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ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

REWRITING ALTERITY: CHALLENGES OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSLATIONS OF THE CLASSICS IN 1590s ENGLAND AND OF SHAKESPEARE IN 1890s ROMANIA

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Keywords: classical literature in translation, early modern translation, geocriticism and spatial literary studies, navigation and travel writing, translation theory, Romanian translations of Shakespeare

This dissertation examines the cultural framework of translation as a dialogic, interdisciplinary, and continuous activity at the turn of the century by comparing translations of the classics, as well as those of geography and travel literature in 1590s England, with translations of Shakespeare as a Western theatre classic in 1890s Romania. The 1590s in Elizabethan England saw an unprecedented and unsurpassed flowering of English translation and appropriation of Greek and Latin classical writers and of early modern geography and travel narratives—from Ovid, Vergil, Plutarch and Pliny to Pedro de Medina, Martín Cortés, or Antonio Galvão. The 1890s in the Old Kingdom of Romania was an analogous period of cultural zenith and globalization, when Shakespeare's plays were translated by Scarlat Ion Ghica, Dimitrie Ghika, and Haralamb Lecca. As a result, translations of Shakespeare were a means of rewriting Romanian cultural alterity in relation to the Western canonical literary figure. No study has accounted comparatively for the cultural assimilation and appropriation through translations at the turn of the century (1590s in England and 1890s in the Old Kingdom of Romania), in cultures distant in space and at different times, and this dissertation is its first comprehensive comparative treatment. Using quantitative data of my survey and close-text analysis, as well as the latest developments in translation theory, cultural anthropology, cultural studies, cultural geography, and geocritical literary studies, this dissertation explores how cultures belonging to different ranges of spatiality and temporality adapted to cross-cultural rewritings. I locate the challenges of translation as a means of cross-cultural communication in space and time in relation to specific factors, which I categorize as cultural, religious, geopolitical, and gender-based ones.

As an additional contribution to Romanian Shakespeare in translation studies, with a specific focus on the 1590s and 1890s periods, this dissertation fills a gap by connecting comparatively the 1590s Elizabethan practice of translation and its role in fashioning the rising national language and cultural identity with Romanian translations of Shakespeare in the 1890s, at a point of intellectual zenith for the emerging modern nation. Furthermore, this dissertation is breaking new ground in the field of both early modern English studies and Romanian literary research, since it draws on translation theory in conjunction with textual and spatial analysis.

Recent translation theory has forged a re-evaluation of translation as a literary medium, pointing to the dialogical nature of translation (Benjamin 21). Positing the inseparability of literary works from their linguistic and cultural contexts, translation theorists have advanced notions as “the translator as a cross-cultural mediator” (Bassnett 95) and have shown the central position of translated literature in the “literary polysystem” (Even-Zohar 192). The cultural space of reception and adaptation of Shakespeare has been interpreted in the light of poststructuralist theories, which acknowledge the tension between literature, the production of culture and the politics of place, and attribute cognitive significance to the culturally mediated spatial sensibilities. The concepts of “relational space” (Murdoch 1), “production of space” (Levebvre 31) and the dichotomy *espace-lieu* prefigured by Michel de Certeau (117) lie at the basis of the spatially-oriented research in this dissertation. Geocriticism and spatial literary studies have emphasized the importance of space and place in fashioning cultural identity by focusing on “the experience of place” (Tally x) in the attempt to “map possible worlds” (Westphal 73). I have used the notions of Romania as an “island of Latinity” (Boia, *Romania: Borderland of Europe* 28) and the “insular syndrome” (Boia, “Romania, a Borderland” 261) to establish the parameters of rewriting alterity in Romanian translations of Shakespeare. To the concept of “cultural rewriting” through translation (Bassnett and Lefevere xi), I add the geocritical reformulation of cultural *emplacement* to show that the choices translators make, or the development of translation practices at a certain time, depend on the geopolitical factors and spatial relations among the participants in the cultural exchange. Translation is a cultural endeavour and, therefore, it is dependent on the time and space in which it is produced, as well as the geopolitical positioning of the target culture. The cultural work these translations perform—whether in 1590s England or 1890s Romania—is the refraction of a specific production of space, in relation to social, economic, political, and intellectual specificities.

Using this growing field of research and scholarship, we can enhance our understanding of translation as it existed during the 1590s in England and the 1890s in Romania. For the early modern writer, translation was a fluid concept, and recent theoretical approaches highlight the variety of cross-cultural rewritings in translation. The cross-cultural approach from the perspective of literary spatiality is an emerging field that focuses on the dynamic relations among space, place, and literature. Recent Romanian scholarship in the field of translations of Shakespeare has been fundamental to my research, especially the East–West dichotomy mirrored through Romania’s geopolitical position in fashioning nineteenth-century translations of Shakespeare (Nicolaescu

286) and the need of “recycling” canonical texts by studying early translations of Shakespeare (Brînzeu 28). The 1590s Elizabethan translations of the classics and the Romanian translations of Shakespeare’s figure as a classic in the 1890s provide new ways of thinking about translation and adaptation in fashioning emergent cultural and national identities in terms of specific spatial and geopolitical conditions. Romanian translations of Shakespeare’s plays in the 1890s perform the cultural function of calibrating Romanian culture and linking theatrical practices to Western European models. Cross-cultural communication via translations of Shakespeare’s plays in nineteenth-century Romania serves as a means of asserting an unrecognized literary practice in a space lying at the crossroads of empires. This is meant to elevate the status of the target culture by linking it to an Elizabethan author whose established standards of canonicity have been generally accepted.

This comparative approach from the perspective of geocritical literary studies develops along three directions. First, I show how translators contribute to the changing status of their trade in 1590s Elizabethan England and 1890s Romania and how they manipulate their Greek/Latin or German/French/English source texts for their target culture’s consumption in a specific space to produce pragmatic translations. Second, I discuss the ways in which translators help define Englishness or Romanian selfhood and foreignness—constructing English or Romanian nationhood and identity as effectively as original vernacular projects do. Third, I analyse how translators convert the competing energies of the revered writers from their sources in a way that reflects and helps shape their historical milieu: the unstable environment of the Elizabethan 1590s, or the Romanian 1890s. While early modern English translators provide functional versions of classical texts in order to renew language and practices and re-order cultural structures to make them more intelligible to their public, Romanian translators of Shakespeare’s plays reshape an emergent cultural identity based on revitalized language and practices according to the models of modern Western theatre by highlighting theatrical performativity. Cross-cultural communication via translations is a means of expressing the modernizing movements in a language and the need to attune a culture to the globalizing trend of the times. My critical survey of Romanian translations of Shakespeare’s plays in the 1890s shows that Shakespeare translations in this period are a seismographic indicator for changing mentalities under the conditions of the early globalization of cultures.

Translations of classical and geography texts in Elizabethan England—mainly at the turn of the century (1590s)—were used to signal the new practices of internationalization of culture, arrived as a result of the new geographic exploration and the extension of Europe's horizons. A similar process of internationalization of culture occurred in late nineteenth-century, with the consolidation of the national states and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in Eastern Europe. The reasons behind Shakespeare's popularity in nineteenth-century Europe are the re-evaluation of European cultural landmarks, nationalistic revivals, and the fashioning of cultural identities. As Shakespeare in nineteenth-century Europe was a medium of cultural exchange, I add the geographic factor and argue that translations of the plays were used as a conduit for cross-cultural communication and an attempt at global positioning of the emergent Romanian cultural parameters in relation to world literature. I address the contradictions and paradoxes in translation practice in the Elizabethan 1590s by reading relationally and analysing what early modern translators state in their paratexts (introductions and notes) regarding their translation work, in comparison and contrast to the actual Romanian translations of a corpus of six Shakespearean plays in the 1890s. I defend the idea that the vitality of Romanian culture at the end of the nineteenth century can be measured by the status Shakespeare has within it. I argue for the comparative and relational study of end-of-century translations, not only from the perspective of individual authors, but as a combination of national, linguistic, religious, cultural, economic, and geopolitical factors. Among these, globalization is prevalent for 1590s England and 1890s Romania. The 1590s in England was a time of economic and cultural globalization, when the new geographic discoveries and overseas travels brought an innovative understanding of the Elizabethans' place in a cosmopolitan society. Similarly, the 1890s in Romania was a time when, shortly after the country's partial unification (1859), the democratic Constitution (1866) and the independence from Ottoman rule (1877), attempts at reconsidering national identity materialized through culturally-significant translations of Shakespeare as a classical figure of Western theatre.

The dissertation is structured in two parts and seven chapters. The first part analyses the Elizabethan translations in the 1590s and their role in fashioning an emerging national identity, based on translations of the classics and of travel and geography texts. Chapter 1 discusses the Elizabethan practice of translation in the 1590s, with a focus on practice, as opposed to translation theory. To contextualize my analysis, the chapter draws on the following interlocking themes: (1) translation and nationhood, (2) translation and geographic space, and (3) translations of the classics

and travel and geography texts in the Elizabethan 1590s within the literary system, with a focus on Shakespeare's rewritings of these texts in the plays. Analysing the Elizabethan translators' statements contained in the dedicatory epistles or prefaces to their translations, I argue the following: (1) translation was an important promoter of nationalistic aspirations, which accorded with the geopolitical factors of the time; in 1590s Elizabethan England, the parameters of the emerging nation were also constructed along the lines traced by the translators, whose activities voiced imperial and nationalistic goals; (2) geographic location and geopolitical positioning played a significant role in the production and reception of translated texts; (3) more than any other type of translation, those of the classics and of travel and geography texts had the role of ensuring the connection with past values (the classics) and contemporary discoveries (travel and geography). For these reasons, Elizabethan translations of these texts were not only important cultural achievements in themselves, but also essential connectors among cultures and values.

Chapter 2, "Translating the Classics in 1590s Elizabethan England," examines a number of translations of the classics in the Elizabethan 1590s and highlights the polyvocality of the genre and the cultural function they perform in the context of the time. Close-text analyses focus on the literary translations of classical scholars and geographers Pomponius Mela and Julius Solinus *Polyhistor*, translated by Arthur Golding (1590); the translation of Pliny's *Naturalis historia* by Philemon Holland (1592; 1601); Plutarch's *Vitae parallelae* translated by Thomas North (1595); and translations of the following Latin writers: Cicero (translated by Nicolas Grimald, 1596; 1600), Tacitus (translated by Richard Greenway, 1598), and Livy (translated by Philemon Holland, 1600). In addition, this chapter analyses paratextual information (prefaces, dedicatory epistles, and marginal notes) contained in the English translations of classical poets: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* translated by Arthur Golding (1593); and Virgil's *Aeneid*, translated by Thomas Phaer and finished by Thomas Twayne (1596). I argue that the pragmatic approach to classical literature and geographic and travel literature through translation was the result of the trend of globalization and the competing cultural and social energies existing in Europe and transmitted to England in the 1590s. In this way, the chapter makes evident how translations of these texts work as cross-cultural mediators adapted to a specific time and space. The rise and decline of the early modern vogue of translations from the classics in 1590s Elizabethan England, therefore, provides a model of influence—not as the diachronic re-employment of classical writers and poets by their successors, but as a living and evolving network of intellectual dialogue and debate.

Chapter 3, “Elizabethan Translations of Travel and the Travel of Translations,” examines a corpus of Elizabethan translations of early modern geography and travel writers published in the period 1590–1601, translated from Latin, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, or French. Close-text analyses focus on the translators’ interventions in the paratexts (introductions and notes) to the translated works. Elizabethan English translation in the 1590s was renewed via translations of travelogues, such as *A report of the kingdome of Congo*, written by Duarte Lopes and translated by Abraham Hartwell (1597); Jan Huyghen van Linschoten’s report of his travel to the East Indies, translated by William Philip (1598); and the account written in Portuguese by António Galvão, translated and edited by Richard Hakluyt in 1601. Analyses of navigational texts printed in 1590s Elizabethan England include close readings of translations of popular navigation manuals by Cornelis Antoniszoon (translated from Dutch by Robert Norman in 1590, with another edition in 1600); Pedro de Medina (translated from Spanish by John Frampton in 1595); and Martín Cortés (translated from Spanish by Richard Eden in 1596). As concerns geography texts, close-text analyses of the paratexts include the translation by Edward Aggas of Michel Hurault’s description of France (1592); a description of the Low Countries by Lodovico Guicciardini, translated from Italian by Thomas Danett (1593); and a description of Venice by Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, translated from Italian by Lewes Lewkenor (1599). The vital interaction between translator and text offers great possibilities to understand more fully cultural differences and similarities—rewriting alterity in new ways, according to time and place. The mental spaces opened by these texts in the Elizabethans’ imagination acted as powerful triggers that shaped a cultural identity marked by economic, social, and geopolitical factors of globalization. These translations responded to the need of integrating English nationhood within the larger limits of the globalized world and voiced emergent imperial aspirations.

Part two of the present dissertation examines the methods and techniques used by Romanian intellectuals in the 1890s to connect their culture to the models and practices emerging in Europe in relation to translations and appropriations of Shakespeare in the nineteenth century. Analysing the Romanian translators’ statements contained in the prefaces to their translations or in their footnotes—the paratexts of the actual translations of Shakespeare in Romania—as well as Romanian critical works dedicated to Shakespeare in the 1890s and the playbills of theatrical productions at the Bucharest National Theatre in the last decade of the nineteenth century, in this section I argue that these trans-generic aspects are various manifestations of cross-cultural

translation. Chapter 4, entitled “Romanian Shakespeare and the Practice of Translation in the 1590s,” examines the following issues: “Translation as Nationhood” (4.1), namely the ways in which translations of Shakespeare were used in nineteenth-century Europe to promote the ideals of nation states; “Romanian Translation and Geographic Space” (4.2), which discusses the influence of Romania’s “insular” position, in the geopolitical context, on translations of Shakespeare’s plays; and “Functional Translations of Shakespeare in the 1890s” (4.3), which examines the extent to which the polyvocality of Shakespeare’s representations of spaces and traditions had an impact on Romanian cultural archetypes in the process of Europeanization. In this chapter, I argue the following: (1) Romanian cross-cultural translations of Shakespeare were produced in accordance with the geopolitical factors of the time and were important promoters of nationalistic aspirations for unification; in 1890s Romania, the parameters of the emerging nation were constructed along the lines traced by translators of Shakespeare, whose activities voiced nationalistic goals meant to place the newly-formed state in the context of Western-European culture; (2) geographic location and geopolitical positioning of the Old Kingdom of Romania in the 1890s, as an “island” at the crossroads of three empires, played a significant role in the production and reception of these texts; (3) more than other translations of Western European writers, translations of Shakespeare’s plays had the role of ensuring the connection with past values and present nationalistic aspirations at work in the 1890s.

Chapter 5, “Roman Values Rewritten for Romanians,” discusses three Romanian translations of *Julius Caesar* by Barbu Lazureanu (1892), by Scarlat Ion Ghica (1895/1896) and by Dimitrie N. Ghika (1908), as well as the translation of *Antony and Cleopatra* by Scarlat Ion Ghica (1893) from the perspective of the translators’ lexical choices and the points of focus revealed in the paratexts. The issues investigated in this chapter include the relation of the 1890s translations of Shakespeare’s Roman plays to the movement of democratization and the renewing parameters of national identity. Translations of *Julius Caesar* reflect the notions of bourgeois liberalism and constitutional democracy related to the adoption of the 1866 Constitution in the Romanian Principalities. In addition, the connection between the historical Julius Caesar and the Dacian Kingdom, in the country’s Roman past, plays a role in the selection and the recurrent translation of this Shakespearean play in 1890s Romania. However, the ambivalence of the dramatic representation of Roman values in both *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the relations between East and West, subjection and power, affect the Romanian translation of the

play, in this period of an emerging sense of national identity within the geopolitical context. The connection with Roman history, interpreted through the filter of a time of change (the Elizabethan 1590s, when *Julius Caesar* was written) is highly relevant for the period of change represented by 1890s Romania.

Chapter 6, entitled “Medieval English History in Wallachian Contexts,” examines the Romanian translations of Shakespeare’s history plays *King John* (*Regele Ioan*) and *Richard III* (*Regele Richard III*) translated directly from English by Scarlat Ion Ghica and published in a single edition in 1892. The issues investigated in this chapter concern the poly-spatial and poly-temporal relationship created by associations of different stages of evolution in medieval English history represented in the two Shakespearean plays; the corresponding medieval Wallachian historical contexts; and the geopolitical realities of the 1890s, when the translations of these plays were published in the Old Kingdom of Romania. Analyses of the translations show that the relation between medieval history in the two Romanian principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) and medieval English history was relevant enough for nineteenth-century audiences to justify the popularity of these two translations. Issues of kingship, power struggle in violent times, as well as aspirations towards political and cultural concord and union had a meaning for audiences and readers in 1890s Romania. In addition, it is possible to link the adoption of the 1866 constitution in the Old Kingdom of Romania to King John’s signing of *Magna Carta* in early thirteenth-century England, even if this fact is not mentioned in Shakespeare’s play, but appears in the translator’s introduction to the 1892 edition. Apart from the semantic and lexical indicators related to these two translations of Shakespeare’s history plays, the geopolitical factors represented by Romania’s position at the crossroads East and West were significant issues that ensured the relative popularity of these translated plays.

Chapter 7, entitled “Comic Relief for the Romanian Stage,” examines the Romanian translations of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (*Un vis din noaptea de Sănziene*), translated by G. P. Sterian (1893) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (*Femeea îndărătnică*), translated by Haralamb Lecca (1898) after a French version. These translations of two popular Shakespearean romantic comedies provide a challenge for Romanian translators because of the social significance and gender roles that the plays activate in interpretation. In this social context, I argue the following: (1) Translation and performance of the two Shakespearean comedies was related to the rise of the modern middle class to economic and political prominence in 1890s Romania. Composed of merchants and

industrialists, civil servants and professionals, especially lawyers and teachers, this class was primarily a Romanian bourgeoisie. (2) The increased literacy, economic affluence, and cultural authority of the women of this class in the 1890s influenced the translation and popularity of these plays among late nineteenth-century Romanian audiences. (3) The comedic aspects of the translations of these plays—verging on farce—contribute to the development of the comedy genre in the modern national theatre. On the whole, these translations play an important role in the conceptualization of change in late nineteenth-century Romania: social change, through the rise of the middle class; cultural change, triggered by increased literacy among the middle classes and the development of the national theatre; and political change, with the rise of hope in a responsible and nation-focused monarchy.

Contradictions, dialogical status, and relationality are the parameters followed in reading translations of the classics and travel and geography texts in the 1590s England and of Shakespeare in 1890s Romania. The cultural, religious, geopolitical, and gender-based challenges facing translators typify the hybridizing impact of Shakespeare in the Romanian culture of the 1890s, comparable to the reception of the classics and of geography texts in 1590s Elizabethan England. Therefore, it is reasonable to re-affirm that culture itself can be interpreted as a process of translation. Translation viewed from this perspective is a dynamic cultural encounter, a negotiation of differences, as well as a process of transformation. This aspect reveals the fact that, at end-of-century periods, literary translations become increasingly adaptable to cross-temporal, cross-spatial, and cross-cultural interpretations. During the end-of-century periods in the two cultures discussed, translations responded to the need of harmonizing the specific language and culture to the globalizing trends of the age. In this way, translations typified aspirations for a modernized national self. This was materialized, in Romanian culture, through cross-cultural translations of Shakespeare as a classicized symbol of Western theatre. Therefore, instead of speaking merely of linguistic replacement in translation, I sustain the concept of cultural *emplacement*—the act of setting the translation in place in its cultural position, by including models of poly-temporal and poly-spatial interpretation.

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