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Daria Moskvitina*

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9958-0962

Bohdan Korneliuk**

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4162-0495

Lost (in) Translations: How Ukrainian Shakespeareana Must Be Bigger Than We Think

Abstract

This article delves into the complex history of Shakespeare translations in Ukraine, with a particular focus on the phenomenon of "lost translations." These losses are categorized as either ontological (irrevocably lost due to destruction or censorship) or gnoseological (existing but inaccessible or underappreciated). The authors situate these losses within the context of Ukraine's turbulent history, marked by periods of foreign domination, enforced language bans, and political repression. These historical forces significantly impacted the development and preservation of Ukrainian cultural artifacts, including Shakespeare translations. The study examines various forms of lost translations, including rare manuscripts that have vanished, rumoured but unverified 'ghost translations,' and stage scripts that were never published or

* Zaporizhzhya State Medical University, Ukraine. daryamoskvitina@gmail.com

** Khortytsia National Educational and Rehabilitational Academy, Ukraine. korneljukbogdan@ukr.net

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have perished. These lost works not only represent significant cultural losses but also offer unique insights into Ukraine's literary and cultural history.

Shakespeare translations in Ukraine served as more than just literary works: they functioned as tools of resistance and avenues for creative expression during periods of repression. By translating Shakespeare, Ukrainian writers and artists challenged linguistic and cultural suppression, contributing significantly to the formation of a distinct Ukrainian literary canon.

The article underscores the urgent need for rigorous archival research to recover and study these lost works. By analysing the cultural, political, and personal factors that contributed to these losses, the study provides a compelling narrative of Ukrainian cultural survival and its ongoing struggle for identity and self-expression.

Keywords: Shakespeare translations, lost texts, ontological loss, gnoseological loss, censorship, archival research.

> Don't forget that some of Sophocles' works have also been lost. Were the lost works of higher quality than those that survived? Perhaps the ones that we still have were those most prized by the Athenian public, which doesn't necessarily make them the most interesting, at least to us. A contemporary reader might prefer the others. […] How many great authors have we never read? And some of them are very famous, despite us having no access to their work. This brings us back to the concept of the phantom or ghost.
>
> *This is Not the End of the Book* (103)
>
> Umberto Eco, Jeanne-Claude Carrière

When it comes to losses in literature, it is usually the original lost text that matters on a global scale, and humanity has not yet fully abandoned hope of recovering at least some from the long list of missing ancient, mediaeval, and Renaissance works (including Shakespeare's *Love Labours' Won* and *Cardenio*). In local contexts, however, translations may be even more important than their sources since they facilitate cultural accessibility and adaptation, enable knowledge dissemination, provide new perspectives and interpretative opportunities, and contribute to shaping national identities. For this reason, the loss of translations (particularly of universally significant texts) can erase a vital layer of cultural history, effectively silencing the specific interpretive voice that adapted those texts for a particular audience, place and time.

The phenomenon of literary work loss is the outcome of various factors. The fragility of papyrus, fires in libraries, and endless wars are often blamed for the extensive inventory of the lost Greek and Roman manuscripts. Over time, such losses tend to be associated with personal reasons, since writers have been prone to determining the fate of their works by burning, shredding, or harming them in any other way. A crucial role was also played by political and ideological factors such as censorship, linguicide, colonial policies, etc., that could have prevented certain original texts and translations from reaching their readership. The latter factors are particularly relevant for Ukraine, with many manuscripts unpublished due to the enforcement of laws restricting the use of the Ukrainian language in the nineteenth century, and full print runs brutally destroyed, or book compositions disassembled during Soviet occupation in the twentieth century.[1]

A closer look at the history of literary translation into Ukrainian reveals a story worthy of a blockbuster, complete with chases, adventures, imprisonment, and lost (or stolen) treasures. The unique status of translations, unparalleled in any other European culture, was shaped by the conditions of the nineteenth century – a time when the Ukrainian language and culture made audacious and valiant attempts to declare themselves to the world. The unique significance of translations in nineteenth-century Ukrainian culture arose from the determined efforts to elevate the Ukrainian language and literature during the time of cultural vulnerability. Translating foreign authors into Ukrainian has never been smooth sailing, first, due to numerous bans imposed on the Ukrainian language in the Russian Empire,[2]

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1 The second part of the novel *Valdshnepy* [The Woodsnipes] by the classic Ukrainian writer Mykola Khvylovyi is considered lost. It was published in the sixth issue of the journal *Vaplite* in 1927, but the entire print run was confiscated and destroyed by censorship. After this destruction and the increasing censorship of his work, Mykola Khvylovyi faced growing persecution from the Soviet regime. As a leading figure of the *Vaplite* literary group, he championed cultural independence and European orientation for Ukrainian literature, which brought him into conflict with the authorities.

By the early 1930s, Soviet repression against Ukrainian intellectuals intensified, and many of Khvylovyi's colleagues were arrested or executed during Stalin's crackdown on the Ukrainian cultural elite. On May 13, 1933, overwhelmed by despair over the brutal suppression of Ukrainian culture and the devastating effects of the Holodomor, Mykola Khvylovyi took his own life in Kharkiv. His suicide was both a personal tragedy and a symbolic protest against the Soviet regime's destruction of Ukrainian cultural identity.

2 Throughout history, the Ukrainian language faced multiple bans, notably the Valuev Circular (1863) and Ems Ukaz (1876), which restricted publications, education, and performances in Ukrainian. Under Soviet rule, initial Ukrainization policies were reversed in the 1930s, leading to mass repression of Ukrainian intellectuals. Further Russification (1930s–1980s) marginalized Ukrainian in education and public life. These measures severely hindered the language's development until Ukraine's independence in 1991.

followed by both overt and covert restrictions and repressions enforced by the Soviet government. Under such conditions, translation was one of the few realms of relatively free artistic (and linguistic) expression. Mykhailo Starytskyi, the person behind one of the first full Ukrainian versions of *Hamlet* (1878), had a remarkably profound vision of the impact of translation on the development of a suppressed culture – a perspective he articulated in a letter to Ivan Franko:

> Переклади – се було й єсть у нас пугало і для уряду, і для жандармської літератури […] і для наших навіть лібералів, а я уважав і уважаю їх за найцінніший труд у добу виховання мови: вони дають найкращу гімнастику слову, найбільше ширють його і, крім того, збагачують читальні засоби для народа на рідній мові, а з тим укоріняють силу і їй самій… (Доценко [Dotsenko] 426–427).[3]

> [Perekladi – se bulo jêst' u nas pugalo ì dlâ urâdu, ì dlâ žandarms'koï lìteraturi […] ì dlâ naših navìt' lìberalìv, a â uvažav ì uvažaû ïh za najcìnnìšij trud u dobu vihovannâ movi: voni daût' najkraŝu gìmnastiku slovu, najbìl'še širût' jogo ì, krìm togo, zbagačuût' čital'nì zasobi dlâ naroda na rìdnìj movì, a z tim ukorìnâût' silu ì ïj samìj…]

The bumpy path of Ukrainian literary translation has been extensively explored in monographs and papers by Dmytro Doroshenko, Lada Kolomiyets, Maksym Strikha, Roksolana Zorivchak, Rostyslav Dotsenko, Viktor Koptilov, and many more. In this context, translations of Shakespeare can be viewed as a driving force for the development of the Ukrainian language and literature. This significance was conceptualised by Panteleimon Kulish, one of the pioneers and passionate advocates of Ukrainian Shakespeare, with a contribution of thirteen translated plays. He considered rendering the legacy of the Great Elizabethan into Ukrainian to be a vital civilising mission:[4]

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3 "Translations were – and still are – a bogey for the government, for police-controlled literature […] even for our liberals, and I have always considered it the most valuable activity in the period of shaping the language: they challenge the word best of all, broaden it the most, and enrich reading for commoners in their native language thus strengthening it…" (qtd. in Доценко [Dotsenko] 426–427). Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Ukrainian are ours.

4 The nineteenth century witnessed a surge in national consciousness across Europe, with translation of canonical works like Shakespeare's serving as a vital 'civilizing mission' to enrich national languages and establish cultural parity. This approach was evident in Poland (e.g., Józef Ignacy Kraszewski), Hungary (e.g., János Arany), and Romania, where Shakespearean translations played a significant role in shaping national literary and theatrical cultures, as Panteleimon Kulish's efforts in Ukraine did.

> If Shakespeare became our favourite reading, this would sober our pitiful literature and give it wings. If comedies and tragedies by Shakespeare summoned my countrypeople to the theatre, this would be a better education for them than all our writing and singing. This is my aim, and this is my motivation for translating Shakespeare's works. (Барвінський [Barvinsky] 203)

Kulish's Shakespeare project, secured and backed by Ivan Franko, in many ways paved the way for the development of the Ukrainian translation Shakespeareana, dominated by *Hamlet*[5] and crowned with the first (and so far, only) edition of *The Complete Works* published between 1984 and 1988. However, this history of obstacles overcome and justices reclaimed is also intertwined with a saga of losses and wrecks, one that is even more dramatic and convoluted.

Our concept of the lost translations of Shakespeare's works into Ukrainian recognizes a spectrum of loss including ontological and gnoseological losses. The first category encompasses translations that were or could have been lost due to *force majeure*, political or ideological constraints, censorship, or repressions. The second group comprises those Ukrainian translations that had been published at some point but failed to get an appropriate reception from readers/theatre practitioners/critics due to a variety of factors. Consequently, ontological losses can be attributed to circumstantial factors, while gnoseological ones were deliberately orchestrated for various reasons, the main one to hinder the natural development of Ukrainian culture and its dialogue with the global Shakespearean discourse.

Significantly, ontological losses have been a vast part of the Ukrainian translational Shakespeareana since their very inception. In October 1865, the Lviv newspaper *Slovo* published a notice saying that "у г. Лозовського [псевд. П. Свєнціцького], неусипного труженика нашої сцени, вкрали повний пер. «Макбета»" (Мороз [Moroz] 812). [u g. Lozovs'kogo [psevd. P. Svênciċ'kogo], neusipnogo truženika našoï sceni, vkrali povnij per. «Makbeta»].[6] Earlier that year, Pavlin Sventsitskyi started to publish his prose translation of *Hamlet* under the pseudonym Pavlo Svii. This was a continuous publication in *Nyva* journal, though it remained unfinished: six issues included only Act 1 of the tragedy, with the rest never published – perhaps, due to a lack of recognition and an abundance of criticism. Ivan Franko's feedback, for instance, was far from laudatory: he described Sventsytskyi's translation as "лишенная литературной ценности"[7]

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5 Excerpts from the tragedy were translated by P. Sventsitskyi and I. Kostetskyi, while the full play was interpreted by Yu. Fedkovych, M. Starytskyi, P. Kulish, L. Hrebinka, V. Ver, H. Khotkevych, M. Rudnytsky, S. Husak, O. Hriaznov, and Yu. Andrukhovych.

6 "A complete translation of *Macbeth* was stolen from a restless toiler of our stage, Mr. Lozovyi (P. Sventsytskyi's penname)".

7 Lacking literary value (Кочур [Kochur] 27).

(Кочур [Kochur] 27) [lišennaâ literaturnoj cennosti]. This criticism was not entirely unjustified, as Sventsytskyi translated indirectly, from a Polish translation, and his versification skills left room for improvement. However, the rest of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are lost to us forever.

Translations intended for the stage are more prone to ontological losses. This is explained by the particular mode of their production – while it remains in the repertoire, the translation is performed on stage. When a production is archived, the translation, which in such cases exists only in a manuscript form, in the director's promptbook and the actors' copies, at best, merely gathers dust in the archive. Ukrainian translations of Shakespeare created solely for the stage have rarely met such a quiet fate. For instance, the Ukrainian playscript of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Yakiv Savchenko for Hnat Yura's 1927 production for Ivan Franko Theatre in Kyiv is lost, with very little hope of recovering it. This production, though announced as highly realistic, was "premiered as clearly conceptual… with expressionistic constructivist overtones" (Makaryk 167). Yakiv Savchenko,[8] a former Symbolist poet who embraced Soviet rule and became one of its heralds, translated from the Russian version (Доценко [Dotsenko] 464), presumably one made by Alexandr Sokolovskiy in 1894 – the most recent for the period. Based on the critical appraisal of the production, Irena Makaryk concludes that Savchenko "did not feel compelled to stay with Shakespeare's blank verse but rendered much of the play into rhyme" (Makaryk 167). Critic P. Nestorivskyi made several remarks on Savchenko's method:

> стару мову Шекспірову перекладено на нову, що кується, мову нової України […]. Щоб досягнути найбільше ефектів у передаванні слова, перекладач не обмежився білими віршами, як це звичайно роблять у перекладах, а дав, у чималій частині, музику, ритм. (5)[9]
>
> [staru movu Šekspìrovu perekladeno na novu, ŝo kuêt'sâ, movu novoï Ukraïni […]. Ŝob dosâgnuti najbìl'še efektìv u peredavannì slova, perekladač ne obmežívsâ bìlimi vìršami, âk ce zvičajno roblât' u perekladah, a dav, u čimalìj častinì, muziku, ritm.]

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8 His destiny was quite typical for that time: a renowned poet, translator, critic, and above all a loyalist, whose mobbing of Les Kurbas, Mykola Zerov, and other representatives of the Executed Renaissance contributed to their imprisonment and execution. Nevertheless, he shared the fate of those who had suffered from his devastating criticism: in 1937, at the height of the Great Purge, he was arrested and his death sentence was swiftly carried out.

9 "Shakespeare's [early modern] language is translated with vocal verse into the new language, the one that is being shaped, the language of new Ukraine. To make his rendering more efficient, the translator did not limit himself to the usual blank verse, but also introduced some musicality and rhythm" (Несторівський [Nestorivskyi] 5).

The critic also mentions some satirical interludes Savchenko added to Shakespeare's comedy, blaming him for not making those additions more relevant and timely.

An interesting case of loss involves two translations of *Othello* by two theatre practitioners: Marko Kropyvnytskyi and Panas Saksahanskyi. The former, a playwright and a renowned theatre figure, dreamt of staging Shakespeare in Ukrainian in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Still, with the restrictions imposed by the Russian Empire, it was hardly possible. Nevertheless, Kropyvnytskyi made a noteworthy attempt to adapt *Othello* (circa 1900): his loose translation was based on the Russian version by Pyotr Veinberg. As pointed out by Maria Shapovalova (Шаповалова [Shapovalova] 95), the translator had conveyed all its advantages and defects in Ukrainian, though sometimes his slavish adherence to the Russian verse corrupted Ukrainian lines. It is likely that he was going to refine his version further (Шаповалова [Shapovalova] 95). For now, this translation is effectively lost for Ukraine since its only known surviving copy (bearing a censor's license for production dated 5 April 1902 (Мороз [Moroz] 812)) is stored in Saint Petersburg Theatrical Library. There is also no reliable evidence that this translation has ever been staged.[10]

Nonetheless, a famous Ukrainian actor and director Panas Saksahanskyi, Kropyvnytskyi's disciple, staged *Othello* in 1926 for Mariia Zankovetska State Theatre (then located in Katerynoslav, later renamed Dnipropetrovsk). Numerous literary sources state that Saksahanskyi personally translated the play. Moreover, Melnychuk-Luchko in *Saksahanskyi the Actor* quotes the theatre practitioner himself:

> Мені не довелося грати у п'єсах Шекспіра. В ті часи не було доброго перекладу. Був, правда, переклад Куліша, але дуже незадовільний. Після революції я поставив «Отелло» в театрі Заньковецької. Я ж сам і зробив український переклад цієї п'єси. (58)[11]
>
> [Menì ne dovelosâ grati u p'êsah Šekspìra. V tì časi ne bulo dobrogo perekladu. Buv, pravda, pereklad Kulìša, ale duže nezadovìl'nij. Pìslâ revolûcìï â postaviv «Otello» v teatrì Zan'kovec'koï. Â ž sam ì zrobiv ukraïns'kij pereklad cìêï p'êsi.]

10 In 1908, Kyivan newspaper *Rada* published several announcements (Issue 82 dated April 8 (21) and Issue 133 dated June 11 (24)) of the intent expressed by Lev Sabinin's theatre company to produce *Othello* translated by Kropyvnytskyi for the following theatre season in Kharkiv. We have not found any evidence of this production (yet). One of the announcements also mentioned that Lev Sabinin himself planned to translate *Hamlet*.

11 "I did not have the opportunity to act [in a play by Shakespeare]. At that time, there was no good translation. Although there was a translation by Kulish, it was not good enough. After the revolution, I staged *Othello* in Zankovetska Theatre. I have translated the play into Ukrainian myself" (Мельничук-Лучко [Melnychuk-Luchko] 58).

A theatre review signed by Hliadach (a Spectator) and published in *Zoria* (The Star) monthly magazine praised the translation used for the production (28). However, Irena Makaryk expresses doubts about Saksahanskyi's translating skills. She points out that by 1926, there had only been two translations of *Othello* – the one by Panteleimon Kulish and the other by Marko Kropyvnytskyi. So, her claim is that Saksahanskyi did not translate from scratch, as previously he had not been known as a translator for the stage but rather abridged his teacher's translation for his artistic needs (Makaryk 179–180).

Rising interest in Shakespeare in the Ukrainian Soviet theatre during the 1920s and 1930s encouraged a surge in translators' activity on the one hand, but, on the other hand, failed to preserve its results for the following generations. One of the biggest and most numerous losses (still, with little hope of winning them back) is the loss of the translations by Semen Husak, perhaps the least known of all the Ukrainian translators of Shakespeare, and the most unacknowledged one. In the bibliography of the Ukrainian Shakespeareana by Myroslav Moroz, he is given credit only for a moderate publication in a 1937 issue of *Teatr*, including fragments of his versions of *Othello* and *Macbeth* (Мороз [Moroz] 809). Meanwhile, he was a prolific translator with a particular focus on drama: he translated *The Duchess of Padua* by Oscar Wilde (*Селянська біднота* [Selâns'ka bìdnota] 3), *The Marriage of Figaro* by Pierre Beaumarchais (*Червоний шлях* [Červonij šlâh] 187), and at least seven plays by Shakespeare, including *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Гусак [Gusak] 171). Iryna Vanina also attributes a translation of *Twelfth Night* (4) to him. Assessing his translations, Vanina admits to their value: "Не позбавлені окремих (часом і серйозних) недоліків, вони, проте, загалом справляли позитивне враження і свідчили про помітне зростання культури перекладацької роботи на Україні"[12] (Ваніна [Vanina] 4). [Ne pozbavlenì okremih (časom ì serjoznih) nedolìkìv, voni, prote, zagalom spravlâli pozitivne vražennâ ì svìdčili pro pomìtne zrostannâ kul'turi perekladac'koï roboti na Ukraïnì]. Some of Husak's versions were staged by The October Revolution Drama Theatre in Odessa, the first of which was Othello, in 1936. His translations were also favourably reviewed by Abram Gozenpud (Гозенпуд *Трагедія* [Gozenpud Tragedìâ] 27–29), one of the leading Shakespeare scholars of the time, who secured the one and only publication of their fragments and obviously patronized Husak.

An attempt to reconstruct Husak's biography and creative activity has turned into something of a detective story and has so far only been partially successful. Even finding out his first name was a real quest, as most publications mention only

12 "Although not without some (sometimes rather serious) shortcomings, they generally made a positive impression and testified to a noticeable growth in the culture of translation work in Ukraine" (Ваніна [Vanina] 4).

his initial. All the same, we occasionally come across a true gem – the manuscript of Husak's dissertation *Shekspir v ukrayinskykh perekladakh (dramatychni tvory)* [Shakespeare in the Ukrainian translations (dramatic works)] dated 1946 and stored in the scientific library of the I. Mechnikov Odessa National University. While it remains unclear whether he eventually defended his (acedemically rather controversial) thesis or not, the work is a treasure in itself as it contains previously unpublished fragments of his translations, as well as some valuable information about his plans for Shakespeare in Ukrainian. For instance, he took a commission from *Mystetstvo* publishing house for a translation of *Richard III* in 1940, but due to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, this edition never saw the light of day.

Another important lost translation for the stage is *The Merchant of Venice*, rendered by Severyn Pankivskyi – an outstanding theatrical personality of his time, active in late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. He performed in the theatre companies of Marko Kropyvnytskyi, Mykhailo Starytskyi, Mykola Sadovskyi, and many more. He was also a theatre critic and researcher, frequently contributing to the journal *Teatr* in the late 1930s, and a translator whose legacy embraced Polish, French, and English drama. Pankivskyi dedicated himself to translating Western playwrights in an effort to broaden the repertoire of Ukrainian-language theatres, which predominantly focused on works by local dramatists. His manuscript of a rhymed translation of *The Merchant of Venice* was mentioned (and praised!) in the detailed obituary by Vasyl Simovych published in *Krakivski visti* in February 1943 (Сімович [Simovich]). Hryhorii Kochur also briefly mentioned this manuscript in his detailed paper *Shekspir v Ukraine* [Shakespeare in Ukraine] (47).

A separate group within the broader category of ontologically lost Ukrainian translations of Shakespeare is comprised of so-called 'ghost translations', which we define as translations that had been planned, written about, and announced but were likely never completed. One of the earliest references to such translations is that of *Hamlet* and *Coriolanus* by Vit Kosovtsev, reportedly translated in the 1860s (Мороз [Moroz] 812). The information about these translations is exceedingly scarce, limited to a brief mention in an issue of *Slovo* newspaper in 1866.

Panteleimon Kulish also contributed to the list of ghost translations. Apart from thirteen plays he is known to have translated and published, he might have completed two more: *Cymbeline* and *The Merchant of Venice* (Даниленко [Danylenko] 335). Kulish's widow, Hanna Barvinok, who wrote to his fellow translator Ivan Puliui, in a letter dated April 21, 1897, that the manuscript of *The Merchant of Venice* had been sent to the Chernihiv Museum of Vasyl Tarnavskyi Junior, from where it allegedly disappeared. After Kulish's death, a prominent Ukrainian composer, Mykola Lysenko, took up the search for these lost translations. In May 1898, he wrote to Hanna Barvinok: "Чи є у вас вдома ще які Шекс[пирові] твори, бо у вітрині, коли я переглядав з В.В. Тар[новським], то наприклад, у трилогії «Макбет» стоїть олівцем записано, що до неї належить

ще «Венецький купець» і ще третя – «Доболін» чи що [тут: «Цимбелін»]" (Даниленко [Danylenko] 335).[13] [Či ê u vas vdoma ŝe âkì Šeks[pirovì] tvori, bo u vìtrinì, koli â pereglâdav z V.V. Tar[novs'kim], to napriklad, u trilogìï «Makbet» stoït' olìvcem zapisano, ŝo do neï naležit' ŝe «Venec'kij kupec'» ì ŝe tretâ – «Dobolìn» či ŝo [tut: «Cimbelìn»]]. However, by the following winter, in a letter to Kulish's widow, Lysenko speculated: "видно, покійник мав лишень на увазі перекласти їх, та й не встиг, або ж, може, у Вас де лишились у господі. Пошукайте…" (Даниленко [Danylenko] 335). [vidno, pokìjnik mav lišen' na uvazì pereklasti ïh, ta j ne vstig, abo ž, može, u Vas de lišilis' u gospodì. Pošukajte…].[14] Later, in the spring of the same year, while discussing plans to publish Kulish's Shakespeare translations in a letter to Olha Franko, Lysenko concluded: "«Цимбелін» і «Венецький купець» не перекладені, або десь запропащені" (Даниленко [Danylenko] 335). [«Cimbelìn» ì «Venec'kij kupec'» ne perekladenì, abo des' zapropaŝenì].[15] These letters highlight the uncertainty and hope surrounding Kulish's potential translations of Shakespeare's plays, as well as the dedicated efforts to recover and preserve his literary legacy. However, Stepan Zakharkin, citing Mariia Shapovalova – who was among the first to question the claims made by Hanna Barvinok and Ivan Puliui about the supposedly lost translations – argues that Kulish did not have the time to complete them:

> за активної праці над перекладом Біблії у 1890-х роках… Куліш не мав ні моральної, ні фізичної змоги відновити працю шістнадцятирічної давності, впоратися з таким непростим завданням, як переклад однієї, а то й двох п'єс Шекспіра. (Захаркін [Zakharkin] 62)[16]
>
> [za aktivnoï pracì nad perekladom Bìblìï u 1890-h rokah… Kulìš ne mav nì moral'noï, nì fìzičnoï zmogi vìdnoviti pracû šìstnadcâtirìčnoï davnostì, vporatisâ z takim neprostim zavdannâm, âk pereklad odnièï, a to j dvoh p'ês Šekspìra.]

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13 "Do you still have any of Shakespeare's works at home? Because in the display case, when I was reviewing it with V. V. Tarnavskyi, for instance, in the trilogy *Macbeth*, it was noted in pencil that it should include *The Merchant of Venice* and another one – 'Dobolin' or something" (referring to *Cymbeline*)" (Даниленко [Danylenko] 335).

14 "It seems the deceased only intended to translate them but did not manage to, or perhaps they remain somewhere in your household. Please, search…" (Даниленко [Danylenko] 335).

15 "*Cymbeline* and *The Merchant of Venice* were either not translated or were lost somewhere".

16 "…given his intensive work on translating the Bible during the 1890s, Kulish neither had the moral nor physical capacity to resume work from sixteen years earlier (his Shakespeare translations began in the 1880s – D.M. & B.K.) and tackle such a challenging task as translating one, let alone two of Shakespeare's plays" (Захаркін [Zakharkin] 62).

Another notable case of a ghost translation is *Hamlet*, presumably translated by the Ukrainian poet and actor Yakiv Zharko. Panas Myrny, a distinguished Ukrainian author (Pavlo Rudchenko's pen name), mentioned it in his letter to Zharko dated May 24 (June 5) 1898, while sharing his rather pessimistic view on translating Shakespeare into Ukrainian:

> Цікаво б прочитати Ваш переклад «Гамлета». Мені здається, що дуже трудно цю трагедію перекласти на нашу мову. Мова наша ще мало вироблена, щоб нею без запинки можна було переказати Гамлетові думки і почуття. Такий добрий коваль усяких термінів, як Старицький, зробив з «Гамлета» посмішище задля наших ворогів. […] Я сам перекладав «Ліра» і добре знаю, як-то трудно перекладати Шекспіра. Дехто казав, що мій «Лір» добре перекладений, а мені здається – ні. А все-таки цікаво, як Вам дався «Гамлет». Зашліть, перечитаю, та й свою думку скажу.[17] (433)
>
> [Cìkavo b pročitati Vaš pereklad «Gamleta». Menì zdaêt'sâ, ŝo duže trudno cû tragedìû pereklasti na našu movu. Mova naša ŝe malo viroblena, ŝob neû bez zapinki možna bulo perekazati Gamletovì dumki ì počuttâ. Takij dobrij koval' usâkih termìnìv, âk Staric'kij, zrobiv z «Gamleta» posmìšiŝe zadlâ naših vorogìv. […] Â sam perekladav «Lìra» ì dobre znaû, âk-to trudno perekladati Šekspìra. Dehto kazav, ŝo mìj «Lìr» dobre perekladenij, a menì zdaêt'sâ – nì. A vse-taki cìkavo, âk Vam davsâ «Gamlet». Zašlìt', perečitaû, ta j svoû dumku skažu.]

It remains unknown whether the translation had ever been sent, as subsequent letters from Myrnyi to Zharko mention neither Shakespeare nor *Hamlet*. Zharko struggled to publish his works and had difficulties obtaining a censor's permit. In 1929, he was arrested and charged with espionage for Great Britain. Following numerous searches, most of his manuscripts disappeared (*1861- народився…* [*narodivsâ…*]).

In the essay *Mykola Zerov and His Poetry*, Ukrainian translator and scholar Hryhorii Kochur outlined Zerov's plans for translating Shakespeare. Zerov, a celebrated translator of Roman classics, was known as the leader of the Neoclassical School, a group of Kyiv-based poets. According to Kochur, he intended to translate several of Shakespeare's works, including *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Julius*

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17 "I would be interested in reading your *Hamlet*. I think this tragedy is complicated to translate into our language. Our language is still not elaborate enough to render Hamlet's thoughts and emotions. Such a good wordsmith as Starytskyi made it a laughingstock for our enemies. [...] I have translated *Lear*, so I know how difficult it is to translate Shakespeare. Some people say my *Lear* is well-translated, and I think this is wrong. It is interesting how you have coped with *Hamlet*. Send it to me, I will read it and share my opinion."

Caesar (Kolomiyets 52). Zerov also wrote about his idea to translate *The Winter's Tale* to his wife Sofiia (*Родинне вогнище* [The Zerov family] 142). However, these ambitious plans were tragically cut short in the mid-1930s when Zerov was arrested, exiled to the Solovki prison camp, and ultimately executed by a firing squad in the Sandarmokh forest, Karelia, on November 3, 1937.

Another instance of a ghost translation, about which we possess very little information, involves Mykola Ivanov, a prose translator from Kharkiv. During the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, he moved to Kyiv and translated *The Merchant of Venice* (Петров [Petrov] 4). Lada Kolomiyets has found a rare quotation from *Ukrayinskyi Zasiv* – a cultural journal published by Viktor Petrov in occupied Kharkiv: "A well-known in Ukraine translator of belle-letters from Kharkiv, M. O. Ivanov has finished translating from English into Ukrainian *The Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare. At the meeting of the literary section of *Prosvita* society, Associate Professor Yu. V. Sheveliov substantially analysed the translation and commended its high quality" (Kolomiyets 56). The information about Ivanov (or Ivaniv in other sources) translating Shakespeare was later reiterated in Petrov's article *Povorot do Yevropy (suchasnyi stan ukrayinskoyi poezii)* [A Turn to Europe] (4), reprinted in other newspapers published in Ukraine during the occupation.[18] The fate of this translation is unknown, and Ivanov's trace, as he allegedly relocated to Western Ukraine and subsequently moved to Germany, was lost after the war (Kolomiyets 56).

So, some ontological losses in the Ukrainian Shakespeareana can be explained by certain backhandedness of theatre practitioners who obviously disregarded preservation of the translations they used. Moreover, World War II and the Great Purge of the Stalinist era are also culprits. Shakespeare scholar and translator Abram Gozenpud recounted that during his time in evacuation, his library was looted by the Nazi occupants and his archive was burnt for heating by his landlords (Гозенпуд [Gozenpud], *У моєму Києві* [U moêmu Kiêvì] 308). In the case of repressed writers and translators, their libraries were usually confiscated and seldom returned.

As for the gnoseological losses in Ukrainian translations of Shakespeare, it makes logical sense to begin with preserved but unpublished manuscripts. These translations never graced a printed page or reached stage spotlights; they eluded critical scrutiny, reader engagement, and the discerning gaze of theatre directors and spectators. They do not yet form a fragment in the mosaic of the Ukrainian translations of Shakespeare's works since they first need to be "excavated" from the archives. For instance, the Lviv State Historical Archive houses three translations

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18 See: Петров В., Конференція українських письменників. *Донецкий вестник*. № 76. 18.07.1943. С. 3–4 [Petrov V., Konferencìâ ukraïns'kih pis'mennikìv. *Doneckij vestnik*. № 76. 18.07.1943. S. 3–4]. Петров В. [Petrov V.]. Поворот до Європи [Povorot do Êvropi].

by a prominent literary scholar, Yaroslav Hordynskyi. He is known to have translated four plays by Shakespeare, with only *A Midsummer Night's Dream* seeing publication in 1927 in Lviv, then part of Poland. Three other translations – *Richard III*, *The Tempest*, and *The Merchant of Venice* – have remained in manuscript to this day (Мороз [Moroz] 812).

The same archive also stores manuscripts of *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* translated by Hnat Khotkevych, a prominent theatre practitioner of the first half of the twentieth century. His Shakespeare-related activity stemmed from his views on the principles of Ukrainian theatre development and included translating – or, rather, adapting/abridging[19] – tragedies and comedies for the stage of the time. His versions of comedies – *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Comedy of Errors* – were published between 1924 and 1928 in Kharkiv by the publishing house *Rukh*. As Khotkevych fell victim to the Stalinist repressions against Ukrainian intellectuals and people of culture, his translations were removed from the libraries and destroyed, making even the published ones bibliographic rarities, with only a few copies scattered across the country's major libraries. Until 1998, Khotkevych's version of *Hamlet* remained buried in the Lviv archive, alongside his other two translations of the tragedies, brought there in 1941 with other manuscripts, books, and musical instruments (Лучук [Luchuk] 198). That year, the manuscript was discovered, retrieved, typed, and published in issue 1 of the culture journal *Paradyhma* by Olha Luchuk, a prominent Ukrainian researcher of Shakespearean translations.

A version of *Othello* by Mykhailo Rudnytskyi, a Lviv-based theatre and literary scholar and translator, has been awaiting publication for more than a century. Initially commissioned to adapt the already existing translation by Kulish for the 1923 Lviv production directed by Oleksandr Zagarov, Rudnytskyi instead came up with a new translation (Гавалюк [Havaliuk]). As Maiia Harbuziuk points out, this case exemplifies close cooperation between translator and theatre: Rudnytskyi even delivered a lecture on Shakespeare's works before the first night of the show (4). Obviously, this marked a still-rare instance of a translation influencing – if not shaping – a theatrical production.

Since translations are closely tied to the times in which they were created, the longer they remain in manuscript, the lower their impact they could eventually exert. This is evident in the case of the renowned Ukrainian poets Ivan Franko, Lesya Ukrainka, and Panas Myrny. Franko, though far better known as an editor of and commentator on Panteleimon Kulish's and Yurii Fedkovych's translations, also undertook the challenge of translating fragments of *King Lear* (1878–1879) and *The Tempest* (1884), as well as *The Merchant of Venice* (full translation completed in 1912) and several sonnets (1901–1907), of which only the sonnets

19 For more details about Khotkevych's translation principles, see Лучук [Luchuk]; Moskvitina.

enjoyed timely publications. The translations of the plays were not published until 1956, forty years after Franko's death, when they were primarily of interest to literary scholars. Perhaps the poet's dedication to the publication of Kulish's translations overshadowed his own ambitions as a translator. The same delayed publication fate befell the translation of *King Lear* by Panas Myrny. Completed in 1897, it was published in his *Complete Works* as late as 1970. Likewise, acts 1 and 2 of *Macbeth*, translated by Lesya Ukrainka in 1898, were first printed only in 1947, as a supplement to the monograph *Poetychyi teatr Lesi Ukrainky* [The Poetic Theatre by Lesya Ukrainka] by Abram Gozenpud. Supposedly, this is because Kulish's versions eclipsed any other Shakespeare-related translation efforts of the time.[20]

A remarkable category of gnoseological losses in the Ukrainian translational Shakespeareana comprises editions published during the 1920s–1930s and almost immediately forgotten because the translators fell victim to the Stalinist repressive machine. The policy of *korenizatsia* (nativisation) established by the Soviet government in the national republics aimed at raising the political and cultural elite for every nation of the USSR. It meant full support of the national languages and cultures, as well as the integration of representatives of certain ethnicities into all the administrative levels of local governments. In Ukraine, this resulted in the Red Renaissance, a flourishing period for literature, theatre, cinema, and translation, that would later tragically turn into the Executed Renaissance, with deportations, arrests, executions, and then Holodomor – the artificial famine inflicted on the Ukrainian peasantry. In addition to the aforementioned adaptations by Hnat Khotkevych, there were three more translations between 1924 and 1936 published in Soviet Ukraine: *Othello* (1927) by Maik Yohansen and Volodymyr Scherbanenko, *Macbeth* (1930) by Teodosii Osmachka, and *Hamlet* (1936) by Yuri Klen (Osvald Burgardt). Their critical appraisal was almost non-existent as both Burgardt and Osmachka emigrated from Soviet Ukraine, seeking refuge abroad, and Yohansen was arrested in 1937 and executed soon after. His fate mirrored that of many

20 Kulish's translations set a standard that made other versions less urgent to publish. Moreover, at the time, there was no strong tradition of publishing multiple translations of the same text. Once Kulish's versions were available, publishers and literary circles may have seen little need for additional efforts. For Ivan Franko, Panas Myrny, and Lesya Ukrainka, translating Shakespeare was a notable but secondary endeavour, an episode within their vast and multifaceted literary output. Their Shakespeare translations, though significant, remained peripheral to their broader intellectual and artistic pursuits. In contrast, for Panteleimon Kulish, translating Shakespeare was not merely an undertaking but a deliberate and sustained mission — a project to which he devoted considerable time, effort, and creative energy. Kulish approached translation as both a linguistic and cultural enterprise, striving to refine the Ukrainian literary language and elevate it to the level of European literary traditions. His dedication ensured that his versions set a lasting precedent, overshadowing other translation efforts of the time.

other Ukrainian cultural practitioners during the Stalinist repressions – archives confiscated, books removed from libraries, and names banned from public mention. Burgardt's and Osmachka's emigration saved their lives and allowed them to continue their literary and cultural endeavours in a freer environment. It was not until the 1960s that their names were mentioned in relation to Shakespeare by Ukrainian scholars Rostyslav Dotsenko and Hryhorii Kochur,[21] who were brave enough to publish their thoughts and relate to recent political history.

A decade later, Abram Gozenpud narrowly escaped execution during yet another devastating tide of Stalinist repressions targeting Ukrainian literati. Before that, he was a key figure among those who reignited interest in Shakespeare in Ukraine after a lull in Shakespeare related activity during the first half of the 1930s. From 1937 to 1941, he worked closely with the Kyiv-based publishing house *Mystetstvo*, which published two of his translations – *Romeo and Juliet* (1937) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1941). In addition, he edited and wrote in-depth, high-quality scholarly afterwords for his own translations, as well as for *Macbeth* in Yu. Koretsky's version (1940), *King Lear* translated by M. Rylsky (1940), and *Hamlet* translated by Viktor Ver (1941). Gozenpud was also an active public lecturer, served as an respondent at dissertation defences, and published scholarly studies. He contributed to the 1939 collection of Shakespeare research edited by O. Biletsky with a section titled *Shakespeare and Music* which had been the topic of his dissertation in 1939. Since 1936, he had been a regular contributor to the journal *Teatr*, likely publishing both under his own name and the pseudonym A. Abramenko. An article by B. Warneke

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21 In his programmatic article Shakespeare in Ukraine, Hryhoriy Kochur offers a positive evaluation of O. Burgardt's work. The researcher describes it as "лучший из того, что было сделано за эти годы" [the best of what was done during these years (referring to the Renaissance of the 1920s–30s); lučšij iz togo, čto bylo sdelano za èti gody] (Кочур [Kochur] 48). Kochur praises the thorough commentary accompanying the translation by M. Yohansen and V. Shcherbanenko and notes their meticulous rendering of the original sense. However, in his opinion, the translation itself "может служить разве только в качестве подстрочника" [can only serve as a crib; možet služit' razve tol'ko v kačestve podstročnika] (Кочур [Kochur] 47). The translation of *Macbeth* by T. Osmachka, according to Kochur, has some strong points, "хотя достигается это иногда ценой некоторого насилия над языком, некоторой искусственности языковых построений. Не всегда безупречна и техника стиха…" [though this is achieved at the cost of some violence done to the language. The technique of verse is also not always flawless…; hotâ dostigaetsâ èto inogda cenoj nekotorogo nasiliâ nad âzykom, nekotoroj iskusstvennosti âzykovyh postroenij. Ne vsegda bezuprečna i tehnika stiha…] (Кочур [Kochur] 47). In his article, Kochur takes another incredibly bold step by mentioning the translation of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* (Parts 1 and 2), which T. Osmachka published while in exile, together with his improved version of *Macbeth* in 1961 in Munich by I. Kostetskyi's publishing house. More on this topic in Ludmila Mnich's "The Ukrainian Project in the Free World: The Ukrainian Shakespeare Society" in this volume.

in issue 3 of the journal in 1938 contains translations of excerpts from *Richard III* and *Henry IV* attributed to Abramenko (39–45).

In 1944, Gozenpud became one of the founding members of the Department of Western Literature at the Institute of Ukrainian Literature of the Academy of Sciences. In a 1946 article by the department head Agapit Shamrai, it was mentioned that the department's scholars were planning a four-volume edition of Shakespeare's works, and Gozenpud was likely to play an active role in this ambitious project (Шамрай [Shamray] 4). However, this plan was never realized. Instead, between 1950 and 1952, a two-volume collection of Shakespearean translations was published in a limited print run, quickly becoming a bibliographic rarity. By that time, Gozenpud had already been pushed out of the Ukrainian literary studies. In the late 1940s, during the campaign against "cosmopolitanism," he was labelled a "staunch cosmopolitan" and a "snobbish anti-patriot", severely criticized for his monograph on Lesya Ukrainka, dismissed from all positions and ultimately forced to leave Ukraine (*Радянська Україна* [*Radâns'ka Ukraïna*] 3). Abram Gozenpud's contributions to Shakespeare translation and scholarship remain largely overlooked in contemporary studies. Despite his significant role in reviving interest in Shakespeare in Ukraine during the late 1930s and 1940s, his translations and critical writings have not yet received the recognition they deserve.[22]

Another important gnoseological loss was determined both politically and geographically. The Ukrainian émigré community, gradually shaped by the 1950s, comprised intellectuals who opposed the Soviet regime but were able to flee from the USSR. Some of them (Ihor Kostetskyi, Teodosii Osmachka, Vasyl Barka, Svaitoslav Karavanskyi, Yar Slavutych and many more) made significant contributions to Ukrainian Shakespeare studies and translations, particularly during the mid-twentieth century. A key milestone in this tradition was the establishment of the Ukrainian Shakespeare Society (USS) on August 25, 1957, on the eve of the Eighth International Congress of Modern Languages and Literature in Heidelberg, Germany. Founded at the Institute of Slavic Studies at Heidelberg University, the USS was spearheaded by three prominent intellectuals of the Ukrainian diaspora: Dmytro Chyzhevskyi, head of the Institute and elected president of the society;

22 Critical assessments of his Shakespeare translations are rare, but one notable evaluation comes from Hryhoriy Kochur. Writing about Gozenpud's version of *Romeo and Juliet* he argues that "this translation (as well as his later translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) is not without its flaws: it contains linguistic – lexical and accentological – errors and awkward phrasing; at times, the translator simplifies his task by streamlining the original. […] At the same time, certain passages are rendered successfully. Of particular interest are the introductory articles that A. A. Gozenpud included with his translations (he also authored the prefaces to most of the other Shakespeare translations published during that period). Thus, as a significant stage in acquainting Ukrainian readers with Shakespeare, Gozenpud's translations had their positive value" (Кочур [Kochur] 50).

Yaroslav Rudnytskyi, a linguist from Canada, who served as its vice-president; and Ihor Kostetskyi, a writer and translator, who became the general secretary and its most active member.

The USS aimed to revive and promote Ukrainian engagement with the works of William Shakespeare, which, according to USS members, had been forcibly interrupted by Soviet cultural repression. The society's programme and its declaration of goals, published in the émigré press, highlighted the destruction of Ukrainian culture under Bolshevik rule, where Shakespeare translations and productions were confined within the limits of Marxist ideology. The society pledged to restore this broken tradition, collect Ukrainian Shakespeareana scattered across Western libraries and archives, and encourage new translations and studies by émigré scholars. The USS also resolved to publish a Yearbook of the Ukrainian Shakespeare Society (some issues appeared in the 1980s) and other related works (Стех [Stech] 6).

One of the most influential figures in this effort was Ihor Kostetskyi, whose bold translation aesthetics left a lasting mark on Ukrainian Shakespeare studies.[23] Under his leadership, and largely through his "Na hori"[24] publishing house, the USS published several significant translations and scholarly works. Kostetskyi's own interpretations, often characterized by baroque stylistics, exemplified a unique and experimental approach to rendering Shakespeare's texts in Ukrainian. These translations departed from the conservative and standardized methods typically employed by mainland Ukrainian translators, embracing innovative linguistic strategies and stylistic boldness. Their unconventional nature often aligned with the tradition of Panteleimon Kulish, exploring the creative potential of the Ukrainian language in new and dynamic ways.

One of the USS's early achievements was the publication of Teodosii Osmachka's translations of *Macbeth* and *Henry IV*, completed in exile and published in 1961 in Munich by Ihor Kostetskyi's publishing house. However, the Ukrainian diaspora's translations of Shakespeare largely remained unnoticed within Soviet Ukraine, where cultural exchanges were heavily restricted. These works, even from today's perspective, are viewed as language experiments, reflective of the cultural and intellectual environment of the émigré community. Despite their innovative qualities, the translations faded from prominence after Kostetskyi's active involvement in the USS ended in the late 1960s, with Shakespeare research initiatives taking precedence over new interpretations in later years.

The diaspora's contributions have only begun to receive wider recognition in independent Ukraine, particularly through efforts such as the extensive three-volume

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23 For more on this, see Lada Kolomiyets' article on Kostetskyi's translations in this volume.

24 This can be translated as "On the mountain" but it also resonates with the Ukrainian word "наropi" [*nagori*], which means "on top" or "above", implying something placed on a high shelf.

project *Shekspir Ukrainskoyu: po toi bik Zaliznoio Zavisy* (Shakespeare in Ukrainian on the Other Side of the Iron Curtain), edited by Marko Robert Stech. Published in Kyiv as part of the CIUS-sponsored series *Ukrayina i Svit: Perekhrestia kultur* (Ukraine and the World: The Crossroads of Cultures), the project aims to compile Shakespeare translations by Ukrainian émigré interpreters. The first nearly 900-page volume, published in 2024, includes Osmachka's *Macbeth* (in its Ukrainian and émigré revisions), both parts of *Henry IV*, and introductory essays by Kostetskyi and Irena Makaryk on Les Kurbas's groundbreaking staging of *Macbeth* in the Berezil Theatre. Forthcoming volumes are expected to include Kostetskyi's translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, Vasyl Barka's *King Lear*, Yurii Klen's *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, and fragments of *Hamlet* translated by Kostetskyi. The first of these texts is virtually inaccessible in Ukraine, as it is absent from libraries and digital archives. Their inclusion will offer a broader understanding of the émigré translators' contributions to Ukrainian Shakespeareana, with their experimental approach providing a valuable counterpoint to the more conservative translations that emerged from within the Soviet Union. The diaspora's translations represent not just a cultural achievement but also an act of resistance, preserving and enriching Ukrainian engagement with Shakespeare while separated from the homeland. Through their bold stylistic choices and intellectual creativity, these translations underscore the unwavering commitment, enduring resilience, and remarkable adaptability of Ukrainian culture.

Despite the impression that half the Ukrainian Shakespeareana is composed of translations buried in oblivion, there are a few happy-ending stories to tell. These stories of survival are nothing short of miraculous and involve sheer luck since two translations – *Hamlet* by Leonid Hrebinka and *Romeo and Juliet* by Vasyl Mysyk – were erased from public memory on purpose, as part of the Stalinist regime's brutal campaign to silence and repress Ukrainian writers and people of culture in the 1930s.

Ukrainian poet Leonid Hrebinka[25] completed his full translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in 1939. He brought the manuscript to Kyiv, intending for

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25 Leonid Yevhenovych Hrebinka (1909–1942), Ukrainian poet and translator, was born in the village of Maryanivka, in the Poltava region, into a family of minor landowners with ancestral ties to the prominent Ukrainian writer Yevhen Pavlovych Hrebinka. Following the upheavals of the Russian Revolution and the establishment of Soviet power, the family lost their estate, and Leonid, after a series of hardships, ended up in a Kyiv orphanage in 1924. Despite early misfortunes, he demonstrated remarkable literary talent, beginning to write poetry aged 12 and publishing in leading Ukrainian journals from 1926 onward. His sole poetry collection, *Radist chornozemna* [Joy of the Black Soil] (1930), published in Kyiv, showcased his lyrical gift but was met with harsh 'proletarian' criticism. This backlash forced Hrebinka to abandon original literary pursuits and turn to newspaper editing for survival. In 1933, he moved to Moscow, primarily to escape the unfavourable socio-political climate in Soviet Ukraine, where severe

it to be used in a production at the Ivan Franko Ukrainian Drama Theatre. The translation had been in progress long before 1939: Leonid had read excerpts from his version to Valentina Yurchenko, the wife of Hrebinka's elder brother Vadym and a teacher of English by profession, in Kharkiv during 1934–1935, and she was deeply impressed by the elegance and beauty of this version's poetic language (Коломієць [Kolomiets; Kolomìêc'], *Український художній переклад* [Ukrainian Literary Translation; Ukraïns'kij hudožnìj pereklad] 287). Unfortunately, the manuscript was lost. The theatre was preparing to stage *Hamlet* using Hrebinka's translation, but their plans were disrupted by a Russian-language production of the play in another Kyiv theatre. Subsequent attempts to publish Hrebinka's translation also failed, despite the enthusiastic endorsement it received from the renowned poet Maksym Rylskyi, who tried to promote its publication. At that time, however, a different translation of *Hamlet* by Viktor Ver was already in print.

Hrebinka's translation remained unknown to the public until the 1970s, when it was rediscovered and transferred to the Archive-Museum of Literature and Arts of the Ukrainian SSR in Kyiv. Rostyslav Dotsenko, who provided this information, explained that the manuscript had been stored for about 30 years in poor condition in a house in Vinnytsia, which used to belong to Ihor Kostetskyi during the pre-war period. Eventually, it was entrusted to Hryhorii Kochur, a prominent Ukrainian translator who himself rendered *Hamlet* in the early 1960s: he ensured it was added to the Archive-Museum and actively advocated for its inclusion in the six-volume edition of Shakespeare's works published by Dnipro publishing house in 1984–1986 (Доценко [Dotsenko] 219). However, when Hrebinka's translation appeared in volume five of this edition, it had undergone significant intervention by the editor-in-chief of the volume, Mykhailo Tupailo. He smoothed over certain politically and ideologically ambiguous passages, thus altering its expressive and conceptual integrity (Коломієць [Kolomiyets; Kolomìêc'], *Українські перекладачі* [Ukrainian

ideological criticism had stifled his ability to continue as an original poet. There, he started editorial work for various newspapers, later channeling his poetic energy into translations. He undertook major translation projects, including a rendition of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (for which he undertook intensive studies in English). His translations and original literary work earned him admission to Maxim Gorky Literary Institute in Moscow where he studied from 1939 to 1941. Despite finding temporary refuge, Hrebinka was arrested on June 24, 1941, shortly after the start of World War II, on charges of alleged involvement in an anti-Soviet Ukrainian nationalist group. All his documents and manuscripts were confiscated and later destroyed. On November 17, 1941, he was sentenced to death by a military tribunal in Saratov. Although his sentence was commuted to ten years of imprisonment in April 1942, he died in prison on April 14, 1942, reportedly from an "intestinal infection," a common euphemism for death by starvation (Коломієць [Kolomiyets; Kolomìêc'], *Український художній переклад* [Ukrainian Literary Translation; Ukraïns'kij hudožnìj pereklad] 285–287).

Translators; Ukrainski perekladachi] 169).[26] Despite these changes, the inclusion of Hrebinka's translation in this major collection marked an important recognition of his work.

The minimally edited (only in illegible places) text of Hrebinka's *Hamlet* was first published in 1975 in the literary journal *Vsesvit* (issue No. 7). However, parts of the manuscript had deteriorated over time due to poor storage conditions, making certain sections difficult to read. The task of restoring the text was undertaken by the Shakespeare scholar and translation expert Mariia Azhniuk, who carried out meticulous textual analysis and worked to reconstruct the damaged passages. Later, it was included in the collection of Leonid Hrebinka's poetry and translations, *Radist Chornozemna* [The Joy of the Black Soil], published in 1990 by the Kyiv-based Dnipro publishing house. This collection was compiled and annotated by Rostyslav Dotsenko, with a foreword by the critic and literary scholar Ivan Dziuba. The book gathered all of Hrebinka's works that Dotsenko had been able to recover at the time.

The other happy rediscovery amidst the numerous lost, neglected and forgotten translations of Shakespeare into Ukrainian is the story of Vasyl Mysyk's[27] *Romeo and Juliet*, completed in 1932. This version marks the culmination of a prolific period of Shakespeare activity in the 1920s and early 1930s. However, its fate as well as the destiny of its translator turned out to be tragic. On the night of November 5, 1934, Mysyk was arrested in his apartment within the 'Slovo' Writers' Building in Kharkiv while editing his translation of a novel by Walter Scott. According to Vasyl Petrovych Mynko, a fellow resident who lived one floor above, Mysyk was arrested by mistake – the warrant was issued in Mynko's name, but the agents did not bother to verify the individual they were apprehending. For them, it was inconsequential, as Mysyk came from what was dismissively referred to as a 'priestly' family, making him a "соціально небезпечною особою"[28] [socìal'no nebezpečnoû osoboû] (Коломієць [Kolomiyets; Kolomìêc'], *Український художній переклад* [Ukrainian Literary Translation; Ukraïns'kij hudožnìj pereklad] 295). On February 26, 1935, the indictment was approved. However, due to insufficient evidence, the investigation was ultimately halted. After enduring numerous tortures

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26 The original, non-edited version was published only in 2003 by *Osnovy* publishing house.

27 Vasyl Mysyk (1907–1983) was a Ukrainian poet, translator, and writer, born into a priest's family in the village of Novopavlivka, in the Dnipropetrovsk region. He developed an early talent for poetry, which was recognized by his teacher, poet Arkadii Kazka, who introduced his student's work to prominent literary figures such as Pavlo Tychyna, Mykola Zerov, and Maksym Rylskyi. Mysyk's poetic debut came in 1923 with publications in leading literary journals. He had a deep interest in languages, mastering several, including English, Persian, and Tajik (Коломієць [Kolomiyets; Kolomìêc'], *Український художній переклад* [Ukrainian Literary Translation; Ukraïns'kij hudožnìj pereklad] 293–294).

28 "a socially dangerous individual".

and even a staged execution meant to coerce a confession, on July 19, 1935, the NKVD's Special Meeting, disregarding the lack of evidence, sentenced Mysyk to five years in a labour camp. He served this unjust sentence in the notorious Solovki camps. Upon completing his sentence, Mysyk returned to his native village, Novopavlivka in the spring of 1940. With the outbreak of war in 1941, he voluntarily joined the front and served as an artilleryman. During fierce battles on the Kerch Peninsula, he was encircled by enemy forces along with 150,000 Soviet soldiers. Once wounded, he was captured by the Nazis and placed in a camp for Soviet prisoners of war until the end of World War II. In the spring of 1945, he managed to evade execution, escaping alongside a group of soldiers who were slated for extermination.

Following the war, Mysyk was repatriated to the Soviet Union. Upon returning to Kharkiv, while avoiding re-arrest, he was nonetheless forbidden from pursuing a literary career. Until the late 1950s, he had to work as an accountant in a tram depot. All his attempts to gain permission to publish his translations, including those of Robert Burns, were consistently rebuffed (Коломієць [Kolomiyets; Kolomìêc'], *Український художній переклад* [Ukrainian Literary Translation; Ukraïns'kij hudožnìj pereklad] 296). Only after the political thaw of 1956, thanks to the tireless efforts of Maksym Rylsky, Vasyl Mysyk was finally reinstated in his 'literary rights'. According to his widow, Mariia Taran-Mysyk, throughout these harrowing years, "пролежав на горищі… Миші пообгризали кути, папір пожовк, але весь машинописний текст з виправленнями зберігся чудово" ("Ромео і Джульєтта") [proležav na gorišì… Mišì poobgrizali kuti, papìr požovk, ale ves' mašinopisnij tekst z vipravlennâmi zberìgsâ čudovo ("Romeo ì Džul'êtta")].[29] The initial publication of the translation appeared in the journal *Prapor* (1988), but no further publications occurred until 2019, neither in Shakespeare's collected works in translation, nor as a separate book. Finally, thanks to the efforts of Professor Eleonora Solovey (Kyiv) and writer Anatolii Stozhuk, director of *Maidan* Publishing House (Kharkiv), this gem of Ukrainian translation was printed as a standalone book for the first time.

The third rediscovery, while perhaps less dramatic than the previous ones, was that *Hamlet* translated by Mykhailo Rudnytskyi for the first Ukrainian production of the tragedy in 1943 in occupied Lviv.[30] This legendary production, despite enjoying sold-out performances, had a tragically short run. The swift

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29 The manuscript of the translation (*Romeo and Juliet*) lay in the attic… Mice had gnawed at the corners, and the paper had yellowed, but the entire typewritten text with corrections was perfectly preserved (*Romeo I Dzhulietta*).

30 In 2023, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of this production, the Ukrainian Shakespeare Centre in cooperation with the Department of Theatre Studies, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, created a virtual museum #Гамлет_UA: дія 1, сцена [Gamlet_UA: dìâ 1,

advance of the Soviet Army towards Lviv instilled widespread panic among the city's inhabitants, prompting Yosyp Hirniak, the production's director, as well as Volodymyr Blavatskyi, the acclaimed actor who played Hamlet, and numerous other members of the Lviv Opera Theatre, the venue of the production, to flee westward, ultimately finding refuge in the United States. Mykhailo Rudnytskyi remained in Lviv, working at Ivan Franko Lviv University as a professor. His activity before 1945 was, to a certain extent, concealed.

After 1991, when it was possible to investigate the non-Soviet history of the Ukrainian theatre openly, the search for Mykhailo Rudnytskyi's translation started. While it was labelled as "brilliant" and "outstanding" even before its premiere (Козак [Kozak] 171–172), it was nowhere to be found: it was missing from the official archives. Lviv director and theatre scholar, Bohdan Kozak, who was the search enthusiast, tried to find the elusive manuscript's traces in the USA, where Hirniak and Blavatskyi had emigrated. It was eventually found within the Blavatskyi's family archive stored in the Ukrainian Museum in New York. Yuri Levytskyi, the son of Vira Levytska, who played Gertrude in the 1943 *Hamlet*, kindly sent a copy of it to Ukraine (Козак [Kozak] 177). However, this was not the end of the story. In 2005, Lyudmyla Rudnytska, the translator's widow, shared a 1956 version of *Hamlet*, which incorporated several edits and revisions. Consequently, in 2008, the Department of Theatre Studies and Acting at the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv published the first comprehensive edition of Mykhailo Rudnytskyi's *Hamlet*, primarily based on the 1943 version, with minor adjustments incorporated from the 1956 revision.

It would be too optimistic to think that losses among Shakespeare's translations in Ukrainian are a thing of the past. Some of those translations whose creators are present and accounted for (or have only recently passed away) cannot be labelled as lost but rather endangered: if they are not published, they will be lost forever. For instance, a postmodern translation of *Twelfth Night* by Yurii Andrukhovych for the 2013 production in Taras Shevchenko Cherkasy Drama Theatre directed by Andrii Kritenko is almost unknown. Moreover, the fate of the translation and production was quite Shakespearean: a great fire dramatically damaged the theatre building. This resulted in a prolonged, five-year repair period, after which many previous box office hits never returned to the stage. Subsequently, only a few copies of the translation survived. There is also some hope to see the translation of *Edward III* by Maria Hablevych, a famous Lviv translator and Shakespearean scholar, which is out of print.[31] For now, only some excerpts are published as part of her article

scena 1943] 1943: https://www.artsteps.com/view/657d8dcb3e7698b59c6de2a7. See the article by Nataliya Torkut, Svitlana Deineka, and Roman Lavrentii in this volume.

31 For more information, see the article "The Quest for Selfhood: Shakespeare's Sonnets Interpreted by Maria Hablevych" by Anna Sverediuk and Oksana Dzera in this volume.

on Shakespeare's worldview of the 1590s (Габлевич [Hablevych]). Oleksandr Hriaznov (1940–2021), the most prolific Ukrainian Shakespeare translator of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, with thirteen plays to his portfolio, succeeded in publishing two volumes of his translations, but until recently, eight plays had remained unpublished. His descendants, apparently, published them in a free Ukrainian online library which eventually contributed to his post-mortem fame: two of the recent Shakespearean premieres in Ukraine (*Macbeth* in Taras Shevchenko Cherkasy Drama Theatre (2024, dir. by Stanislav Sadakliyev) and *Othello* in Kyiv Academic Theatre of Drama and Comedy (2024, dir. by Oksana Dmitriyeva)) used Hriaznov's translations, never staged previously.

The history of Shakespeare translations in Ukraine is a poignant reflection of the nation's complex and often tragic past. The numerous instances of 'lost translations' – whether through deliberate destruction, neglect, censorship or the passage of time – serve as stark reminders of the challenges faced by Ukrainian culture in the face of foreign domination, political repression, linguistic suppression, and cultural erasure. These losses represent not merely the disappearance of significant literary works but also the gagging of voices, the silencing of creative expression, and the suppression of Ukrainian identity. The recovery and study of these lost translations are therefore not regarded as an academic pastime. It is imperative that we continue to seek out and preserve these translations, bringing them back to life for modern audiences and scholars alike. Now, at a time of war, this task becomes even more urgent, as these precious texts face the risk of being damaged or irretrievably lost. These efforts are a powerful reminder that even in the darkest times, the preservation of art and culture remains an act of defiance and hope for the future. Rediscovering and meticulously analysing previous translations not only enriches our understanding of Ukrainian Shakespeareana but also provides valuable insights for modern translators. By studying the linguistic choices, stylistic nuances, and interpretative strategies of earlier interpretations, contemporary translators can draw inspiration and develop fresh approaches to Shakespeare's texts. Moreover, such engagement with numerous past translations may ultimately encourage retranslation, fostering a renewed dialogue between the past and the present. This ongoing process ensures the enduring power of Shakespeare's art that never fails to connect, inspire, and endure.

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