

2. SHAKESPEARE WITHIN THE BORDERS

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SHAKESPEARE'S ENGAGEMENT IN UKRAINIAN CULTURAL RENAISSANCE OF THE 1920s-1930s

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1920s–30s the craft of translation experienced its heyday alongside other forms of verbal and non-verbal art both in the so-called Central Ukraine (then Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, which factually comprised the Central, Eastern, and Southern parts of Ukraine) and Western Ukraine (most of whose territories passed over to Poland and the rest to Romania and Czechoslovakia in 1921). The 1920s have gone down in the history of Ukraine as the decade of National Renaissance, when hundreds of translations from dozens of languages (both classical and contemporary ones) were brought out, including multi-volume and reprinted editions, and large-scale publications in a considerable number of periodicals both in Central and Western Ukraine.

The provenance of Ukrainian cultural revival harkens back to the collapse of the Russian Empire in February 1917. The February Revolution in Russia triggered national liberation movements all over the country. The anti-tsarist state of public opinion and strong national liberation feelings together with numerous peasant uprisings against landlords had led the Ukrainian population into the turmoil of political upheavals and civil war (March 1917 – March 1921). After the Bolsheviks attained an epoch-making victory over the Ukrainian governmental elite and influential political parties, they could not but underestimate the moving force of national revival idea for the oppressed nationalities as well as the importance to put this idea into service for their rule over the former Russian colonies¹.

¹ Pauly M. D. *Breaking the Tongue: Language, Education, and Power in Soviet Ukraine, 1923–1934*. Toronto; Buffalo; London, 2014. xx+456 p.

Therefore, in 1923 the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks declared governmental support of the Ukrainian language and its usage in all domains of social, administrative, economic, scientific, and cultural life in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic by launching the “policy of Ukrainization” of the Republic’s bureaucratic apparatus and its major state-financed institutions, but actually keeping in mind a policy of strengthening their own power in Ukraine. The period of so-called “active Ukrainization” lasted until 1929. Although aborted, the policy of Ukrainization greatly influenced all areas of cultural life, and its favorable consequences survived until the late 1930s despite the fact of actual elimination of the policy for maintenance of national languages started in the late 1920s – early 1930s. Further denunciation of the supportive policy towards national languages in the USSR and its condemnation as a “nationalistic fallacy” would bring about rigid censorship, arrests, death, and oblivion for the hundreds of Ukrainian public leaders, intellectuals and translators among them.

It is noteworthy that translations of Shakespeare’s works into Ukrainian have played a formative role in protecting the Ukrainian nation language and culture from dissolution in the ocean of Russian predominance. At all times of the struggle for Ukrainian national self-identity and survival, i. e., in the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet period, translations from Shakespeare have been viewed as a sign of cultural maturity and competence of the Ukrainian people as European nation.

1. Shakespeare’s cultural agency amidst the boost in translations in the 1920s

The factor of cultural agency brings forward the idea of the translator’s mission, a conscious act of translating grounded in the feeling of interconnection between creativity and social change. As formulated in the Synopsis of the book *Cultural Agency in the Americas*, “‘Cultural agency’ refers to a range of creative activities that contribute to society, including pedagogy, research, activism, and the arts”².

In the auspicious atmosphere of the decade of National Renaissance (from the early 1920s to the early 1930s), dozens of writers, university professors and literary critics made efforts in literary

² Sommer D. (ed.) *Cultural Agency in the Americas*. 2006. URL : <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Cultural-Agency-Americas-Doris-Sommer/dp/0822334992>.

translation. Numerous translations, including reprints, were put out in the market as separate editions or were included in literary, socio-cultural, political and purely propagandistic periodicals, or both. This fact testified to the weight the translated discourse found then in the professional and public domains, in the political debate, in the million-strong readership, and to what had become the people's popular pastime.

In the 1920s, thus, the bulk of translations from dozens of languages testified to the vim and vigor of the Ukrainian national and cultural revival. Although the exact reasons for choosing the source texts and languages for translation were quite different, ones just for Russian-language and others for English-language authors, the common goal was the enrichment and flourishing of Ukrainian language and culture.

At that time, several competitive publishing houses were represented by professional teams of editors, who successfully cooperated with a wide range of educated and responsible translators, and those qualified editorial boards, truly devoted to the highest standards of book-publishing, could guarantee the realization of long-term multi-volume translation projects. And most importantly, doing translations, together with all the accompanying translation activities such as editing and publishing translations, was no less prestigious than being engaged in the original creative writing.

Translations performed the role of cultural agents both for Central and Eastern Ukraine, or Velyka Ukraina (the Ukrainian heartland, as it was called), which became Soviet from the early 1920s, and for Western Ukraine, or the so-called Polish Ukraine, or Galicia. Burning issues of national and linguistic survival united the two parts of Ukraine, politically divided, into a culturally unified nation. Books in Ukrainian and translations into it, forbidden by tsarist censorship in the pre-communist Russia, found their way to publication in Western Ukraine, as was the case with the translations of Shakespeare's plays by Panteleimon Kulish in the late 19th century.

Yaroslav Hordynskyi (1882-1939), a competent Shakespearean scholar and textual critic of the Kulish translations of Shakespeare's plays,³

³ See Hordynskyi's research article entitled *Kulishevi pereklady dram Shekspira* [*Kulish's Translations of the plays by William Shakespeare*]: Гординський Я. Кулішеві переклади драм Шекспіра. *Записки Наукового Товариства імені Шевченка у Львові*. Львів, 1928. Т. 148. С. 55–164.

which were printed in Lviv,⁴ translated himself several of the plays, of which only “Son litnioii nochi” (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*) was published: first in the Lviv journal “Literary and Scholarly Herald” (1927, vol. 92)⁵ and later that year as a separate book.⁶ In view of the authoritative poet-translator Hryhoriy Kochur, Hordynskyi’s translation was a scrupulously accurate work, although not a highly poetic one. Other three translations by Hordynskyi from Shakespeare – plays “Buria” (*The Tempest*), “Venetskyi kupets” (*The Merchant of Venice*), and *Richard III* – were not published at all.

Shakespeare’s plays *Othello* and *Hamlet*, which were translated for theatrical performance by Mykhailo Rudnytskyi (1882–1975), an acclaimed author, translator, and educator of his time, did not appear in print either.

Nevertheless, the record of translation endeavors demonstrates the fact that in the interwar decades both Central and Western Ukraine resonated with a trend to retranslate and modernize Shakespeare.

Rudnytskyi’s translation of the tragedy *Othello*, done in 1923, was intended for staging by *Ukrainska Besida* Theater in Lviv, which was subsidized by the *Ruska Besida* Society, a Ukrainian cultural and educational club in Galicia, known in the 1920s as *Ukrainska Besida*. In this translation, the characters of *Othello* spoke in Ukrainian for the first time in the history of Ukrainian national theater. The play was directed by a famous Russian and Ukrainian actor, stage director, and theater teacher Alexander Zagarov.

In Soviet Ukraine, the Kharkiv Publishing House “Rukh” printed in 1924 Shakespeare’s early play “Komediia pomylok” (*The Comedy of Errors*), adapted for contemporary theater by writer, ethnographer, and musicologist Hnat Khotkevych, a victim of the Yezhov Terror (1877–1938)⁷.

⁴ Шекспірові твори: З мови британської мовою українською поперекладав П. А. Куліш. Том первий: Отелло; Троїл та Крессида; Комедія помилок. Львів, 1882. 418 с.; Шекспір У. Гамлет, принц данський / Переклад П. А. Куліша; Виданий з передмовою і поясненнями Др. Ів. Франка. Львів, 1899. 172 с.; Шекспір У. Міра за міру. Переклад П. А. Куліша / Видав і пояснив д-р Іван Франко. Львів, 1902. 127 с.

⁵ Шекспір В. Сон літньої ночі / Перекл. Я. Гординський. *Літературно-науковий вістник*. 1927. Т. 92. С. 24–37, 120–135, 208–223, 305–317.

⁶ Шекспір В. Сон літньої ночі / Перекл. Я. Гординський. Львів, 1927. 64 с.

⁷ Шекспір В. Комедія помилок / Пристос. для театру Гнат Хоткевич. Харків, 1924. 46 с.

The play *Othello* appeared in print in Kharkiv in 1927. It was translated by writer, critic, and linguist Mike (Mykhailo) Yohansen (1895–1937), a victim of Stalin’s purges, too, in cooperation with V. Shcherbanenko, and published by the State Publishers of Ukraine (DVU)⁸.

In 1928 the Publishing House “Rukh” printed Shakespeare’s comedy “Susidochky z Vindzoru” (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*), remade and adapted for contemporary theatre performance⁹, and also – separately – the comedy “Pryborkannia norovystoi” (*The Taming of the Shrew*), although without mentioning the name of the translator¹⁰. New editions of earlier translations of Shakespeare’s plays were published that year as well. In particular, the Knyhospilka cooperative union printed a new edition of the play *Hamlet* (edited and with the editorial notes by Andriy Nikovskyi), based on the translation done in the 1870s by librettist, playwright, and actor Mykhailo Starytskyi (1840–1904), who went down in history as the coryphaeus of Ukrainian professional theater¹¹. That year, a modernized version of Kulish’s translation of the play *Romeo and Juliet* saw the light of day in the Publishing House “Ukrainiivskyi robotnyk”. The adaptation was done by poet, actor, and stage director Mykola Voronyi (1871–1938), a founder of Ukrainian National Theater in 1917, who fell victim of Stalin’s purges.¹²

It is worthwhile to pinpoint the editorial work of Andriy Nikovskyi, the general editor of Starytskyi’s translation of *Hamlet*, printed by the Knyhospilka publishers in 1928. The first printing of Starytskyi’s *Hamlet* took place in 1882. Nikovskyi, thus, had to considerably review and refresh the text of translation as well as supply it with thorough explanatory commentaries. His approach was substantiated in the foreword entitled “A Ukrainian translation of *Hamlet*”¹³.

⁸ Шекспір В. Отелло / Перекл. М. Йогансен та В. Щербаненко. Харків, 1927. 270 с.

⁹ Шекспір В. Сусідочки з Віндзору. Переробл. і пристос. для театру Гнат Хоткевич. Харків, 1928. 74 с.

¹⁰ Шекспір В. Приборкання норовистої. Харків, 1928. 68 с.

¹¹ Шекспір В. Гамлет / Перекл. М. Старицького; ст. С. Родзевича; ред., ст. та прим. А. Ніковського. Харків, 1928. XXXVIII, 192, XXXIV с.

¹² Шекспір В. Ромео і Джульєтта / Перекл. Панько Куліш, у переробці Миколи Вороного. Харків, 1928. 151 с.

¹³ Шекспір В. Гамлет / Перекл. М. Старицького; ст. С. Родзевича; ред., ст. та прим. А. Ніковського. Харків, 1928. С. I-XXXVIII.

In 1930 Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* was published by DVU (Kharkiv-Kyiv) in the translation of a highly talented expressionist poet Todos Osmachka (1895-1962),¹⁴ who was declared to have been mentally disordered in the mid-1930s. As a mental patient, Osmachka managed to survive Stalin's purges. After several failed attempts to emigrate from the USSR, he successfully moved to Lviv in 1942 and eventually emigrated to the West in 1944. For political reasons, a new translation of *Macbeth* had to be done in Soviet Ukraine, and it appeared in the Kyiv Publishing House "Mystetstvo" in 1940,¹⁵ performed by poet and journalist Yuriy Koretskyi (born 1911), who died on 19 September 1941 in WWII in the battle of Kiev (Kyiv).

A Reader of Western European Literature for High School Students, printed by the Kyiv Publishing House Derzhlitvydav in 1936, under the general editorship of classicist scholar Oleksandr Biletskyi (1884–1961),¹⁶ included a new translation of *Hamlet* by the neoclassical poet and literary critic Oswald Burghardt (1891–1947). This translation also entered the next edition of the *Reader* in 1937. That same year a new translation of the play *Romeo and Juliet*, done by theater expert and musicologist Abram Gozenpud (1908–2004), who lived and worked in Saint-Petersburg since 1953, saw the light of day in the Kyiv Publishing House "Mystetstvo".¹⁷

Further I will dwell on new translations of the play *Hamlet* in more detail.

On 26 March 1930 Oswald Burghardt (pen name Yuriy Klen) signed an agreement with the Kharkiv State Publishing House of Literature and Arts, which formally commissioned him a translation of the play *Hamlet*. This agreement was preceded by a decade of search for the new forms in staging Shakespeare in Ukraine. The pursuit was initiated by the performance of *Macbeth* in the Kyiv Drama Theater under the directorship of Les Kurbas (1887–1937), a highly talented stage director-experimenter and actor, who was also the male lead in this play. *Macbeth*, staged by Kurbas in the style of "classical expressionism," has taken deep root in Ukrainian theatrical consciousness of the 1920s. An influence of stage expressionism, cultivated by Kurbas, reverberates in Burghardt's

¹⁴ Шекспір В. Макбет / Перекл. Т. Осьмачка. Харків – Київ, 1930. 150 с.

¹⁵ Шекспір В. Макбет / Перекл. Ю. Корецький. Київ, 1940. 165 с.

¹⁶ Хрестоматія західноєвропейської літератури для середньої школи / За редакцією О. І. Білецького, 1936.

¹⁷ Шекспір В. Ромео і Джульєтта / Перекл. А. Гозенпуд. Київ, 1937. 197 с.

translation of *Hamlet*, as well as in his later translation of *The Tempest* (“Buria”)¹⁸.

In the 1920s Ukrainian theater was developing amazingly quickly. One could come across an experimental and modernistic performance as well as a classical one. In addition to the already mentioned productions of Shakespeare’s plays, it would be appropriate to speak briefly of some more. For instance, the Taras Shevchenko Theater in Kyiv staged *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1922 (under the title “Pryborkannia hostrukhy”) and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (“Son litnioii nochi”) in 1927. The Maria Zankovetska Theatre in Lviv performed *Othello* in 1926. Still intriguing remains a question of the choice and preparation of the texts for these theatrical performances. Regarding the 1926 performance of *Othello*, which was staged by Panas Saksahanskyi (1859–1940), a famous director from the cohort of the founders of Ukrainian professional theater, it is known that Saksahanskyi’s niece Maria Tobilevych (1883–1957), a writer, translator, and theater producer, who worked as the secretary to Saksahanskyi, helped him to verify the available Ukrainian translations with the original.

A Ukrainian branch of Shakespeare Studies was practically founded in the 1920s. Among the best research papers on Shakespeare topics, one should mention an article by Hanna Chykalenko (1884-1964) entitled “Suchasnyi stan Shekspirivskoi doby” (The Contemporary State of Shakespeare’s Epoch) and published in the Lviv sociopolitical journal “Literary and Scholarly Herald” in 1929. A daughter of the noted patron of Ukrainian culture from the Kherson region Yevhen Chykalenko, Hanna received an excellent education (she studied in Odessa, Lausanne, Edinburgh, and Geneva)¹⁹. She was lucky enough to escape Stalin’s purges and from 1931 lived in Tübingen (Germany), where she worked at the university library.

But still a clear need for newer and modern translations of Shakespeare’s plays remained, and especially for the renewed translation of *Hamlet*, which would be responsive to the requests of wider audience. The author of introductory essays to Burghardt’s translation of the two plays, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, which were published in the fourth

¹⁸ Шекспір В. Буря / Пер. з англ. Ю. Клена. *Клен Юрій. Твори: В 4 т.* – Торонто, 1960. Т. 4. С. 247–387.

¹⁹ Chykalenko-Keller, Hanna [Text]. *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. URL : <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CC%5CH%5CChykalenko6KellerHanna.htm>.

volume of the 4-volume edition of his works in Toronto in 1960²⁰, Valerii Revutskyi has aptly remarked that Burghardt's aim was to give the Ukrainian audience a translation at the level of European culture and to find the "bridges" that would lead this audience to a deeper understanding of Shakespeare's texts²¹.

For the first time Burghardt's translation of *Hamlet* appeared in print in the abovementioned *Reader of Western European Literature for High School Students* (1936), edited by Biletskyi. The translation was anonymous and abridged. In fact, all translations in the *Anthology* were printed anonymously, although in the preface Biletskyi mentioned the names of those translators whom he still could mention. As for the rest of the names, he just explained that had availed himself of all the accessible material having substantially revised the included texts. It was an act of courage on the editor's part to have included certain translations even with such a reservation because there was a danger that the regime might discover that the volume contained translations by a purged author.

Interestingly, Ukrainian high school students of the 8th grade studied *Hamlet* in Burghardt's abridged translation while the name of this writer-émigré was strictly forbidden in the USSR.

The first full translation of *Hamlet* by Burghardt saw the light of day only in the year 1960, in the aforementioned 4-volume edition of Burghardt's works in Toronto.

Rudnytskyi's translation of *Hamlet* had its first printing in 2004 – in a theater studies journal of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv "Proscenium," with an introduction by Roksoliana Zorivchak²². This translation which was expressly intended for the stage performance, in view of Prof Zorivchak, "comprises very interesting interpretative findings and interesting word combinations"²³.

The text of *Hamlet* in Rudnytskyi's translation was found in the archives of the Ukrainian Museum in New York City and handed over to

²⁰ Клен Ю. Твори: В 4 т. Торонто, 1960. Т. 4.

²¹ Ревуцький В. До історії українського «Гамлета». *Клен Юрій. Твори: В 4 т.* Торонто, 1960. Т. 4. С. 11.

²² Шекспір В. Гамлет / Пер. з англ. М. Рудницького. *Просценіум.* Театрознавчий журнал. 2004. № 1–2 (8–9). С. 131–206.

²³ Quoted in: Мілянчик Ю. Віднайдений переклад «Гамлета»: До 120-річчя від дня народження Михайла Рудницького. *Каменяр: Інформаційно-аналітичний часопис Львівського національного університету імені Івана Франка.* 2009. № 1-2 (січень-лютий). URL : <https://kameniar.lnu.edu.ua/?p=1346>.

Ukraine in the early 21st century thanks to the efforts of Prof Bohdan Kozak. This version of translation lacked the last scene of the first act and the final scene. But it was this very text that formed the basis for a distinguished performance in Lviv in 1943, staged by the leading Ukrainian theater actor and director Yosyp Hirniak (1895–1989). The translation was commissioned to Rudnytskyi by the art director of the Lviv Opera House Volodymyr Blavatskyi. Working on the staging of *Hamlet* in 1943, Rudnytskyi gave lectures and guidelines to the actors of the Lviv Opera House who were preparing this performance. These lectures are held nowadays by the Rudnytskyi Archive.

In commemoration of the 120th anniversary of Rudnytskyi, the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv published his translation of *Hamlet* as a separate volume, prefaced by a research article of Anastasiia Vasylyk-Furman, in which the scholar analyzes Rudnytskyi's translation works, and with an afterword of Prof Kozak, who highlights the history of the premiere performance of this translation²⁴. The text of translation in the 2009 edition differs from the previous publication in “Proscenium” in that it is complete (the text was granted by the translator's widow, Liudmyla Rudnytska, from Rudnytskyi's private archive).

2. Shakespeare's plays between a rock and a hard place of Soviet censorship and terror

During the decade of the “Great Terror” in the 1930s, many Ukrainian intellectuals, and the translators among them, had to pay with their own lives for their indisputable literary and translation-related achievements.

An outburst of political repressions against Ukrainian literati, scholars and academicians that started in the late 1920s and reached its peak in 1937 did not succeed in crushing the accelerative development of translation activities at once, though it became typical of the late 1930s that the names of translators recently subjected to repressions would simply disappear from their newly published translations, as well as from many reprinted editions. After all, just a handful of Ukrainian cultural figures were lucky enough to escape trumped-up charges and prosecutions.

²⁴ Шекспір В. Гамлет: Трагічна історія принца Данського. Трагедія на 5 дій / Пер. з англ. М. Рудницького. Львів, 2008. 192 с

Despite this fact, translated discourse became organically integrated into the national literary and cultural polysystem as the means for protecting and enriching the Ukrainian literary language in its expressive potential, register variability, stylistic sophistication, and emphatic force.

Concurrently, starting from the mid-1930s, the Communist Party's propaganda machine has been treating translations from Western classics – selected and censored ones – as ideological weapon in the “class struggle” for Soviet rule. By the late 1930s, Soviet censorship managed to transform the works of certain Western classics into such a mighty ideological weapon. And Shakespeare's plays were in a focus of concern for the Party propagandists and their printed press. It should be noted in this regard that, for instance, an excerpt from the play “Dvanadtsiata nich” (*The Twelfth Night*), translated by one of the best Ukrainian poets Maksym Rylskiy, was first published in the Soviet weekly “Literaturna hazeta” (Literary Newspaper) in 1939²⁵ before they play appeared in print in the full length.

Another example deals with the Kyiv annual collection “Radianske literaturoznavstvo” (The Soviet Literary Studies), where in 1939 first appeared an excerpt of Rylskiy's translation of the play “Korol Lir” (*King Lear*)²⁶, and only after this test the full new translation of the play was printed as a separate edition in 1941²⁷.

In the essay “Mykola Zerov and his poetry,” written in the 1960s as a foreword to the Russian-language edition of the works of Mykola Zerov (1890–1937), which was published for the first time only in 2008²⁸, Kochur argues that Zerov, a friend of Rylskiy and virtuoso translator of Roman classics, who became famous as the leader of a group of Kyivan poets representing the Neoclassical School, was planning on translating Shakespeare's works, and first of all the plays *Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Julius Caesar*. Zerov's plans were thwarted in the mid-1930s by his arrest and exile to the Solovki special prison, and the

²⁵ Шекспір В. Дванадцята ніч (уривок) / Перекл. М. Рильський. *Літературна газета*, 1939, 23 квітня.

²⁶ Шекспір В. Король Лір (уривок) / Перекл. М. Рильський. *Радянське літературознавство*. 1939. № 6. С. 4–7.

²⁷ Шекспір В. Король Лір / Перекл. М. Рильський. Київ, 1941. 240 с.

²⁸ Кочур Г. Микола Зеров и его поэзия. *Кочур Григорій. Література та переклад: Дослідження. Рецензії. Літературні портрети. Інтерв'ю* / Упоряд. А. Кочур, М. Кочур; Передм. І. Дзюби, Р. Зорівчак. Київ, 2008. Т. 1. С. 339–349.

eventual execution by firing squad in the forest of Sandarmokh, Karelia, on 3 November 1937 – together with Les Kurbas and almost three hundreds of other prominent Ukrainian writers, dramatists, and translators executed in a single day.

Below I will keep track of Ukrainian translations of *Hamlet* in the 1930s-early 1940s. It is quite revealing that for the Soviet policy makers the plays of the world's pre-eminent dramatist turned out to be a tough nut to crack and convert into their ideological weapon. Therefore, there was a gaping hole in new translations of *Hamlet*, as well as other Shakespeare's plays, throughout the entire decade.

An accomplished poet and translator Leonid Hrebinka (1900–1942) finished the full translation of the play in 1939. Until then, he had been intensively studying English and working on this translation for several years. Trouble is that the Soviet press started to chastise Hrebinka as the original author as early as the beginning of the 1930s. Devoid of the possibility to publish his poems and hoping to escape impending arrest by the Soviet secret police, Hrebinka moved to Moscow in 1933, where he worked as a journalist in several newspapers. With the flow of time, he found in the occupation with literary translation a way out for his poetic talent. During the years 1939–1941, until his arrest by the NKVD agents, he studied at the Maksim Gorky Literary Institute of Moscow (Department of poetry)²⁹.

Hrebinka's translation of *Hamlet* was highly evaluated by both Ukrainian literati and English language specialists. From the memoirs of his contemporary, English language teacher Yevgenia Snesariova – a sister of Aleksandr Snesariov, Hrebinka's fellow student at the Gorky Institute and the landlord of the lodging that he rented in the suburbs of Moscow. Ms Snesariova recollects that from time to time Hrebinka recited for her as an expert in English the excerpts from his translation of *Hamlet*. She characterizes his speech as emotional, cultivated, and rich in synonyms and metaphors³⁰.

²⁹ Hrebinka's further fate is well known by now. After his arrest on 24 June 1941, he was sentenced to death penalty on 17 November 1941. He died of exhaustion on 14 April 1942 in the Saratov Prison – a little before the news about a Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR, by which the capital punishment was replaced with ten years of imprisonment, has reached the Saratov Prison.

³⁰ Припутень О. 70 років загибелі Леоніда Гребінки. *Місто Гребінка: Новини*. URL : <http://www.grebenka.com/>.

Mrs. Valentyna Yurchenko, the wife of Hrebinka's elder brother Vadym, told to Hrebinka's biographer Rostyslav Dotsenko that Leonid had recited to her the excerpts from his translation of *Hamlet* in Kharkiv in 1934–1935 and that she had been amazed at their excellence and the beauty of language³¹.

When Hrebinka brought the typewritten translation to Kyiv in 1939, he handed it over for staging at the Ivan Franko Ukrainian Drama Theater of Kyiv. But the typewritten text got lost. Based on this translation, the Franko theater troupe was going to perform *Hamlet* – for the first time on the Ukrainian stage – although the fact that the play *Hamlet* was already staged at that time by one of the Russian-language theaters in Kyiv prevented this plan from implementation. Hrebinka's translation wasn't lucky with the print either. Despite its appreciation by renowned poet, editor, and translator Maksym Rylskyi, who was trying to promote its publication, the translation remained unpublished. This happened to a great extent due to the fact that another translation of *Hamlet* was being printed at that time. It was the translation by Soviet avant-garde and futurist poet Viktor Ver (1901-1944; real name Viktor Cherevko), who came to praise in his works the Bolsheviks' regime, the idea of collectivization of farmers, and the policy of industrialization together with the enthusiasm of the first five-year plan. Since 1935 he lived and worked in Kyiv. Participant of the WWII, Ver died in May 1944.

In 1941 his translation entitled “Трагедія про Гамлета, принца датського” (*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*) appeared in print³². The Soviet press endorsement of this translation was not long in coming³³. After WWII it was staged by the T. H. Shevchenko Ukrainian Drama Theater of Kharkiv in 1956 and by the M. Zankovetska Ukrainian Drama Theater of Lviv in 1957. Hryhoriy Kochur, in his day, did not commend Ver's translation comparing it with the translation by Hrebinka, which he considered a masterful one. Hrebinka's translation indeed had had a very good reputation in the literary and theatrical circles of Kyiv prior to the publication of Ver's work, but because of the absurd

³¹ Доценко Р. «За Україну його замучили колись...» (З циклу «Україна без українців»). *Нові дні*. 1995 (липень). С. 14.

³² Шекспір В. Трагедія про Гамлета, принца датського / Пер. з англ. В. Вера. Редакція і післямова А. Гозенпуда. Київ, 1941. 269 с.

³³ See a review by Родзевич С. Шекспір у нових українських перекладах. *Комуніст*. 30 березня 1941 р.

accusations of Hrebinka in anti-Soviet activities, it was the translation of Ver that was destined to see the light of day in print at that time.

In the contemporary translation studies, however, there is an opinion about Ver's interpretation of the play as the one being overtly literalistic³⁴.

As for Hrebinka's translation, it was found only in the 1970s and handed over to the Archive-Museum of Literature and Arts of the UkrSSR in Kyiv. As a manuscript of the repressed person, it was assigned to the closed-for-public department of the Archive. The manuscript had been stored for about 30 years in rather unfavorable conditions in the attic of a country house of Ukrainian émigré writer Ihor Kostetskyi³⁵. It was passed over to Hryhorii Kochur, who handed it on to the Archive.

Hrebinka's translation of *Hamlet* was published for the first time in the journal of literary translations "Vsesvit" in 1975, № 7³⁶. The manuscript turned out to be damaged because of its former inappropriate storage, and it was difficult to read in some places. Textual analysis of the manuscript and its preparation for publication, conducted by Shakespeare scholar Maria Azhniuk, required a scrupulous restorative work. It was decided to replace the lost parts of the text with the respective places from Ver's translation.

Kochur promoted its publication in the 6-volume edition of *The Works of William Shakespeare* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1984–1986). Eventually, Hrebinka's translation of *Hamlet* was included in the 5th volume, but it was tangibly corrected (actually, cliched in numerous places) by the volume editor Mykhailo Tupailo. Thus, until the year 2003, when the authentic Hrebinka's translation of *Hamlet* was printed in a separate book by the Kyiv Publishing House Osnovy, his translation had been known to the public in the corrected and places unrecognizable version.

In the early 1940s, there was an evidence of existent translation of another Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice*. The translation, entitled "Venetsiiskyi kupets," was done by a fruitful and recognized translator from English, French, Spanish, and German Mykola Ivanov (1890–unknown). On page 75 of the first number of anti-Soviet Ukrainian

³⁴ Стріха М. Український художній переклад: між літературою і націстворенням. Київ, 2006. С. 223.

³⁵ Доценко Р. «За Україну його замучили колись...» (З циклу «Україна без українців»). *Нові дні*. 1995 (липень). С. 15.

³⁶ Шекспір В. Гамлет. Трагедія / З англ. пер. Л. Гребінка. *Всесвіт*. 1975. № 7. С. 97–166.

journal of national intelligentsia “Ukrainskyi zasiv: Chasopys Natsionalnoi Inteligentsii,” published in Kharkiv in 1942 (when the city was occupied by the Germans), one could come across the following mention: “... 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 analyzed the translation and commended its high quality (my translation – *L.K.*)”³⁷.

At the beginning of WWII, Ivanov supposedly moved to Western Ukraine and later to Germany, where his trace was lost. Researchers assume that he most likely became a victim of Soviet “human hunters” and was brought back to the USSR after the War, where he was executed or died in imprisonment.

CONCLUSION

For many interwar Ukrainian literary figures, public and political leaders, educators, scholars, and scientists in Central and Western Ukraine, separated from each other by a political boundary until 1939, translation activities became inseparable from their original creative writing practices as a device for strengthening the national language authority and broadening its recognition and daily usage by reading audiences. Moreover, literary translation served both as a powerful guardian instrument aimed at the protection of the Ukrainian language from Russification and degradation, as well as a gateway for the Ukrainian people to European cultural and civilizational values.

It was the national idea that inspired a rapid development of literary and non-literary translation in the National Renaissance period, both in Soviet and Polish Ukraine. The central position that translations occupied in the processes of literary development and canon formation, the people’s enlightenment and nation-building in the 1920s and early 1930s, testified to the real renaissance scope of strengthening the Ukrainian language and culture at that time, against all the odds.

³⁷ Український засів: Часопис національної інтелігенції / Ред. В. Петров (Домонтович). Харків, 1942. № 1 (жовтень). С. 75. This rare edition was found by Ukrainian librarian and bibliographer Nadiia Strishenets and first quoted in her book about the Ivanov family: Стрішенець Н. В. Бібліографічна спадщина Юрія Меженка. Київ, 1997. 144 с. URL : www.nbuv.gov.ua/books/19/97megen/5.htm.

In Western Ukraine of the interwar period, Yaroslav Hordynskyi and Mykhailo Rudnytskyi have been working most intensely on Shakespeare's dramaturgy. In the 1920s in Soviet Ukraine, the renewed, modernized editions of the earlier translations of Shakespeare's plays belonging to classical Ukrainian writers Mykhailo Starytskyi and Panteleimon (Panko) Kulish appeared in print. Several theatrical adaptations by a "living classic" Hnat Khotkevych were also published at that time. Some new translations by Mike (Mykhailo) Yohansen, Todos Osmachka, and Oswald Burghardt (Yurii Klen) saw the light of day as well. In the 1930s-early1940s, the new translations by Maksym Rylskyi, Abram Gozenpud, Yurii Koretskyi, and Viktor Ver (Cherevko) were published. The work of Leonid Hrebinka would be published only in the late Soviet period. The translation of Mykola Ivanov hasn't been found yet.

The pre-WWII decade in Soviet Ukraine witnessed a recession of translation activity, or to be more precise, an ideological shift in the publishing policy towards translations, which was caused by the external factor of Stalin's political terror. The ideological turn in the mid1930s also resulted in certain changes in the attitude to translating Shakespeare's plays.

The study of translated Shakespeare as a means of cultural agency contributes to a better understanding of cultural processes in Ukraine of the 1920s–1930s. The attempted survey of Ukrainian translations of Shakespeare's plays published in the 1920s–1930s and early 1940s, as well as of those that remained unpublished, marks the beginning of a systematic study of Ukrainian translation practices and translated discourses of the National Renaissance period. A broader historiographic research should include more biographical sketches, an account of translators' strategies and publishers' policies, as well as the depiction of the socio-cultural and political atmosphere of that time both in Central (Soviet) and Western Ukraine.

SUMMARY

The article offers a general overview of Ukrainian translations of William Shakespeare's plays in the 1920s–30s and until the early 1940s. It briefly discusses the changing socio-political environment and the role of translators as cultural agents in Central (Soviet) and Western (Polish) Ukraine during the decade of Ukrainian National Renaissance (or Revival) of the 1920s and early1930s (which has been termed the

“Executed Renaissance”) and the subsequent decade of the Yezhov Terror (aka the Great Stalinist Purge). Both the printed translations and the manuscripts, which either remained unpublished or appeared in print in the post-Stalinist time, have been equally taken into consideration. The discussion focuses on the works of Yaroslav Hordynskiy, Mykhailo Rudnytskyi, Hnat Khotkevych, Mike (Mykhailo) Yohansen, Todos Osmachka, Oswald Burghardt (Yurii Klen), Leonid Hrebinka, Maksym Rylskiy, Abram Gozenpud, Yurii Koretskyi, Viktor Ver (Cherevko), and Mykola Ivanov, among others. The study reveals the dynamics of Soviet translation policy during the interwar period. The data on Ukrainian translations of Shakespeare’s plays have shown the Stalinist regime’s attempts to openly regulate literary expression in translated books, including textual choices and translation strategies.

Keywords: translation policy, translator’s strategy, the cultural agency of translation, Soviet Ukraine and Western Ukraine in the 1920s–1930s.

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