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## History in Translation: Shakespeare's Sonnets and Kajkavian Tongues

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Shakespeare's Sonnets have been translated into Standard Croatian several times since the middle of the twentieth century. Yet another Croatian translation appeared in 2000, but this time into Kajkavian. Kajkavian has not fared very well since the process of standardisation was completed on the basis of Štokavian dialects in the nineteenth century. Since then, there have been numerous attempts to revive the rich tradition of the Kajkavian literary language. The recent translation of Shakespeare's Sonnets is another contribution in a series. It is not clear, however, how much the new Kajkavian tradition is supposed to draw on the literary and linguistic resources of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries or how far it should be modelled on contemporary speech and, especially, on which dialect of Kajkavian. This paper addresses some of the vexed questions connected with the establishment of new traditions and the restoration of past ones, drawing attention to the friction involved in reconciling diverse tongues of the past with those of the present. It specifically deals with the role of a translated canonical text in a new context, concentrating on the inevitability of accepting the critical history of the text in question and the unexpected effects this might have on the cultural project of which this particular translation is part.\*

It all begins with a storm. The magic is only seemingly harmful: no one gets drowned. The brave vessel simply spits its nobility and the rest of the fraughting souls out onto the island. It may have been evil, but it was necessary; it makes everything possible. Trinculo, a jester of a king, fears another storm brewing in the wake of the one that was, as he falsely believes, fatal for everybody but himself. Yet the only shelter available must nonetheless be shared:

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\* The topic touched upon in this paper was fortunate enough to have been rehearsed in partial guises and provisionally written forms several times by now. I wish to thank all those who were unfortunate enough, and also patient enough, to have read and commented on any of the always temporary scripts, especially Janja Ciglar-Žanić, Ljiljana Ina Gjurgjan, Ikuko Kometani and Veronika Schandl. I also thank Paul Prescott for his perceptive reading of what became the present version and for a number of suggestions that I silently and gratefully adopted.



Here's neither bush nor shrub to bear off any weather at all, and another storm brewing – I hear it sing i' th' wind. [...] What have we here – a man or a fish? – dead or alive? A fish, he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell; a kind of not-of-the-newest poor-John. A strange fish! Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday-fool there but would give a piece of silver. There would this monster make a man – any strange beast there makes a man. [...] Legged like a man, and his fins like arms! Warm, o' my troth! I do now let loose of my opinion, hold it no longer: this is no fish, but an islander, that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt. (*Thunder*) Alas, the storm is come again! My best way is to creep under his gaberdine – there is no other shelter hereabout. Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows.<sup>1</sup>

The episode, of course, takes place in *The Tempest*, and it is difficult not to think of another, dramatic storm beginning just as this literal, even though equally man-made, is drawing to its close.<sup>2</sup> A gaberdine that protects from the storm enables an intimate encounter of very different bodies. These bodies, palpable, or only fashioned in textual signs, or textual bodies themselves,<sup>3</sup> are necessarily multiform and strange. Originals and translations, those born on the island and those “carried across”, domestic and foreign bodies, represent an obvious semantic extension of sharing a gaberdine whose symbolic value is exploited by all who creep under its common name. They may indeed be strange bedfellows and the cover they are forced to share appears to be a matter of economic necessity, of calculated choice rather than fatal fascination. Although the domestic body may be literally dead, it still matters; it yields warmth that will help the other body to thrive. When it is felt to be alive, it is often denied difference and mistaken for one's own.

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In the second volume of Rollins's variorum edition of Shakespeare's Sonnets, containing appendixes that within some five hundred pages patiently summarise evidence

<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; reprinted 1998), 2.2.18-39.

<sup>2</sup> “Caliban and his confederates” (*Tempest* 4.1.140), first met partly under, partly around Caliban's gaberdine, will enable “the only real moment of drama” in the play. Cf. Francis Barker and Peter Hulme, “Nymphs and reapers heavily vanish: the discursive con-texts of *The Tempest*”, in *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. by John Drakakis (London and New York: Routledge, 1985; reprinted 1996), p. 201. Prospero's magic seems to produce its own contradictions; his “so potent art” (5.1.50) threatens to be the cause of its own disintegration.

<sup>3</sup> Thus two bodies of one *King Lear*, of an idea made to transcend its disparate textual forms, share the same covers of the Oxford Shakespeare (ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor). “The *King* was seen, as it were, to have two bodies”, but still, it seems, only one soul. Cf. Graham Holderness and Andrew Murphy, “Shakespeare's England: Britain's Shakespeare”, in *Shakespeare and National Culture*, ed. by John J. Joughin (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 30. See also Jonathan Goldberg, “Textual Properties”, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37.2 (1986), pp. esp. p. 214.





related to various problems for which the Sonnets have become notorious, there is a chapter devoted to the vogue of the Sonnets in different countries (Appendix XIII, pp. 326-399). Near the end of it, in the section entitled "Other foreign countries", mention is made of Japan, and especially of Minoru Toyoda's "interesting monograph on *Sh. in Japan*", published in 1940, "truly a 'period of world-wide tribulation'" (p. 398), tribulation that was still felt when the variorum edition was published.<sup>4</sup> The following is a typical example of the manner in which Rollins generally proceeds when there is occasion for his unequal mixture of fine irony and sardonic wit:

"Is it not in mutual understanding and spiritual brotherhood that the final hope of humanity reposes?" Toyoda asks (pp. vii f.) before acknowledging his "profound gratitude" for the "official interest" taken in his book by "the Cultural Work Bureau of our Foreign Office." He predicts (p. 118) an ultimate "appreciation of Shakespeare by the [Japanese] people in general, to whose unsophisticated hearts he cannot but appeal, for he knows them and is their friend." *Sh.*, like misery, acquaints a man with strange bedfellows. (pp. 398-399)

With a proverbial Shakespearean touch Rollins for a moment speaks through Trinculo's mouth, uneasy about creeping under the same gaberdine with a strange lot of unsophisticated Calibans but apparently untroubled by taking the role of a supposedly sophisticated jester, a "pied ninny", a "scurvy patch", as Caliban, in a fit of celestial, liquor-inspired verbal ingenuity, describes Trinculo (*The Tempest* 3.2.62).<sup>5</sup> In such an uncanny recasting of roles Shakespeare is likened to the misery that most immediately acquaints you with the strange bodies of others.

<sup>4</sup> A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare. *The Sonnets*. Edited by Hyder Edward Rollins. Volume 2 (Philadelphia & London: J. B. Lippincott, 1944).

<sup>5</sup> A reader who decides to rely on the most authoritative modern critical editions of Shakespeare's plays is bound to be confused after consulting explanations and comments devoted to the sentence "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows". It is nowadays considered to be proverbial and can, for instance, be found in John Simpson's *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (London: BCA, 1990; reprinted 1992; originally by Oxford University Press, 1981). It will however be found under "Adversity makes strange bedfellows", where a note explains that "there is some variation in the first word of the proverb" and the quotation from Shakespeare's *Tempest* follows as the earliest recorded example of its use. *Oxford English Dictionary* (second edition) is not more enlightening on this particular point: it lists the example from *The Tempest* under "misery" and it seems to be the earliest recorded use of the proverb. The confusion seems to have begun only recently, with the latest Arden edition of *The Tempest* (ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, London: Thomas Nelson, 1999; reprinted 2001), where the sentence is glossed as proverbial (reference is made to R. W. Dent, *Shakespeare's Proverbial Language*, 1981), with the accompanying explanation that "[i]n Shakespeare's era, travellers often shared beds with strangers" (p. 209). This is in direct contradiction with Orgel's gloss that it is "not recorded as a proverb" (Oxford Shakespeare, p. 146). I thank Will Sharpe for being extraordinarily quick in checking a reference not immediately available to the authorial body.



When Shakespeare's Sonnets are in question, the troubling body for most male interpreters has always been that of the young man, the "friend" – in more ambiguous terms, inconveniently "pricked [...] out" (20.13)<sup>6</sup> and thus transformed not only into a strange but also an embarrassing and uncomfortable presence. Instead of providing warmth, this bedfellow frequently caused righteous shudders in the bodies of a long line of commentators.<sup>7</sup> The importance of this "pricklish" subject is usually lost sight of in Croatian translations, where the love between the two men is also always characterised by uprightness, but of a different kind, of course. The same is true of the recent translation of the Sonnets into Kajkavian.<sup>8</sup> Though it would be interesting to consider this publication from various perspectives, the present study will limit itself to a modest discussion of those cultural-historical-critical processes involved in undertaking a translation of this kind that could prove illuminating not just for the specifically Croatian situation but also, it is hoped, for Shakespeare translation generally and for the role a canonical text is made to play in re/establishing legitimate linguistic and literary traditions. Before I turn, however, to the principles motivating this translation and the effects it is intended to produce, a few brief remarks on the history of Shakespeare translation are in order.

Although Shakespeare is, in a sense, always already translated in the attempts at its authentic recovery<sup>9</sup> within its native culture (or the culture that sees itself as the continuation of Shakespeare's native culture, whatever "Shakespeare's native culture" may actually mean), some form of Shakespeare is also translated, in a more radical sense, into foreign languages, cultures and traditions. Since Shakespeare is commonly regarded as one of the central structures of the Western literary canon, its impact on foreign cultures is more visible than in the case of some other, less powerful canonical formations. It is no wonder, then, that the role of Shakespeare translation in Croatia, as traditionally described, is in many respects similar to the role these works played in other Eastern and Central European countries. This is especially true of the nineteenth century, when this

<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent citations of Shakespeare's Sonnets are from Colin Burrow's Oxford Shakespeare edition, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Rollins, for example, commenting on Godwin's conjectural reading of "women's pleasure" as "all men's pleasure" (*New Study of the Sonnets of Shakespeare*, 1900, p. 180 n.), declares that "one can only shudder at Godwin's conjecture" (Rollins, vol. 1, p. 59, note to line 13).

<sup>8</sup> William Shakespeare, *Soneti*, kajkavianized by Željko Funda (Varaždinske Toplice: Tonimir, 2000). The translation is followed by Božica Jelušić's afterword, significantly titled "Posel da kaj bude jak" ["Making kaj strong"], to which I shall hereafter refer simply as "Afterword".

<sup>9</sup> See Margreta de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), but also a number of related studies, especially in the field of editorial theory. *The Authentic Shakespeare and Other Problems of the Early Modern Stage* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), for example, usefully brings together most of the influential essays by Stephen Orgel from the last two decades of the past century.



massive canonical configuration was repeatedly appropriated in order to invigorate and legitimize revived national traditions in both linguistic and cultural terms. Shakespeare in translation often served as a proof of the excellence and potential of a particular literary tradition; it was, among other things, through “their own Shakespeare” that such urgent national projects gained confidence. This is almost a kind of commonplace in discourses about Shakespeare, particularly those by foreign-Shakespeare scholars. Among the most recent examples, as far as Eastern and Central Europe are concerned, is Stříbrný’s chapter “Shakespeare and National Revivals” in his *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe*.<sup>10</sup> Discussing the tradition nearest to him, Stříbrný describes how the “patriots from the Booth”, led by K. H. Thám (who published the first Shakespeare play in Czech in 1786, a *Macbeth* translated from one of the German adaptations of the period), appropriated Shakespeare and put him in the service of educating the nation in their mother-tongue, shoulder-to-shoulder with other plays in Czech which their compatriots were called upon to read. These enthusiasts “wanted to prove to the whole nation and the world that the Czech language was capable of expressing the highest achievements of European dramatic art” (p. 60). The Czechs were not an exception in this respect. Other peoples going through the throes of national rebirth in the nineteenth century set for themselves similar ideals and, in Croatia and no doubt elsewhere as well, there were well-known poets who spoke of the unique and inexhaustible resources that their language had to offer to those who would but cast a sympathetic glance at it.

It would be advisable, however, to keep in mind that it was always the Shakespeare of the plays or, more precisely, of the tragedies or even only some of the tragedies (or the history plays), and never the Shakespeare of the sonnets and poems that was part of these projects. In fact, as Delabastita rightly points out, “translations of the *Sonnets* [...] systematically appeared much later and often have to be ascribed to an interest in their presumed autobiographical content”.<sup>11</sup> To the reader educated in the traditions of New

<sup>10</sup> Zdenek Stříbrný, *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For a related discussion concentrated on the Croatian situation in the late nineteenth century in connection with historical drama see Ivo Vidan, *Engleski intertekst hrvatske književnosti [English Intertext of Croatian Literature]*, (Zagreb: ZZK, 1995), esp. pp. 53-82. The pioneering study of Shakespeare translation in 19th-century Croatia is Rudolf Filipović’s “Anglo-Croatian Literary Relations in the 19th century”, *The Slavonic Review* 32.78 (1953), pp. 92-107. A critical account of “the legitimate/d (as against the supposedly illegitimate) uses of the discursive formation we call ‘Shakespeare’” is provided by Janja Ciglar-Žanić’s “Shakespearean Cross-Cultural Migrations: Contentions, Containments, Contentments”, in *British Cultural Studies: Cross-Cultural Challenges*, ed. by Janja Ciglar-Žanić, Damir Kalogjera and Jasna Jemersić (Zagreb: The British Council Croatia, 1998), pp. 39-50. See also the collection of essays entitled *Shakespeare in the New Europe*, ed. by Michael Hattaway, Boika Sokolova and Derek Roper (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> Dirk Delabastita, “Shakespeare Translation”, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. by Mona Baker assisted by Kirsten Malmkjaer (London and New York: Routledge, 1998; reprinted 2001), p. 225.



Criticism, especially its insistence on reading literary texts “closely”, this must appear confusing.<sup>12</sup> The Sonnets, that is, have in the course of the twentieth century become famous for their verbal intricacy and ingenuity, and for that complexity of meaning that is almost impossible to render neatly into another language. One would primarily expect these poems therefore, not least because of their formal difficulties, their pointed wit, the excessive amount of punning and, consequently, the demands they put upon both the translator and the target language, to figure as the ideal test of the expressive limits of any language – if this is truly what would furnish a new or a renewed tradition with authority.

Yet the Sonnets, as sonnets, tangled or not, have not always been held in such high esteem. Apart from other controversies surrounding their inclusion in the late-eighteenth century editions of Shakespeare’s works, the contentious issue was the actual value of this strange collection of poems and the significance of each specimen contained therein. Shakespeare *cum notis variorum* offers to its readers a series of very interesting exchanges between the most prominent Shakespearean editors of the time. George Steevens, the Puck of Commentators, had for example the following to declare in connection with this “exotick species of composition”, the sonnet:

A Sonnet was surely the contrivance of some literary Procrustes. The single thought of which it is to consist, however luxuriant, must be cramped within fourteen verses, or, however scanty, must be spun out into the same number. On a chain of certain links the existence of this metrical whim depends; and its reception is secure as soon as the admirers of it have counted their expected and statutable proportion of rhimes. The gratification of head or heart is no object of the writer’s ambition. That a few of these trifles deserving a better character may be found, I shall not venture to deny; for chance co-operating with art and genius, will occasionally produce wonders. [...] Perhaps indeed quaintness, obscurity, and tautology, are to be regarded as the constituent parts of this exotick species of composition. But, in whatever the excellence of it may consist, I profess I am one of those who should have wished it to have expired in the country where it was born [...].<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This valuable tradition of reading, as far as Shakespeare’s Sonnets are concerned, was crowned by the efforts of Stephen Booth in his edition of the Sonnets in the late seventies (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977; reprinted 2000) and, more recently, by Helen Vendler’s *The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1997; reprinted 1999). The similarity between the two publications is underlined by photographic facsimiles of the sonnets from the 1609 edition, in all their oddity. Needless to add, *A Lover’s Complaint* is characteristically absent from both.

<sup>13</sup> *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare*, in sixteen volumes. Collated verbatim with the most authentick copies, and revised: with the corrections and illustrations of various commentators. Edited by Edmond Malone. Dublin: John Exshaw, 1794. Cf. vol. 16, p. 104. It is perhaps worthwhile to remark that the note to sonnet 127, where the discussion between Steevens and Malone can be found, stretches over five pages.



Malone, typically, had to defend the sonnet if he was to succeed in defending Shakespeare, but this time the odds seem to have been against him:

I do not feel any great propensity to stand forth as the champion of these compositions. However, as it appears to me that they have been somewhat underrated, I think it incumbent on me to do them that justice to which they seem entitled. [...] When they are described as a mass of affectation, pedantry, circumlocution, and nonsense, the picture appears to me overcharged. Their great defects seem to be, a want of variety, and a majority of them not being directed to a female, to whom alone such ardent expressions of esteem could with propriety be addressed. It cannot be denied too that they contain some far-fetched conceits; but are our authour's plays entirely free from them? Many of the thoughts that occur in his dramattick productions, are found here likewise; as may appear from the numerous parallels that have been cited from his dramas, chiefly for the purpose of authenticating these poems. Had they therefore no other merit, they are entitled to our attention, as often illustrating obscure passages in his plays. (*Ibid.*, p. 106)

Understandably enough, the problem of “far-fetched conceits” disappears altogether once the importance of the Sonnets is recognised for the purpose of “illustrating obscure passages” in the plays. In other words, we find ourselves engaged in a painstaking critical activity in order to show that the Sonnets are authentically Shakespearean, so that we could then use them in order to divulge Shakespeare's meanings in some places in his plays. The sonnets and the plays seem in fact to be mutually “authenticating” and can thus assist the editor in his favourite pastime: smelling “corruption” and effectively dealing with it.

Views of the aesthetic value of the Sonnets have undergone a sea change since the times of Johnson, Steevens and Malone. The popularity of the Sonnets in the critical practice of the twentieth century and the esteem they were accorded along the way discouraged even those who at first decided to disagree. John Crowe Ransom, in his essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets transparently entitled “Shakespeare at Sonnets”, begins the discussion in a very daring manner: “I begin with a most obvious feature: generally they are ill constructed.” But the obvious will soon become less so. In a “Postscript”, published in *The World's Body* together with this and another inconveniently aimed essay, Ransom, the sinner against received canons, repents and ransoms Shakespeare, whatever the price:

In this Postscript I must acknowledge a bad lapse of judgment in two of the foregoing essays. One was “A Cathedralist Looks at Murder,” where I set myself against the stylistics of Mr. Eliot's poetic drama. The other was “Shakespeare at Sonnets,” in which I must have seemed bent upon diminishing even the greatest of poets. But Eliot's reputation is still secure, and the totality of Shakespeare's achievement is still reckoned as a monument.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> John Crowe Ransom, *The World's Body* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968) pp. 273 and 351 respectively





Before this monument there is little, of course, to be done except veneration. The question of Eliot will, in spite of its many attractions, have to be left out of the scope of the present discussion.<sup>15</sup>

Resorting to similar strategies of veneration with regard to canonical poetic texts, the proponents of a revived Kajkavian literature act logically when they desire to have the Bard himself, the "I" of the Sonnets – authentic voice of the monument – speak in Kajkavian and thus perform the key role of empowering, but also always partly effecting, this "tongue-to-be" and the specific form of cultural identity fashioned in it. The voice in fact proclaims its own eternity with another monumental turn: "Your monument shall be my gentle verse, | Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read, | And tongues-to-be your being shall rehearse, | When all the breathers of this world are dead" (81.9-12). Despite this powerful image of tongues that in some distant or not so distant future will rehearse the unique being of the "lovely Boy" (if we are to believe the accepted editorial list of characters found in the Sonnets), the choice of the Sonnets is still an unusual one, bound to produce a certain amount of internal contradiction. The attempt to strengthen the Kajkavian tradition by means of a translation of Shakespeare's Sonnets must sooner or later face the semantic consequences of its own choice; in order to achieve anything it must recognise the conflict that exists between what the translation is striving to accomplish and what the Sonnets bring with themselves regardless of the intentions on the part of their translator and publisher.

In addition to what Delabastita claims with respect to the moment when Shakespeare's Sonnets started to be translated into other languages, there is another likely reason why the transmission of the poems was late when compared with the plays. During the eighteenth century, the period in which Shakespeare as we know "it" came into being, the sonnets and poems were systematically excluded from all the major editions of Shakespeare's complete works. If they did appear, it was always in supplementary or piratical volumes;<sup>16</sup> even in the celebrated edition by Edmond Malone (1780) they are a "supplement" to the volumes published two years earlier by Johnson and Steevens<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Suffice it to say that Eliot, in one of his more famous essays, speaks of literary texts (if not literary "talents") as monuments: "The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them." Cf. "Tradition and the Individual Talent", in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London & Boston: Faber & Faber, 1975; reprinted 1980), p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> For a cogent discussion which proposes that the sonnets and poems were not a proper part of the major editions because they were "the province of pirates" rather than because they were scandalous, see Catherine M. S. Alexander, "Province of Pirates: The Editing and Publication of Shakespeare's Poems in the Eighteenth Century", in *Reading Readings: Essays on Shakespeare Editing in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Joanna Gondris (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp. 345-365.

<sup>17</sup> *Supplement to the Edition of Shakespeare's Plays published in 1778 by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens*. In two volumes. Containing additional observations by several of the former com





(though their supplementary position is not without its irony in contemporary theoretical contexts). It was not until the nineteenth century that Shakespeare's sonnets and poems actually and finally formed an integral part of the canon. This fact, however, did not solve the problems besetting these texts; their inclusion in the canon was more likely to magnify the potential controversy by making the texts, and the editorial apparatus accompanying them, available to the general reading public. The issues that first provoked debate were morally charged and their currency is best attested to by the frequency of citing Steevens's condemnation of sonnet 20 (1780) in recent Sonnets criticism: "It is impossible to read this fulsome panegyrick, addressed to a male object, without an equal mixture of disgust and indignation"; or his equally notorious view of all the sonnets and poems when he decided to exclude them again from his complete Shakespeare (1793): "We have not reprinted the Sonnets, &c. of Shakspeare, because the strongest act of Parliament that could be framed, would fail to compel readers into their service [...]".<sup>18</sup> Stallybrass, discussing a new history of sexuality and "character" that writes itself over "the culturally valued but culturally disturbing body of the *Sonnets*", offers a useful description of what Malone's and Steevens's efforts amounted to:

Steevens and Malone between them had constructed and passed down an impossible legacy: a legacy from Malone of the *Sonnets* as crucial documents of the interior life of the national bard; a legacy from Steevens of that interior life as one that would destroy the life of the nation.<sup>19</sup>

The Kajkavian translation, published in 2000 – after about two decades of lively and confusing debates on the sexual politics of the Sonnets,<sup>20</sup> is implicated in this impossible Shakespearean legacy perhaps against its own will. The reason for this is not just the fact that translations are generally unable to sever themselves from the histories of their originals, but, more significantly, because the translated Sonnets are adorned with a critical apparatus reminiscent of the one that was first conferred on them by Malone in

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mentators: to which are subjoined the genuine poems of the same author, and seven plays that have been ascribed to him; with notes by the editor [Edmond Malone] and others. London: Printed for C. Bathurst..., 1780.

<sup>18</sup> *The Plays of William Shakspeare*. In fifteen volumes. With the corrections and illustrations of various commentators. To which are added, notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens. The fourth edition. Revised and augmented (with a glossarial index) by the editor of Dodsley's collection of old plays [Isaac Reed]. London: Printed for T. Longman..., 1793. Cf. "Advertisement", p. vii.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Stallybrass, "Editing as Cultural Formation: The Sexing of Shakespeare's Sonnets", *Modern Language Quarterly* 54.1 (1993), pp. 93 and 101 respectively. Also reprinted in the collection of essays mentioned in the following note.

<sup>20</sup> Even the most recent collection of critical essays on Shakespeare's Sonnets, representing the Shakespearean sonnet criticism in the 1990s, is dominated by the emphasis on "the sexual politics" of these texts. Except for the first five essays, all the essays in the collection are original contributions that appear in print for the first time. Cf. *Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays*, ed. by James Schiffer (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999; reprinted 2000).



1780, whose “implements of criticism”, in Steevens’s opinion, were “like the ivory rake and golden spade in Prudentius [...] disgraced by the objects of their culture” (1793: vii).

These notes, comments, explications are imported with the primary texts as an essential and not an accidental feature, they are assimilated into the translation rather than considered dispensable, providing in this way a neat outline of the reception Shakespeare’s Sonnets have so far suffered. Their critical history is represented as a slow accumulation of traces the readers of the past have left behind, whose anonymous presence in the translation denies the possibility of a fresh beginning in a new language where readings might be free of inherited controversies and could build on self-sufficient and seemingly self-erected canonical purity rather than on contestation, that basic principle of good criticism. A fresh beginning is, of course, an illusion, and one should probably be grateful that it is so. Translations cannot claim to offer innocent critical opportunities: their cause, the reason of their being, is exactly this burgeoning body of judgement in which the greatness of the text in question resides. The new code only compels you even more forcefully to recognise that the dead will sooner or later have to be awakened, that they too will be “carried across”. The contents of the private drawer “continue to reappear in the texts which seek to repress them. The commentaries on the sonnets are fascinated by the very spectre which they are trying to exorcise”.<sup>21</sup> In order to illustrate the degree to which translations of Shakespeare’s Sonnets do this as well, it will be enough to consider just one of the many problems. The Kajkavian *Soneti*, like some other Croatian translations of the sequence, uncritically reproduce the division between the first 126 and the remaining 28 sonnets;<sup>22</sup> they speak about “the friend”, “the rival poet” and “the dark lady” as if these characters were so obviously there and would be unmistakably identified by anyone

<sup>21</sup> Simon Shepherd, “Shakespeare’s private drawer: Shakespeare and homosexuality”, in *The Shakespeare Myth*, ed. by Graham Holderness (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988; reprinted 1991), p. 105.

<sup>22</sup> I am referring here, of course, to the ordering of *Shakespeares Sonnets*, the quarto edition of 1609. The division was first introduced by Malone and has been uncritically perpetuated ever since (except by those who undertook reorderings of the sequence). It was even possible for Paul Ramsey to criticise Philip Martin’s *Shakespeare’s Sonnets: Self, Love and Art* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972) because it ignores “the crucial question of order”. Ramsey expects Martin’s discussion of sonnet 94, for instance, to square with “the last sonnets in the sequence to the young man, especially Sonnets 121, 124, and 126”, as if the division itself were unquestionably valid. This point deserves a lengthier discussion, but I would simply like to point out that Ramsey is untroubled by the absence of *A Lover’s Complaint* from Martin’s discussion of the collection (and from the majority of other discussions), although the absence of the complaint is more self-evident than the absence of the division which is, perhaps a little too casually, taken to be natural or unambiguously given. Cf. Ramsey’s review of Martin’s book in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25 (1974), p. 366. For a discussion of the relevance of *A Lover’s Complaint* see Katherine Duncan-Jones’s “Introduction” to her edition of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* in *The Arden Shakespeare* (London: Thomson Learning, 1997; reprinted 2001), pp. 88-95, as well as Ilona Bell’s ““That which thou hast done”: Shakespeare’s Sonnets and *A Lover’s Complaint*”, a particularly apt conclusion to Schiffer’s anthology of critical essays, pp. 455-474. How much editing contributes to making certain texts “central”, which is one of the general points I am trying to remind the reader of here, is vividly put by John Kerrigan in reference to *A Lover’s Complaint*: “Poorly edited because thought peripheral, the text has stayed peripheral because poorly edited.” Cf. his edition of *The Sonnets* and *A Lover’s Complaint* (Penguin Shakespeare, 1986; reprinted 1999), p. 389.



irrespective of their familiarity with the already existing interpretations, so long with us that they have gradually been transformed into common critical sense, an inevitable and logical result of every single act of reading. The story of the reading of these texts always comes pre/posterously – and in this context there could hardly be a more suitable word – before the texts which are the object of reading or interpretation. Even the front cover of the Kajkavian translation, where textual and visual symbols are intermingled, serves as an anticipation of what the reader is supposed to find inside. It bears the name of the author of the collection (William Shakespeare) and the title of the collection (*Soneti*, in Kajkavian), but also three medallion-shaped paintings: a small image of the unromantic First-folio engraving of Shakespeare presiding over a large image of a fair-faced man and a somewhat smaller image of a dark-haired but hardly dark-skinned woman. The heroes and heroines of the Sonnets are thus there before the sonnets are, and the centre around which the sinful earth revolves is William Shakespeare Himself, seen to be one of the principal actors – the breathing body hiding behind the “I”, the one involved in the supposedly real-life, historically plausible erotic and psychic drama depicted in the Sonnets.

The first note that appears below the first sonnet in the collection is exemplary in its superfluosity and in how it manages to entangle itself in the debates described above. It says that “[i]n the first seventeen sonnets the poet is persuading his friend to marry [...]” (p. 7) and goes on to retell (or rather tell in advance) what is happening in this little play during the first seventeen scenes. “The poet” and “the friend” figure in the notes below the sonnets that follow and after the sonnet number twenty the reader is informed that “[s]ome critics claim that this sonnet shows the relationship with the friend was not homosexual”.<sup>23</sup> This is a clumsy way of putting it in both Kajkavian and English, but what is meant is clarified in the “Afterword”, where it is claimed that one should not pay attention to the homoerotic character of the verse but rather to the choice of vocabulary, the elegance of rhyme, the sophistication of metaphor (p. 178). “Shakespeare knew well”, the reader is told, “that sinful carnality can be transformed into noble feelings” and that unrequited love transports one into the realm of transcendence (p. 179). I cannot claim to know whether Shakespeare entertained such notions; if he did, they obviously only managed to transport him back to his native Stratford-on-Avon, where, thanks to a very profitable career in London, he had bought himself the best house in the town and, I am

<sup>23</sup> The proof is, supposedly, in the couplet: “But since she pricked thee out for women’s pleasure | Mine be thy love, and thy love’s use their treasure.” Arguments for and against abound. For some taste of the diversity of interpretations see Rollins’s variorum edition, vol. 1, pp. 54-59. Pequigney devotes a whole chapter to this famously difficult sonnet under the title “Passion and Its Master Mistress (Sonnet 20)”, and considers it “pivotal in the sequence”; see Joseph Pequigney, *Such is My Love: A Study of Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 30-41. The Master-Mistress of this sonnet, with a very significant hyphen, is borrowed as the title for Winny’s study of the Sonnets, where Shakespeare’s “imaginative colloquy” is seen to be concerned with dualistic figures. The poet and the friend are here found to be positive and negative forms of the same divided self. Curiously, the face visually divided on the front cover of the book is half male, half female. Cf. James Winny, *The Master-Mistress: A Study of Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968).



inclined to cling to the suggestion, was now very likely to ponder transcendence for the not so adventurous rest of his life on earth. Or, more seriously, less ironically and more aptly put:

The favoured account of the Sonnets story has Sheikspeare as tragic central figure, frustrated in his desire for the youth and creating great poetry out of his frustration. This relationship is constantly rewritten in the plays. Thus great Art is seen to come out of very personal suffering. It's a definition of Art which obliterates politics but which feels comfortable and familiar in our age of liberal individualism, where full expression of the self is the highest good. This Art transcends any grubby human emotion, such as homosex, which produced it, and thus conveniently facilitates an evasion of the matter of homosexuality.<sup>24</sup>

It is obvious that once again “[t]he critical discussion transmutes the potential embarrassment of the private drawer into virtue and respectability” (Shepherd, p. 104).

This kind of criticism, actively engaged in a historical battle or a battle unambiguously meant to affect history, while resorting to the tradition of Kajkavian writing, simultaneously attempts to evade or transcend the history of the text chosen to bolster this tradition up. The paradox in which the appropriation has found itself is also reflected in a certain lack of consensus in the attempts to re/elevate Kajkavian to the pedestal of a “literary” or “standard” language. It is not quite clear how much the new Kajkavian tradition is supposed to draw on the literary and linguistic traditions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries or how far it should be modelled on contemporary speech and, especially, on which dialect of Kajkavian. This translation goes very far in the direction of reviving vocabulary items which many Kajkavian speakers find unintelligible. Some of them are almost irritated by the idea that they should learn the language in which they consider themselves to be sovereign authorities and in which their use of the word makes the word “correct” because it is theirs and thus saves them the trouble and frustration of modelling their use of Kajkavian on someone else's, however authentic the latter may be in embodying Kajkavian experience and however unfortunate Kajkavian may have been in its history.<sup>25</sup> In any event, authenticity, as it will be recalled, is historically, and in the case of texts editorially, constructed. Therefore it might be of some interest to look at what kind of tradition is retrieved from the textual traces of the past and how translation, taken in its multiple senses, performs the task of bridging the historical abyss and moulding an authentic and desirable image of the tradition it is designed to sustain. The conflict that emerges is not just that between the future life of the translation and the history of its original, but also

<sup>24</sup> Simon Shepherd, “Shakespeare's private drawer”, p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> A major flaw of the translation is in giving a Kajkavian-Štokavian glossary at the end, where the archaic Kajkavian vocabulary thought to be difficult to grasp for a modern speaker of Kajkavian is explained in the terms of Standard Croatian. The mistake is that the glossary is called Kajkavian-Štokavian instead of Kajkavian-Standard Croatian and is not in accord with the statement at the beginning of the translation (p. 5) which





that between the present and the past of the Kajkavian language itself, between its symbols and its many and different referents. Can the symbolic aspect of a language be recuperated without also partly reproducing the social relations of the past in which it thrived? Can the grafting of the present moment onto the Kajkavian literary tradition contain the diverse and often completely opposed meanings surfacing in the process?

What I have in mind will become obvious through an example of a single word as used in the translation of Shakespeare's Sonnets. The word "friend" from the Sonnets and the criticism on the Sonnets is in Kajkavian rendered as "pajdaš"; hence the word "pajdaštvo" for "friendship".<sup>26</sup> When in the well-known moral treatise *The Original Sin of Our Father Adam* Juraj Habelić, a Jesuit priest and a foremost Kajkavian writer of the seventeenth century, used the word "pajdaštvo" in describing relationships between men, it was, among other places, in the third part of the bulky volume, in the eighteenth article entitled "The Sins Contrary to Nature", which ends with a short paragraph expressing the author's abhorrence of what he calls the horrible sin between either two men or two women that, to his mind, curiously resembles the "shameful fellowship" ["sramotno pajdaštvo"] of a man or a woman and the Devil himself. The matter is so abominable that its immoral stench forces the righteous author to abandon it and move to

describes Kajkavian as a language and not simply a dialect, in the social sense of these terms. I would therefore expect it to be on equal terms with another "literary" or "standard" language, not another (group of) dialects, which is what Štokavian is. Curious as it is, many Kajkavian speakers still refer to the standard variety of the Croatian language (only "based" on Štokavian dialects) as Štokavian and thus unconsciously acknowledge its superior status, which in linguistic terms makes little sense. Perhaps I should add here that I am not a native speaker of Kajkavian but that I am generally in sympathy with every project whose aim is to maintain linguistic diversity and question the "natural" status of a standard variety of language. Finally, the impossibility of speaking for others does not mean that one should stop speaking altogether.

<sup>26</sup> The word "pajdaš" is frequently found in both past and present uses of Kajkavian. It was borrowed into Kajkavian from Hungarian, and its translation into English would not be "friend", but rather "mate", "associate" or "companion". The Kajkavian word for "friend", on the other hand, would be "priatelj". This is confirmed by old Kajkavian dictionaries, the very tradition upon which the translation of the Sonnets rests, where the Latin word "amicus" is never translated as "pajdaš". Instead, "pajdaš" is rendered by the Latin terms "socius", "socienus", "sodalis", "collega", "contubernalis", "consors", "compar" (Belostenec's Dictionary of 1740, s.v. "paydás"). This proliferation of meanings is significant in itself and especially in the context of the present discussion. Yet nowhere is "pajdaš" rendered as "amicus". It is interesting that one of the collocations Belostenec provides is "paydas ú lyubavi tretjega" ["pajdaš" in loving someone], which is equivalent to Latin "rivalis", "rivinus". In this instance, "the rival poet" seems a more likely candidate for the title of "pajdaš" than "the friend" of the Sonnets. Jambrešić in his Dictionary (1742) translates "amicus" as "priatelj" and "Freund" – there is again no mention of "pajdaš"; "socius", however, will be translated as "drug", "pajdaš", "tovarus". It is also of some interest that Habelić, who, as we shall see, uses the word "pajdaš/tvo" in his writings, does not include it in his Dictionary (1670). He does, however, include the word "priatelj", offering as its equivalents "amicus" and "necessarius"; "priatelj veliki, osebjuni" Habelić translates as "amicus intimus, summus, specialis, singularis; alter ego". Curiously, one of the meanings of the feminine form of the word "pajdaš", i.e. "pajdašica", is "uxor", the one you are supposed to share your bed with.



the next, more palatable sin.<sup>27</sup> Habelić's reaction is a recognisable variation on Steevens's condemnation of the Sonnets (or vice versa) and on the image of "the ivory rake and golden spade in Prudentius [...] disgraced by the objects of their culture". Significantly, the word "pajdaštvo", the same one chosen to describe the relationship between "the poet" and his "friend" in the Kajkavian translation of the Sonnets, carries obviously negative connotations. The discourse on sex, on the physical, has been conveniently replaced by the discourse on the metaphysical; theological language leads to a hasty dismissal of the subject at hand. The same discursive strategy is at work in the "Afterword" to the translation, as we have seen.

That this is not an isolated or idiosyncratic use of the word will become evident after examining another important Kajkavian text, now from the beginning of the 19th century, the period when the Kajkavian literary language was being "dethroned and turned into the language of servants", in the words of one of the early nineteenth-century defenders of Kajkavian. Jakob Lovrenčić's *Petricza Kerempuh* is a prose narrative written with the intention that characterises most 18th-century enlightenment literature: to fight widespread prejudice and to inform "the innocent and unsophisticated hearts" (there we are again!) of the author's compatriots about the reality behind supposed "witchcraft", a topic riddled with so much superstition. *Petricza* is a prankster, a rogue, a wanton boy who outwits simple men and even more simple-minded women partly for his own sport, partly for the noble purpose of education, still closely tied to the fear and love of God. His own deeds, however, soon come under the familiar kind of suspicion. In the claims that Kerempuh too "associates with the Devil" ["da on z-chernem v-pajdastvu ztoji"] (p. 70) the word "pajdaštvo" is again linked to the black body of the Devil himself. Soon after, one of the unsophisticated hearts will again question the source of *Petricza*'s so potent art, using the same unfortunate word: "So you have no association with the Spirit of Evil?" ["Anda oni z-nechiztem duhom nikakvo *pajdastvo* nemaju?"] (p. 73, my emphasis). He of course denies any suggestion of the sort; his witchcraft is

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<sup>27</sup> Juraj Habelić, *Pervi otca nassega Adama greh, i salosztno po-nyem vsze chlovechanszke natvre porvsseye* (Graz, 1674). The article on "The Sins Contrary to Nature" ["Od grehou proti nature"] is on pp. 673-680. The article begins with a story of a man who was disgusted with the elaborate discussion of sins connected with the sixth and ninth commandments in one of the confession manuals he was reading. Habelić fears his discussion might occasion the same kind of disgust and is therefore quick and rather vague about it. Foucault's remarks on the steady proliferation of discourses concerned with sex in the context of confession manuals are relevant here: "Little by little, the nakedness of the questions formulated by the confession manuals of the Middle Ages, and a good number of those still in use in the seventeenth century, was veiled. One avoided entering into that degree of detail which some authors, such as Sanchez or Tamburini, had for a long time believed indispensable for the confession to be complete: description of the respective positions of the partners, the postures assumed, gestures, places touched, caresses, the precise moment of pleasure – an entire painstaking review of the sexual act in its very unfolding. Discretion was advised, with increasing emphasis." *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*. Translated from the French by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1998), pp. 18-19.





“natural” and his power over people comes from his knowledge of their desires and of their “cupidity” (p. 73).<sup>28</sup>

The phonetic, and not only phonetic, resemblance between “cupidity” and Cupid, that “general of hot desire” of the concluding sonnets in Shakespeare’s sequence, suggests that this discussion ought similarly to come to its puzzling and divided end. A few relatively simple queries should suffice: Can you disregard the semantic, con/textual and counter/textual, connotative burden which language of the past carries both in its original and in its translated forms? Should you do that and what happens when, with the simple and misleading idea of “authenticity” in mind, you are endeavouring to restore, continue or appropriate as unproblematically one’s own cultures contained in the symbols of the past? Shakespeare is needed because of the gaberdine and the protection it offers. This is why you have to translate it too, the whole critical cover,<sup>29</sup> because it is there more than anywhere else that the “Shakespeare” which you need lies. Yet it should not be forgotten that an/other body is there too and that it has not “suffered by a thunderbolt”, but has rather taken shelter because “here comes a spirit of his”, bent on torment. Is there not something to be learnt from the welcome union of the semantic multiplicity of the textualised Kajkavian past with the multiaccidental diversity of the Kajkavian present, effected through a translation of Shakespeare’s Sonnets and the fickle

<sup>28</sup> Jakob Lovrenchich, *Petricza Kerempuh, iliti chini y sivlenye chloveka prokshenoga* [*Petrica Kerempuh, or the life and works of a wanton man*] (Varaždin, 1834). It is worth noting that Petricza is not a complete stranger to the English, at least in fictional worlds. When in London, he announced that he would fly from the clock tower of the Houses of Parliament. The English were shown to be even more simple-minded than the Croats, since the whole of London gathered to see him do it (cf. pp. 16-17). I choose the word “wanton” because it is capable of suggesting much of the meaning the word “prokshen” may carry. It is used to describe a “roguish” or “mischievous” person, but Belostenec’s list of Latin equivalents given in his 1740 Dictionary suggests much more: for “prokshen” he offers “delicatus”, “effoeminatus”, “mollis”, “tener”, “petulans”. An interesting thing about Petricza Kerempuh is that most of his tricks are meant to ridicule women, yet all of his travels are void of any sexual incidents (although one of the meanings of “prokssen” is also “lascivious”; cf. Jambrešić’s 1742 Dictionary, s.v. “lascivus”). It is surprising that he never marries, considering the fact that he has proved to be a supreme master of putting other people’s marriages in order. “People were desirous to know the real reason why he never married” [“Petricza Kerempuh nije bil osenyen – a lyudi pako hlepeliszu znati pravoga zroka”] (p. 97). The book concludes with a list of very negative stereotypes about women found after his death and written by Petricza himself. No woman was good enough for him and, if his example is to be followed, for any other man. A strange conclusion to a book aimed to educate the simple.

<sup>29</sup> Although it may not be present in the edition from which you translate. The Kajkavian translation uses *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, The Shakespeare Head Press (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1996; reprinted 1999), in which neither the sonnets nor the plays are accompanied by any kind of notes. This did not prevent the translator from culling freely from more scholarly (critical) editions of Shakespeare and subsequently producing notes which give the impression of being inevitable and necessary. In most cases, however, they are superfluous or tendentious (imposing a certain kind of reading under the guise of neutrality and critical disinterestedness), which is an objection that could be raised in connection with even the most serious editions of the Sonnets in English.





glass of their history? Perhaps one thing to remember would be that tongues also, because they yield meaning, are always wanton and wayward and will never be ruled. The same is and will, I think, be, *pace* Petricza Kerempuh and his author, true of human desire.

#### POVIJEST U PRIJEVODU: SHAKESPEAREOVI SONETI I KAJKAVSKI JEZICI

Shakespeareovi *Soneti* prevedeni su na standardni dijalekt hrvatskoga jezika nekoliko puta od sredine dvadesetog stoljeća. Novi prijevod pojavio se 2000. godine, ali ovaj put na kajkavski književni jezik. Kajkavski se nije najbolje proveo otkako je dovršena standardizacija na temelju štokavskih dijalekata u devetnaestome stoljeću. Postojala su otada mnogobrojna nastojanja da se oživi bogata tradicija kajkavskoga književnog jezika. Nedavni prijevod Shakespeareovih *Soneta* još je jedan prinos u tome smislu. Nije međutim jasno koliko će se nova kajkavska tradicija oslanjati na književne i jezične izvore sedamnaestog i osamnaestoga stoljeća niti koliki bi u njoj bio udjel suvremenoga kajkavskog govora te posebno kojega od nekoliko kajkavskih dijalekata. Ovaj rad bavi se nekim od mučnih pitanja povezanih s ustanovljivanjem novih tradicija i ponovnom uspostavom onih davnasnjih, posebno upozoravajući na trenje koje se javlja pri usklađivanju raznolikih jezika prošlosti i sadašnjosti. Rad posebnu pozornost posvećuje ulozi prevedenoga kanonskoga teksta u novome kontekstu usredotočujući se na neminovno prihvaćanje kritičke povijesti predložka kao i na neočekivane učinke što bi ih ona mogla imati na kulturni projekt u kojem spomenuti prijevod sudjeluje.