелишвили, „Последние «из могикан», или Кризис грузинской русистики”, *TSQ*, № 53, Summer 2015, pp. 113-134.
- ³ О. Баканидзе, Украинистика в Тбилисском государственном университете. *Научные труды, серия: филология, том XIII*. Санкт-Петербург, Издательство Тбилисского университета, Тбилиси, 2007, pp. 40-49.
- ⁴ І. Луценко, „Біля чистих джерел Братерства”, *Райдужними мостами. Українсько-грузинські літературні зв'язки*, Київ: видавництво художньої літератури «Дніпро», 1968, pp. 217-232.
- ⁵ Central Archive of Contemporary History, National Archives of Georgia, Fond No. 473, Inventory No. 21, File No. 163
- ⁶ Fond No. 471, Inventory No. 21, File No. 146.
- ⁷ R. Pipes, *Communism*, Translated by Levan Ghambashidze, Intelekti, Tbilisi, pp. 115-116.
- ⁸ ‘Interest in Ukraine Will Never Fade in Georgia,’ interview with Prof. Otar Bakanidze by Malkhaz Chkadua. *Sakartvelo/Сакартвело*, No. 2(11), 2011, pp. 18-23.
- ⁹ M. Kintsurashvili, ‘From the History of the Literary Fellowship of Ukraine and Georgia,’ manuscript, *Archive of the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature*, No. 25381, pp. 1-3.
- ¹⁰ Fond No. 471, Inventory No. 21, File No. 339.
- ¹¹ Idem, File No. 362.
- ¹² Idem, (Minutes No. 15).
- ¹³ Д. Цыганов, „Советская многонациональная литература как имперская практика”. *Новое литературное обозрение*, 2005, №3, pp. 402-416.
- ¹⁴ С. Екельник, „Украинская историческая память и советский канон: как определялось национальное наследие Украины в сталинскую эпоху”, *Ab Imperio*, 2/2004, pp. 77-123.
- ¹⁵ *История украинской литературы, т. 1*. Киев: Издательство Академии наук Украинской ССР, 1954. 758 p.
- ¹⁶ Т. Буачидзе, *Программа по истории украинской и белорусской*

литературы. Для филологического факультета Тбилисского государственного университета им. И. В. Сталина. Тбилиси, 1956, 21 р.

¹⁷ Fond No. 471, Inventory No. 21, File No. 339 (folio 20).

¹⁸ L. Nemsadze, O. Bakanidze, *Department of National Literatures, Literary Relations and Translation*, TSU Press, Tbilisi, 2005, pp. 33-63.

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¹⁹ *Українська радянська література*. Київ: «Вища школа», 1979, 653 р.

²⁰ *Программа восточнославянских литератур*. Составители: проф. О. А. Баканидзе, доц. К. К. Квачантирадзе, Издательство Тбилисского университета, Тбилиси, 1997, 32 р.

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