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Literary Parallels: Galaktion Tabidze and Luis de Camoens

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Abstract: The paper analyses Galaktion Tabidze's works that evince closeness to the *Lusiads*, the masterpiece of Luis de Camoens. The exploration of the diaries and autographs of Galaktion's works revealed that the interest of the Georgian poet in Portuguese literature is much more significant than it seems. Moreover, it turns out that G. Tabidze's two verses are written based on a creative impulse received through the poem *The Lusiads* by Luis de Camoens, a classic poet of Portuguese literature. The Georgian poet expresses his thoughts about Camoens' lines, Portuguese literature and culture through allusions. In this article, two verses by Galaktion which reveal a connection to *The Lusiads* are analyzed.

The re-establishment of the genetic connection between the verses by Galaktion and *The Lusiads* by Luis de Camoens is an important fact because until now this kind of closeness between the Georgian and Portuguese literature has not been observed.

Keywords: *Galaktion Tabidze; Camoens; The Lusiads.*

The exploration of the diaries and manuscripts of his works has revealed that the interest of the Georgian poet in Portuguese literature is much more significant than it seems. Moreover, it turns out that G. Tabidze's two verses are written by a creative impulse received through the poem *The Lusiads* by Luis de Camoens, a classic poet of Portuguese literature. The Georgian poet expresses his thoughts about Camoens' lines, Portuguese literature and culture through allusions. In this article, two verses by Galaktion, which reveal a connection to *The Lusiads*, are analyzed.

The re-establishment of the genetic connection between the verses by Galaktion and *The Lusiads* by Luis de Camoens is a significant fact in this respect because, until now, such closeness between Georgian and Portuguese literature has not been observed.

The 7th volume of *Eight Volumes, Complete set of Works* by Galaktion Tabidze, published in 1950, opens with a verse devoted to Stalin. The poet wishes happy birthday to the great leader on behalf of the Georgians with his verse, *Beginning of the New Year*. The same volume finishes with the long verse, *1950*, dedicated to the praiseworthy *Clearly Shown Ways* by Lenin and Stalin. In the book, one can find several verses reflecting the socialistic conjuncture; the poet eagerly assures us that merging dreams and reality has been already accomplished, and that is why the new epoch and the new chapter in the history textbook are so „fierce“. Against the background of the ideological texts, a less-known, six-stanza verse, *Let it Become Loud!* draws the readers' attention. This very verse was for the only time published in the 7th volume of the *Eight Volumes*, a *Complete set of Works* by Galaktion Tabidze in his lifetime.

Let it Become Loud! begins with a call of a lyric hero who addresses himself (or a like-minded poet):

Let it Become Loud, let it boil with the feeling and not to show the age.
let our lyres sound, thunder with an old power!

[3, p. 174]

These lines are followed by an acute disclosure of a specific group of people who do not see the light. Moreover, these people perceive dark as light. Their minds are drugged and obsessed with only one thought.

Presently, some exhausted, senseless people
are left with a sole aspiration,

with a sole center for passion –
the vain and filthy passion that rises whenever
an eye, a greedy eye sees the shining gold!

[3, p. 174]

Who did the author imply by “some people”? The answer to this question is given in the following stanza, wherein the lyric hero starts discussing his own creative belief.

And you see existence in this way: if you desire to gain what you desire,
talk to us unselfishly, old friend.

[3, p. 175]

In my opinion, this confrontation (some people – and you, a filthy passion – an unselfish talk) shows that Galaktion tries to point out a group of artists who talk selfishly. Moreover, if we take into consideration the general context, we can conclude that Galaktion’s criticism refers to those poets who follow the government’s orders and write accordingly.

You can make a lyre tell the truth, give it strong firmness,
you cannot make it turn off from the chosen path and cannot bribe it
with gold.

[3, p. 175]

On the one hand, confrontation with the situation wherein gratification and flattery are blooming as well as hinting in verses regarding the rising of the time-serving artists. However, at the same time, writing about creative principles: devotion to the truth and talk about incorruptibility would not be very safe in the epoch of the totalitarian regime. It should be taken into consideration that perhaps the reason why the poet dates *Let it be Loud!* by 1950 and publishes it in the victorious socialistic epoch and not in 1935 when the so-called class confrontations reach the highest point. Nevertheless, it should not be excluded that this verse could have indeed been written in the 1930s, but Galaktion, for some unknown reasons, was not able to publish it the following fifteen years.

We have three original documents of *Let it be Loud!* Observation of these handwritten documents shows that the original version of the verse is preserved in one of them (3663). This very version which the poet wrote in his notebook and dated by 1930 greatly differs from the latest, printed version. First of all, it

is written in the prosaic form: Enough, Muse, enough. There are no more accords left on my lyre. Sounds are no longer heard in my voice; I cannot sing for the deaf, coarsened people who have lost the ability to see beauty. And there is nothing, completely nothing in my homeland that can inspire my soul and make my genius sing; an unconscious, exhausted nation that deserves hatred has a sole aspiration – gold. The vain aspiration of the vain, lowlife people. On the same page, below this fragment is presents the same content but this time in the form of the verse:

Enough, Muse, enough! my lyre shows age.
 No bells of accords and my voice has become old and aged.
 I cannot sing where people are deaf and coarsened.
 They have lost an ability to see t beauty.
 Their minds are darkened by drugs.
 O, homeland! nothing is left, absolutely nothing
 to dress lyre in the fine silk and make Wandering Jew sing once again!
 an unconscious, exhausted spit-deserving nation
 has a sole aspiration, a sole center for passion –
 the vain and filthy passion that rises whenever
 an eye, a greedy eye sees the shining gold!

The phrase spit-deserving nation reminds us about the lines from the verse *The Plea* by Akaki Tsereteli (You deserve spit, Georgia); The closeness to Akaki Tsereteli's works is observed in the same verse, however, in another manuscript (4231), the interpolated stanzas are from the poem *Tornike Eristavi* (Amirani was chained/ to the Caucasus/ was surrounded by crows and ravens/ his heart was torn into pieces) and, in the published version of the poem, the incorruptible lyre and the motive of poet's devotion to the truth (cf: Galaktion: You can make a lyre tell the truth, give it strong firmness. Akaki: I need Changuri to serve the truth). Despite these similarities, *Let It Become Loud!* was not written by creative impulses received from Akaki Tsereteli's works. It has much more unexpected literary source.

In the handwritten copy of the poet discussed above, in the left corner of the page, together with the prosaic version of the verse, one can read the following word: Camoens.

This raises a question: what does the name of the great Portuguese poet, one of the significant representatives of the late Renaissance period, Luis de Camoens (1524/25-1580), mean here? Is there any secret connection between the texts of these authors? In the comments to the verse published in the 4th volume of the Twelve Volumes, Complete Set of the Works by G. Tabidze, we read: "... It is possible that the version's main idea was taken from some works of a Portuguese poet, Camoens. However, we were not able to find anything similar with Camoens..." [2, p. 329].

Our experience has shown that comments and hints in the handwritten copies of Galaktion usually show the correct direction. Therefore, despite the unsuccessful attempts of my predecessors, I continued looking for the prime source of the verse by Galaktion. The search was productive, and it was discovered that the prosaic fragment written in the poet's notebook, as well as its rhymed version are translations of one of the sections of the epic poem, *The Lusiads* by Luis de Camoens.

The Lusiads (in Portuguese – *Os Lusíadas*) represents a heroic poem like *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*, tells us about the voyages of Vasco and Gama and praises the historic past. The poem divided into ten cantos consists of the introduction, the main part and the epilogue. For us, the object of interest is the epilogue (Stanzas: 145-156) which is the appeal to King Sebastian, the ruler of Portugal. The very first stanza – the call to Muse – echoes the text written in the notebook of Galaktion:

Nô mais, Musa, nô mais, que a Lira tenho
Destemperada e a voz enrouquecida,
E não do canto, mas de ver que venho
Cantar a gente surda e endurecida.
O favor com que mais se acende o engenho
Não no dá a Pátria, não, que está metida
No gosto da cobiça, e na rudeza
Dũa austera, apagada e vil tristeza...
(Enough, my muse, thy wearied wing no more
Must to the seat of Jove triumphant soar.
Chill'd by my nation's cold neglect, thy fires
Glow bold no more, and all thy rage expires.
Yet thou, Sebastian, thou, my king, attend;

Behold what glories on thy throne descend!
 Shall haughty Gaul or sterner Albion boast
 That all the Lusian fame in thee is lost!)
 (Translator: William Julius Mickle)

When Galaktion's verse was being written, *The Lusiads* was not translated into Georgian. The poet probably read the poem's Russian translation. In the 30s of the previous century, *The Lusiads* was fully translated (by Mikhail Travchetov). However, due to a number of reasons, it was not published. Only several of its fragments were published in literary journals. Nevertheless, since the 17th century, some sections of works by Camoens were translated into Russian and were published numerous times. After studying them it becomes clear that none of those translated texts coincides with the passage from *The Lusiads* that we are interested in.

In this seemingly hopeless situation, we consider that Galaktion may have read about Camoens in some scholarly, literary paper wherein the epilogue of *The Lusiads* was cited.

I began rechecking the poet's library in order to find the source. Galaktion's private library is preserved in the State Museum of Georgian Literature where my attention was drawn to *A History of Literature* by a German literary critic, Johannes Scherr. According to the content of the book, Portuguese literature was allotted a separate section wherein the life and work of Luis de Camoens were emotionally described. The author in his book vividly tells us the story of how Camoens survived the shipwreck and how his manuscript of *The Lusiads* was saved. We also read that Camoens dedicated his poem to the ruler of Portugal. Despite the general admiration caused by the poem after its publishing, the money set as an allowance for the poet was so insignificant that Camoens was in danger of dying of hunger. Scherr also speaks about the profound pain that the Portuguese poet suffered before dying: The fall of the country and losing freedom for Camoens was as painful as his own personal difficulties.

Emphasizing these facts would undoubtedly cause Galaktion's interest and sympathy. It seems that the poet read the section where Scherr introduces the contents of *The Lusiads* attentively. While discussing the tenth canto, Johann Scherr provides the beginning of the epilogue, the 145th stanza in the Portuguese language and below, in the footnote is given the word-for-word translation in Russian. The footnote is circled with the pencil by Galaktion himself. Let us

compare the Russian word- for- word translation to the lines of the poet's notebook:

Camoens:

“Довольно, муза, довольно, на моей лире нет более акордов, в моем голосе нет более звуков; я не могу петь для глухого, загрубевшего народа, который уже не видит более прекрасного. Да и ничего уже, ничего нет теперь в отечестве, что могло бы вдохновить мой гений: у бессмысленного, тупого, презренного народа осталась только одна страсть, - низкая и суетная страсть к золоту”.

(Enough, Muse, enough. The accords have left my lyre. There are no sounds heard in my voice anymore; I cannot sing for the deaf, coarsened people who have lost the ability to see beauty. And there is nothing, completely nothing, in my homeland that can inspire my soul and make my genius sing; an unconscious, exhausted nation that deserves hatred has a sole aspiration - gold. The base and vain aspiration of the vain, lowlife people).

Galaktion:

Enough, Muse, enough. There are no more accords left on my lyre. Sounds are no longer heard in my voice; I cannot sing for the deaf, coarsened people who have lost the ability to see beauty. And there is nothing, completely nothing in my homeland that can inspire my soul and make my genius sing; an unconscious, exhausted nation that deserves hatred has a sole aspiration - gold. The vain aspiration of the vain, lowlife people.

It is clear that Galaktion wrote a prosaic fragment of Camoens's stanzas based on the Russian word- for-word translation.. Having defined the source, logically, the following questions come to my mind: why did Galaktion become so interested in The Lusiads? Why did he translate the stanzas? To answer these questions will not be difficult if we take into consideration a general context of the translated stanzas.

Camoens is a patriot poet. A man who gives up his life for the prosperity of his homeland. In the epilogue of the Lusiads, when he addresses the king, he is saddened because the heroic world depicted by his poetic genius has already become part of the past, that the modernity does not leave space for heroism. People acquired other, selfish-grabbing aspirations and all these are brought by time, by the dark age which lacks morality. There are two main reasons why Ca-

moens asks Muse to become quiet. Firstly, there is nothing left in his homeland that the genius poet could admire and secondly, there is no one who could truly enjoy and appreciate beauty.

It seems that Galaktion finds similarities between Georgia of that period and Camoen's homeland. As well as this, he read his own attitude towards reality in the mood of the Portuguese poet.

That is how a strange parallel between the epoch of Camoens and Galaktion's period of Georgia is created.

As has been already mentioned, Luis de Camoens' stanzas were written down in Galaktion's notebook in the 30s. This fact is significant not only for dating the final edition, but here, what is more important is that by translating this stanza, the Georgian poet reveals his real attitude towards Sovietized Georgia and towards the bloodthirsty epoch. During the discussion, it should be taken into consideration that due to the pure translation interests or goals, Galaktion does not create the Georgian version of the very text. In some way, his so-called translations represent materials for the creation of a new verse – the foreign text selected for translation is so close to the poet's mood that Galaktion considers that it completely corresponds to his spirit.

Camoens' words have such a great impression on the Georgian poet that he not only made the word-for-word translation from Russian but also created a rhymed version of the text and later edited and corrected his verse. Introducing the theme of Wandering Jew (make Wandering Jew sing once again!) means that Galaktions starts working on putting the translation in his own creative context and, based on this, writes a new verse. However, in this manuscript, the poet does not finish the text. Certainly, Galaktion understands that it would be impossible to publish the verse with such content. Referring to Camoens would not have helped either as the works of the classic Portuguese poet in the 1930s would not have been appreciated either. It is hard to believe but Camoens is proclaimed as the apologist of capitalistic expansion and his *The Lusads* is considered the text praising imperialism.

However, Galaktion cannot waive the Camoens' stanza. First, he set it in the context of Industrial Poetry, but, in the end, he was not able to spare his dear stanzas for verses about the steamboats and machines (this peculiar attempt is reflected in the manuscript #276 and the word- for- word translation belongs to the beginning of the 30s). Later, he writes another – the third versi-

on of this text, which shows more closeness to the verse, *Let it Become Loud!* published in the 7th volume of *Twelve Volumes, Complete set of Works* by the Georgian poet. In manuscript (4231) the text is entitled *To My Friend Poet* and has almost nothing in common with the primary source – Camoens' stanza. Here, the lyric hero does not ask Muse to stop conversing. On the contrary, he asks the Muse to play the lyre and make it sing loud. Here, the people with filthy passion vanish and their place is taken by a specific group of artists; the stanza about the homeland that becomes foreign to the poet is deleted. Instead, there is a narration about unselfishness and the motives to serve the truth. In the end, despite the changes, Galaktion creates the text which is not considered to be much safer in that period.

It is hard to prove but I believe that the handwritten copy also belongs to the 1930s. However, the corrections which make it similar to the printed version must have been edited shortly before its publishing.

Through the impressions obtained from Camoens's stanzas, Galaktion creates a different text based on his inspirational source. Furthermore, *Let it Become Loud!* is understood as a response of the Georgian poet to the epilogue of *The Lusiads* by Camoens. Despite the difficult situation, Galaktion considers that the lyre should sing, cry, boil with emotions and with a full voice shout the truth.

The creative transformation of the final scene of the text is the following: the first written copy of the verse by Galaktion is almost the same as it repeats Camoens text. It shows the poet's real moral condition and his attitude towards the totalitarian epoch. The final version of the verse depicts the poet's ethical standpoint in the 50s when Galaktion constantly thinks about such forgotten things as literary conscience.

I consider that *Let it Become Loud!* which was written based on the inspiration from *The Lusiads* stanza, represents the landmark model of the civilian lyrics of Galaktion Tabidze. It is one of the first lyrical verses of the Georgian poetry of the 30s-50s of the 19th century that expresses a critical attitude towards the socialist reality. Perhaps, it's worth mentioning that the Georgian version of the stanza of *The Lusiads* by Camoens written in Galaktion's notebook is the very first attempt at the translation.

Galaktion Tabidze was interested in Luis de Camoens before the 1930s. The Portuguese poet was mentioned in Galaktion's verse, *Inesa*, which Galaktion

dates to 1917. However, if we take into consideration the publication date (1927), it must have been created in the 1920s.

Inesa throws light on nobody as
on new Cubells and old Camoens,
they forever moan,
Inesa, Inesa.
Now there is only dim shadow,
the same plea and Castillia;
once it seemed as sunny plea
at door Infanta.
Time has changed, but heart brought up
with that song still sings
Inesa, Inesa.

In the handwritten copy of the verse, the title is indicated as Ines de Castro, but the subtitle is A legend. The verse addresses a historical person, Inesa de Castro, the wife of the king of Portugal, Don Pedru.

The love story of the Castilian noblewoman, Ines de Castro and the Portuguese Prince, Don Pedru is well-known worldwide. Their love became an inspiration for numerous poets, including Galaktion, a Georgian poet, and author of Inesa.

Galaktion must have learned about this popular story spread all over Europe through the book, *The Tales about Love* written by a Russian writer and translator, Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik ("Сказания о любви". М., 1910). In this work, this tragic love story is represented in the form of a novella.

A Castilian noblewoman – Ines de Castro was secretly married to the Royal Prince of Portugal, Don Pedru, who was a widower, but from the previous marriage had a son – the heir to the throne. The Royal Council and king Alfonso IV were afraid that one day, one of the four children of Pedru and Ines de Castro will desire to rule the country and attempt to steal the rightful throne from the heir. For this, along with other reasons, the Council punished Ines de Castro with death. After the death of his beloved, the Prince changed. He became an enemy of his own father and started the civil war in the country. Soon Alfonso died, and Pedru became the king. The new king promises his nation that in the nearest future, they will meet his wife, the new queen of Portugal. According to

the legend, Pedru ordered to dig out Ines de Castro from her grave, dress her like a queen, put on her head the royal crown and sit her on the throne. Following the king's desire, the nobles expressed their respect for the new queen by kissing her hand. Pedru fulfilled his promise to her beloved and made Ines de Castro the lawful queen of Portugal. Let us return to Galaktion's verse. At the beginning of the verse, he mentions two artists – New Cubells and old Camoens as well as their sympathy towards the queen of Portugal, This points out a special attitude of the poet. This attitude is even more specified in the written copy of the verse.

Inesa throws legends around,
many are dying from anger...
She was loved by Cubells, Camoens...
Inesa, everywhere Inesa, Inesa.
Eternal dream, sings and throws legends
woman, who tortured Cubells, Camoens...

In the second volume of the Twelve Volume, Complete Set of Works by Galaktion, Inesa is accompanied by the comment in which Cubells is referred to as a Portuguese poet whereas Camoens Luis (1524-1580) is classed as a great Portuguese poet. Although both of the poets are named, there is not a single word about the kind of connection Cubells and Camoens have to Ines de Castro. Nevertheless, both the manuscript and the printed text indicate their distinguished, specific attitude towards the queen.

In the comment, Cubells is presented without mentioning the name; he is referred to as a Portuguese poet. However, during the research, he turned out to be a Spanish painter Salvador Martinez Cubells (1845-1914), who painted the episode from the legend about Ines de Castro. On the canvas he depicts the following scene: on the left of King Pedru I is a dead woman dressed in the bride's gown and nobles who are patiently waiting to meet their new queen.

In the comment Camoens is defined correctly, however, in this case, there is absolutely no information about how Ines de Castro throws light on the great Portuguese poet.

In the third canto of The Lusiads (118-137 stanzas) which represents the poem's most lyric episode, with great sympathy, Camoens tells us about the unique and exciting love between Ines de Castro and Don Pedru. Moreover, Johannes

Scherr in his *A History of Literature* discusses this passage in detail. Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik in her novella, *Ines de Castro* dedicates the stanza from the *Lusiads*: “Ты, которая, после своей смерти стала королевой” (“You, who became the queen after your death”) as an epigraph.

Perhaps the only interest of Galaktion in this unique story of love and devotion is not only the theme for verse, but is determined by some specific impulses of a personal nature. However, this is a topic of other research. Finally, it is worth mentioning that Inesa by Galaktion Tabidze would beautify the world of *Inesiana*, vast and diverse bibliography of works created on the theme of Ines de Castro.

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