

אִתְּיָא ל
הַפּוֹשֵׁי מִיְנַעֲצִיא

Ithiel the Tushite of Venice

19 & 20th June 2018 at 19:30



*The first Hebrew version of Shakespeare's
Othello the Moor of Venice*

at UCL's Bloomsbury Studio

*To book tickets visit:
www.thebloomsbury.com/event/run/17123*



This performance is funded by UCL's Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Ithiel the Cushite of Venice (a translation of *Othello the Moor of Venice*, Vienna, 1874), is the first Hebrew-language version of any complete Shakespeare play.

The play was translated by Isaac Salkinson (1820-83), a Lithuanian Jew who, after a traditional yeshiva education, became an adherent of the Jewish Enlightenment and developed an interest in Hebrew literary translation. He travelled to London in the late 1840s, where he converted to Christianity. He subsequently trained as a Presbyterian minister in Scotland and was hired by the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, who posted him to Vienna in order to conduct missionary work and translate the New Testament into Hebrew. Despite his conversion and missionary status, Salkinson continued to identify as a Jew and regarded Hebrew literary translation as an important life calling. In addition to *Ithiel* and his Hebrew New Testament, he produced a Hebrew version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as well as of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Salkinson's translation comprises an element of the Jewish Enlightenment project to create a modern European-style literature in Hebrew at a time when the language was still primarily only a written vehicle, prior to its revival as a vernacular in fin de siècle Palestine. *Ithiel* was intended primarily for private reading by members of the Hebrew literary circles in Central and Eastern Europe. As such, it offers a unique and fascinating perspective on global Shakespeare. In this unusual version of the iconic play, characters have biblical names, references to Christianity and Classical mythology have been replaced with Jewish equivalents, and the lines are replete with a rich layering of biblical, rabbinic, and medieval Hebrew textual references. This type of domesticating translation strategy is typical of Hebrew translations of the Enlightenment era as well as of earlier translations into Hebrew and other Jewish languages dating back to the medieval period. Salkinson's striking choice to adhere to this domesticating paradigm despite his status as a convert and missionary is likely rooted in his sensitivity to the expectations of his intended Enlightenment Jewish readership, combined with his ongoing self-identification as a Jew and his intimate familiarity with Hebrew textual sources.

Salkinson's *Ithiel* remained the only Hebrew version of *Othello* for more than seventy-five years, until the Israeli poet Nathan Alterman published a new translation of the play in 1950. Despite its longevity, *Ithiel* was performed on stage in only two productions, first in 1936 at the Haifa Hebrew Theatre and then as a one-man show at the HaOhel Theatre in Tel Aviv in 1946. This UCL production thus offers a rare opportunity to see Salkinson's groundbreaking work brought to life. It features an abridged version of his translation accompanied by surtitles displaying the Hebrew text alongside an English back-translation.

CAST

Anah (Bianca)	Sonya Yampolskaya
Asenath (Desdemona)	Lucy Jennings
Chesed (Cassio)	Nathan Eddy
Counsellor	Matheson Bayley
Doeg (Iago)	Ben Whittle
Herald	Anthea Crane
Ithiel (Othello)	Sergio Cittadino
Kenaz (Montano)	Die Hu
Lud (Lodovico)	Charis Muir
Milcah (Emilia)	Kiriana Kingston
Phichol (Brabantio)	Sonya Yampolskaya
Prince	Charis Muir
Raddai (Roderigo)	Lawrence Speelman

Directors	Paul Moore and Lily Kahn
Music	Matheson Bayley
Dramatic consultant	Helen Beer
Translation consultant	Ada Rapoport-Albert

Shoomburk Studio