

**Black Sea as a Literary and Cultural Space 4
and Beyond:
Inter-Reflections of Translation and Literature**

URL: <https://bsu.edu.ge/sub-57/page/2-405/index.html?lang=en>

The conference seeks to explore how literary and translational trajectories generate what may be termed inter-reflexive systems: configurations in which translations interact not only with source texts but also with other translations, historical imaginaries, and cognitive schemas embedded within specific cultural contexts of the Black Sea and beyond.

Edith W. Clowes conceptualises post-Soviet culture in *Russia on the Edge: Imagined Geographies and Post-Soviet Identity* (Cornell University Press, 2011) and “The Return of Eurasia: Imagining Empire in Post-Soviet Russia” (*Ab Imperio*, 3 (2005), 69–96). Clowes’s article shifts imperial imaginaries and frames the Black Sea as a dynamic cultural site rather than a periphery.

Positioned at the intersection of empires, languages, and shifting cultural hegemonies, the Black Sea constitutes a complex translational space shaped by asymmetrical flows, mediated circulation, and layered dependencies. Therefore, a literature of the Black Sea region, would be typically a ‘Small’ Literature, as points out Yordan Lyutskanov (“A ‘Small’ Literature, that is: Literature with Limited Translational Opportunities, of Structural Undercapacity and Voluntary Self-diminishment,” 2024): a national literature posed to dependence on dominant linguistic channels that perpetuates structural subordination. Susanna Witt (2011: 150-151) explores the themes instrumental to the study of literary translation in the context of Soviet culture, pointing out that there are gaps in research regarding the study of literary translation in the context of Soviet culture. This argument can be well-extended to the Black Sea translational space.

Bela Tsipuria’s works highlight Georgia’s “in-between” position, where cultural texts reveal both imposed imperial narratives and local efforts to preserve agency (2021). Her work often examines how literary representation functions as a site where colonial power is reproduced, challenged, or reimagined in the post-Soviet context (2016).

Hayate Sotome considers Ilia Chavchavadze's "Letters of a Traveler" (2019) as a distinctly postcolonial work, and Gül Mükerrrem Öztürk (2025), in the same light, writes about Translation and Power in Georgia exploring Socialist Realism to Post-Soviet Market Pressures.

Khatuna Beridze’s *Black Sea, Trilingual Reflections: Georgian and Russian Literature (2022–2023)* identifies a “trilingual condition” in Georgian writing that oscillates between languages and interlinear trots. Her theoretical approach to the analysis explores theories of Cognitive Linguistics (Lacoff, Johnson, 1989, 1999), the Habitus (Bourdieu's (1991) and Cultural Archive (Said, 1993).

Ukrainian research, led by Lada Kolomiyets (2023), exposes the political anatomy of translation under totalitarian rule. Her archival studies of the 1930s “Executed Renaissance” demonstrate how Stalinist purges destroyed Ukraine’s direct Western translation culture.

Bulgarian scholarship, from Boyko Penchev (2012), to Alexander Kiossev (1995, 2004), and Miglena Nikolchina (2013) - shifts the focus from coercion to voluntary emulation.

Romanian theorists highlight translation as both refuge and resistance. Lidia Vianu’s (1998) idea of “translation as asylum” describes how writers used translation to survive censorship, keeping literary language alive under the “wooden language” of propaganda. Maria Sass (2018) redefines translation as an internal dialogue between Romania’s German and Romanian traditions, the Transylvanian model where translation becomes a means of European self-identification rather than subordination.

Turkish research, represented by Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar and Saliha Paker (2015), foregrounds translation as a tool of state planning and ideological re-engineering.

The global circulation of Georgian literature offers a particularly revealing case of how “small literatures” navigate asymmetrical translation systems and negotiate visibility within the world literary space. In this context, translation emerges not merely as transfer but as a strategic act of cultural positioning, where translational choices shape how national literature is framed for international audiences.

Alexis Nuselovici (Nouss) (2022) advocates for a paratranslational ethics that embraces the threshold as a space of creative tension, where translation is an act of hospitality to the foreign without erasing its difference. It calls for translators to recognize their role as active, critical agents who generate new linguistic and cultural forms through the very act of translating *on the threshold*.

Mzago Dokhtourichvili's article “*La représentation linguistique de différentes cultures à travers une même langue* (2021) of Assia Djebar (Algeria), Tahar Ben Jelloun (Morocco), and Andrei Makine

(Russia) demonstrates how writers use French as a non-native language to express distinct cultural identities while challenging fixed notions of belonging. Against this background, the situational analysis of Black Sea writers is interesting to analyze: there are other models of exile and cultural translation.

What unites the literatures of the Black Sea region in translation?

Shakespeare stands as a shared translational and cultural axis of the Black Sea cultures. Circulating across the region through direct and indirect translations, Shakespeare's works offer a unique opportunity to trace diachronic shifts, intermediary influences, and inter-reflexive translation practices. In many cases, Shakespeare in the Black Sea context is not a direct encounter with the English original, but a palimpsestic construct, shaped by prior translations and dominant linguistic filters.

Recent developments in corpus-based and corpus-driven translation studies offer powerful tools for systematically investigating the Black Sea translational space, particularly in relation to asymmetrical mediation, indirect translation, and diachronic layering. Corpus linguistic approaches with aligned multilingual corpora make it possible to empirically identify whether translations are produced directly from source texts or mediated through dominant languages, and to map how these trajectories evolve across time. Researchers can trace recurring patterns in lexical choice, stylistic normalization, pragmatic shifts, and the persistence of intermediary influence. At the same time, the integration of cognitive linguistics, enables a deeper analysis of how meaning is not merely transferred but restructured in translation. This cognitive dimension intersects productively with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which foregrounds the historically and socially conditioned dispositions guiding translators' choices. In the Black Sea context and beyond, translational habitus may reflect ideological constraints, institutional norms, and inherited literary models. This conference proposes to reconceptualize the Black Sea as a dynamic laboratory of translation, where texts do not merely move between languages but are continuously reconstituted through processes of mediation, reinterpretation, and ideological reframing. Researchers are invited to present case studies of modern translations, exploring how contemporary works are reframed across linguistic and cultural boundaries, and how they negotiate between local specificity and global legibility.

Key Topics

The main topics of the conference are:

- The Black Sea, National Literature and Translation
- The Black Sea and Beyond: The Practice of Literary Translation: Empirical Studies
- Understanding Shakespeare in the Common Cultural-Translational Space of the Black Sea
- From Cognitive Linguistics to Cognitive Translation Studies
- Literary and Translation Inter-Reflections in the Contexts of Icon Schemes, Habitus and Cultural Archives
- Corpus Linguistic Research Models of Literary Translation
- Cultural Imperialism and Censorship
- Linguistic Exile and Cultural Translation

The previous conferences included:

25-27 October, 2018. Black Sea as a Literary and Cultural Space (I); <https://blacksea.iliauni.edu.ge/en/> - held at Ilia State University, Georgia;

30 March – 1 April 2020. Black Sea as a Literary and Cultural Space (II): peoples and communities. https://www.bas.bg/?tribe_events=25923&lang=en held online at Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski," Bulgaria.

20-21 November, 2025. The Black Sea as a Literary and Cultural Space (III): Ruins (Ancient and Modern) and Mobilities, held at Ovidius University, Constanta, Romania.

<https://sites.utexas.edu/creees/2025/06/05/cfp-the-black-sea-as-a-literary-and-cultural-space-university-of-constantia-romania/>

Topical conferences also included:

5-6 October 2018: "East European Multicultural Space" at Batumi State University, Georgia;

<https://bsu.edu.ge/sub-41/page/2-246/index.html?lang=en> ; <https://www.bsu.edu.ge/main/page/10932/index.html>

29-30 March, 2024: “Re-envisioning the Black Sea in Literature and Historiography: Backwater or oikoumenē?” held at Virginia University, US;
<https://classics.as.virginia.edu/symposium-re-envisioning-black-sea-literature-and-historiography>

For Authors

Abstract Submission Guidelines

- Abstract length: 300–350 words
- Conference languages: English (French and Georgian - Conference languages: English (French and Georgian - in this case full-text articles have to be submitted 2 weeks before the conference)
- Keywords: maximum 5

Abstract formatting guidelines

1. Margins: top, bottom, left, right - 2 cm. Paragraph 1.25 cm.
2. The main text of the abstract should be in the font: Sylfaen for the Georgian version, and Times New Roman, 12 pt., line spacing - 1.0 for abstracts prepared in English.
3. On the first line: the author's name and surname in bold, italicized at the top right of the page. On the next line in regular font in the following order: first line - scientific/academic degree; second line - academic position in full with the name of the faculty; Third line – name of institution; Fourth line – city, country.
4. ORCID identifier - <https://orcid.org/>
5. On the next line below, the abstract title should be placed, bold, centered. Author's email address;
6. References: - at the bottom, Times New Roman, 12 pt. APA (American Psychological Association (APA) Style.
7. Keywords: Maximum 5

For the conference report, you can use the following (but not limited) thematic sources:

1. **Beridze, Khatuna.** (2023). *Black Sea, trilingual reflections: Georgian and Russian literature. Transponticae: Journal and Book Series for Black Sea Literary and Cultural Studies*, 1(3), 356–422.
2. **Beridze, Khatuna.** (2026). Inter-reflexive Theory of Translation (forthcoming).
3. **Beridze, Khatuna, Nana Kajaia.** Exploring Shakespeare Speaking Old and Modern Georgian. *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies* 13 (27), 19-32, 2025.
4. **Clowes, Edith W.** (2011). *Russia on the edge: imagined geographies and post-Soviet identity.* Cornell University Press.
5. **Dokhtourichvili, Mzago.** (2021). *La représentation linguistique de différentes cultures à travers une même langue.* De Gruyter Brill. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110642018-028>
6. **Dokhtourichvili, Mzago.** (2025) Les problèmes traductologiques ou «trahison créatrice» à la lumière de la traduction de la poésie géorgienne en français (Translation problems or "creative betrayal" in light of the translation of Georgian poetry into French), in : Denis Fadda, Carmen Saggiomo (dir.) UN COUP DE DÉS Cahier de culture française, francophone et maghrébine, La Renaissance Française ÉDITIONS, №12, p. 57-69.
7. **Gürçağlar, Şehnaz Tahir.** (2008). *The politics and poetics of translation in Turkey, 1923–1960.* Rodopi.
8. **Gürçağlar, Şehnaz Tahir, Paker, Saliha, & Milton, John** (Eds.). (2015). *Tradition, tension and translation in Turkey* (Vol. 118). John Benjamins.
9. **Hundorova, Tamara.** (n.d.). *Ukrainian postmodernism of the 1990s* (Sergiy Yakovenko, Trans.). Academic Studies Press. (Honorable Mention, Book Prize of the American Association for Ukrainian Studies 2018–2019).
<https://books.huri.harvard.edu/books/the-post-chornobyl-library>
10. **Kiossev, Alexander.** (1995) The self-colonising cultures. In *Cultural aspects of the modernisation process*, ed. by Dimităr Ginev, Francis Sejersted, Kostadinka Simeonova, Oslo: TMV-senteret, 73–81.
11. **Kiossev, Alexander.** (2004) *Heritage and inheritors: the literary canon in totalitarian Bulgaria.* John Benjamins.

12. **Kolomiyets, Lada.** (2023). The politics of literal translation in Soviet Ukraine: The case of Gogol's "The tale of how Ivan Ivanovich quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich." *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 18(3), 325–359. <https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.21020.kol>
13. **Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson.** 1999. *Philosophy in the flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*. New York: Basic Books.
14. **Lakoff, George & Turner, Mark.** 1989. *More than cool reason: a field guide to poetic metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
15. **Ljuckanov Jordan.** (2014). Introduction: translating a small literature to the global market: the Bulgarian case and beyond. *Studi Slavistici* 11, 215-223
16. **Lyutskanov, Yordan.** (2024). A "small" literature, that is: literature with limited translational opportunities, of structural undercapacity and voluntary self-diminishment. In *Contemporary Issues of Literary Studies – international symposium proceedings* (Vol. 17, pp. 644–652).
17. **Lyutskanov, Yordan.** Introduction. In *Heteroeuropeanisations: (in)capacity to stay marginal*, ed. by Y. Lyutskanov, Benedikts Kalnačs and Gaga Shurgaia, Napoli: UniOr Press, 2021, 1-61;
18. **Nikolchina, Miglena.** (2013). *Lost unicorns of the velvet revolutions: heterotopias of the seminar*. Fordham University Press.
19. **Nuselovici (Nouss), Alexis.** (2022). Paratraduction: du seuil et du traduire. *Meta*, 67(3), 665–671. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1100480ar>
20. **Nuselovici (Nouss), Alexis.** (2013). L'exil comme expérience. {halshs-00861245}.
21. **Gould, Rebecca** (2013) Inimitability versus translatability. *The Translator*, 19:1, 81-104, DOI: 10.1080/13556509.2013.10799520
22. **Öztürk, Gül Mükerrerem.** (2025). Translation and power in Georgia: postcolonial trajectories from Socialist Realism to post-Soviet market pressures. *Humanities* 14, no. 9: 174.
23. **Penchev, Boyko.** (2012). A History of the Literary Field of the People's Republic *A History of the Literary Field of the People's Republic*. Maison des Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société (Sofia)
24. **Riabchuk, Mykola.** (2011). *Postcolonial syndrome* [Postkolonialnyi syndrom. Sposterezhennia]. KIS.
25. **Sass, Maria, Pojoga, Vlad, & Baghiu, Stefan** (Eds.). (2018). *The culture of translation in Romania / Übersetzungskultur und Literaturübersetzen in Rumänien*. Peter Lang.
26. **Sotome, Hayate.** 2019. The perspective of postcolonial zoocriticism in 19th century Georgian literature. *Sjani*, 20, pp.174-184.
27. **Tlostanova, Madina.** (2017). Postsocialist ≠ postcolonial? On post-Soviet imaginary and global coloniality. In *Postcolonial perspectives on postcommunism in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 28–40). Routledge.
28. **Said, Edward W.** (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. Vintage Books. New York.
29. **Tsipuria, Bela.** (2016). Georgian modernism: Relocating Georgian culture. In *Chancen und Schwierigkeiten des interkulturellen Dialogs über ästhetische Fragen* (pp. 57–74).
30. **Tsipuria, Bela.** (2021). "The Figurative Language of Soviet Power and Georgian Literature". *Volume 3 Discourses on Nations and Identities*, edited by Daniel Syrov, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021, pp. 529-542. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110642018-041>
31. **Vianu, Lidia.** (1998). *Censorship in Romania*. Central European University Press.
32. **Witt, Susanna.** (2011). "Between the lines: totalitarianism and translation in the USSR", in: *Contexts, Subtexts and Pretexts*, 89: *Literary translation in Eastern Europe and Russia*, ed. by Brian James Baer. John Benjamins B.V., pp. 149-170.
33. **Witt, Susanna.** (2017). Institutionalized intermediates: conceptualizing Soviet practices of indirect literary translation. *Translation Studies* 10(2):1-17
DOI: 10.1080/14781700.2017.1281157

Registration

Please upload conference abstracts to the following address:

<https://bsu.edu.ge/sub-57/page/2-405/index.html?lang=en>

or email to:

Blacksea4translation@gmail.com and beridze@bsu.edu.ge

Keynote speakers:

Professor **Diana Roig-Sanz**, coordinator of GlobaLS, is an ICREA Research Professor and an ERC Starting Grant holder at the IN3 (UOC). Ramón y Cajal senior research fellow at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

https://globals.research.uoc.edu/research_lines/global-translation-flows/

Education: Aix-Marseille University (2004–2008)

Yordan Lyutskanov, Associate Professor, Department of Comparative Literature
Institute for Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
co-editor of Transponticae, journal & book series

Organizing Committee

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University

Translation and Interdisciplinary Research Centre at BSU Faculty of Humanities

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University's UNESCO Chair on Internationalization of Higher Education through Interdisciplinary Research and Development;

Co-organizers: Association Transpontica Sofia, directed by Assoc. Professor Yordan Lyutskanov, Institute of Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Scientific Council

1. Khatuna Beridze, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia
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11. Gül Mükerrerem Öztürk, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, Rize, Türkiye
12. Lada Kolomiyets, visiting professor at Dartmouth College (Ukraine, USA)
13. Tamar Siradze, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia
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Paper ethics

The paper presented by the author(s) at the conference must be the result of original research. Authors must confirm that the conference paper they are presenting represents the result of their original research and has not been previously published or submitted to another conference. The data used in the paper must be authentic and accurate.

Important Dates

Abstract submission deadline: 25 June 2026

Acceptance notification: 1-15 July

Conferences dates: 29-30 September, 2026

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