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Article abstract

This article presents a brief history of the development of the cultural phenomenon which is now called "*kobzarstvo*." I analyze the *Kobzar-Lirnyk* singing tradition, musical instruments (*kobza*, bandura, wheel lyre), repertoire, forms of organization, modes of transmission, and other factors as they changed diachronically. I review sources to develop an understanding of their lifestyle and art. Over time, the mostly blind and itinerant *kobzari* developed their own world view and style of living. To organize and regulate their activities, to protect their rights, and for other advantages, they created self-governing territorial guilds, elected leaders, initiation rituals, and rules of conduct. *Kobzarstvo* was nearly eradicated in early Soviet times, but a few bearers of the tradition survived in the margins. The tradition has revived powerfully in the period of Ukrainian independence, with guilds, repertoire, initiation rituals and other elements re-established in the new cultural and technological context.

On the History of the *Kobzar-Lirnyk* Tradition

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Kobzarstvo is an oral tradition of blind itinerant singers, who accompanied their songs with play on the kobza (fig.1), bandura (fig.3), or lira (fig.7). It is a Ukrainian cultural phenomenon which appeared in the early modern period and spread to all lands settled by Ukrainians. Vernacular names for these singers included *startsi* (старці, old men, beggars), *didy* (діди, grandfathers), and more respectfully, "*Bozhi liudy*" (Божі люди, God's people). From the middle of the 19th century, influenced by the light hand of Taras Shevchenko, they were increasingly called "*kobzari*" (кобзарі, kobza players; singular - *kobzar*).

Numerous researchers have contributed significantly to the understanding of *kobzarstvo*, starting at the beginning of the 19th century and continuing until today: Mykhailo Maksymovych, Nikolai Tseretel'ev, Panteleimon Kulish, E. Krist, Mykola Lysenko, Oleksandr Rusov, Valerian Borzhkovs'kyi, Pavlo Zhytets'kyi, Porfirii Martynovych, Vasyl' Horlenko, Volodymyr Hnatiuk, Mykola Sumtsov, Mykhailo Sperans'kyi, Borys Luhovs'kyi, Kateryna Hrushevs'ka, Porfyrii Demuts'kyi, Opanas Slastionov, Filaret Kolessa, Hnat Khotkevych, Klyment Kvitka, Fedir Dniprovs'kyi, Sophia Hrytsa, Heorhii Tkachenko, Kost' Cherems'kyi, Volodymyr Kushpet, Mykhailo Khai, and others.

Over time, through their activities, *kobzari* developed their own world view and style of living. To organize and regulate their activities, to protect their rights and for other advantages, they created self-governing territorial associations. In addition to the singer-musicians, who sang and played a kobza, bandura or lira, these associations included so-called *stykhivnychi* (стихівничі) – male and female readers of religious verses and psalms. Most commonly, these associations were called *tsekhy* (цехи, guilds).

Craft guilds appeared in Ukrainian territory when cities and towns were granted Magdeburg law. Their place and role in Ukrainian society in the 18th century was described in the introduction to a publication on the Charter of the Kyiv barber's guild:

> Guilds – an old form of social life of Ukrainian cities, which came from the west in the Lithuanian period along with the Magdeburg Law, and became widespread locally because of its similarity to the longstanding pratices of our order of local governance. These were our free associations, which gathered together people of particular professions in well organized groups, united by the commonality of their clerical-religious and community interests. They were also completely autonomous in their inner operations […] Sometimes a guild existed together with a church brotherhood, or several guilds united into one brotherhood, or even not being called a "brotherhood," a guild served the goals of a church. In effect, the organization of guilds and brotherhoods are one and the same, though their goals are different. If the main function of a guild is to unite and develop a particular profession, then a brotherhood, by contrast, has religious-moral needs more at its centre. Both guilds and brotherhoods functioned as social services, and both had similar structures. Guild organizational patterns were also adopted by groups beyond those of societal leadership, such as beggars and blind people in particular. ("Ustava kievskogo tsiriul'nicheskogo tsekha" 1883: 471)

The earliest centers of *kobzarstvo* were towns and cities that hosted regiments or companies of Cossacks, in which lived workers of various craft guilds and industries. Many former villagers, Cossacks, officers and clergy lived in these cities. These populations supported the bandura and lira players "until the older context changed and administrative pressures chased the *kobzari* into the villages, where they could continue their work and their studies more peacefully" (Hrushevs'ka 2007: 1: cciii). In the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, kobzar centers that remained important in Left Bank Ukraine (east of the Dnipro River) included Komyshnia, Krasnyi Kut, Bohodukhiv, Zin'kiv, Lokhvytsia, Mena and Sosnytsia – formerly cities and towns, some of which had devolved into villages under the conditions of serfdom in the Russian Empire. Their populations had lapsed into serfs, masses without rights and without education.

Craftsmen's guilds each had emblems and symbols that reflected their occupation and the *kobzar* guilds were no exception. These included a banner (*korohva*, корогва), an icon and a lamp whose flame was never to be extinguished. Porfirii Martynovych describes the banner of the Kostiantynohrad *kobzar* guild, which was kept in the local Annunciation

Cathedral.[1] It had a red-raspberry color background on which was painted "a Zaporizhzhian bandura without the shorter side strings (*prystrunky*, приструнки), with its neck and scroll pointing upward, and the body below, and above the bandura was a mace (*bulava*, булава) lying horizontally, and the bandura vertically" (Cherems'kyi 1999: 44; Cherems'kyi 2002: 82).

The workings of the *kobzar* (*starets'*) associations were described by Mykhailo Sperans'kyi:

> 1. The main principle of the singing broherhood was territorial, that is this community included a certain group of villages, towns and cities, where the brotherhood operates, protects its rights in these locations from exploitation by other associations or individuals, who do not belong to the given brotherhood. 2. It has its centre in a specific place, which is manifested in the maintenance, at shared expense, of icons, candles, and lamps in one or another church. This gives somewhat of a religious character to the whole organization. 3. Management of the affairs of the brotherhood is public, with elected positions. The main power belongs to the assembly: court, disposal of joint assets, acceptance of new members. 4. The brotherhood has a common cash fund, which contain the deposits by individual members of the brotherhood, old and new. 5. The brotherhood grants the right to teach, though it retains the right to control the teaching. 6. The brotherhood has a specific initiation ritual in its home location, a ritual which is coloured by religious tones, which again reflects the general character of the association. 7. Acceptance into the brotherhood is conditioned by a certain level of professional knowledge: the ability to play on a lira or a bandura, knowledge of a certain number of songs, knowledge of the conventional language of the organization. 8. The rest – the private, individual life of the member of the brotherhood – does not concern the community. (Sperans'kyi 1904: 120-121)

The head of the association was the "guildmaster" (*tsekhmaister*, цехмайстер), an elected person from among the oldest and most authoritative "fathers" (*panotets'*, панотець). The ritual associated with selection of the guildmaster and the length of his mandate are unknown. Volodymyr Kushpet claimed that the selection of a new guildmaster took place after the death of his predecessor (Kushpet 2007: 146). This individual should have no small honour. Opanas Slastionov, expert on *kobzarstvo*, characterized guildmaster Ivan Kriukovs'kyi in the following way,

1. The city is now called Krasnohrad.

> in 1876, in the town of Lokhvytsia, I saw and listened to the first "great *kobzar*" – that's how the *kobzari* of Poltava call him even today – Ivan Kriukivs'kyi (also known as "Kriuk"). This person enjoys incredible authority among his brethren, first as one who is exceptionally knowledgeable, and secondly, as "Lord-master," that is the president of a very challenging kobza-lira player organization, which has its customs, laws, and perhaps even its own language. Thirdly, as an extremely just person, who adjudicates all issues with a clear conscience and scrupulously maintains all rituals and ceremonies of his corporation. (Slastionov 1902: 304)

Khvedir Vovk, a guildmaster from 1848 to 1889, also enjoyed great authority. During the time of his office, this guild grew to a great territory. He was an exceptional individual, knowing all twelve Ustian books perfectly, and traveling a lot.

> He sang with such a deep bass voice that sometimes the ground beneath him shook. And what a bandura he had. When he strummed on it even the clouds sometimes vibrated, and the grass simply whispered. And the listening crowd fell silent as a stone, and tears poured from their eyes, as if streamlets gurgling from the high hills. That's how our dearly departed, our most senior *panotets*' could play and sing. (Hrymych 1992b: 23)

Petro Martynovych's childhood memories included stories about another great guildmaster of the older times – Havrylo Zelins'kyi, whose street name was Havrylo Vovk (1750 to approx. 1867).

> He was a very good *kobzar* and a very good leader. People said of him 'Havrylo Vovk led order among all the blind' (Гаврило Вовк поміж усіми сліпцями вів товк; this sentence features internal rhyme in the original). … And people listened to him carefully. To not obey him was not possible in their world. That's how he kept order over all of Ukraine. He let it be known, that such and such a *kobzar* from the Podillian Governorate should be in Kostiantynohrad for the feast of Pokrova. And that *kobzar* would come. Not to listen to him was impossible. (Martynovych 2012: 369; Cherems'kyi 2002: 389-390)

Kobzari from all over Ukraine came to the markets and feast days in the town of Kostiantynohrad (now Krasnohrad in the Kharkiv oblast). They included blind singers from Right Bank Ukraine (west of the Dnipro River) – Kyiv Governorate (Chyhyryn area), Podillia and Volyn' (Martynovych 2012: 369-371). It is clear that this description refers to those times when the *kobzar* brotherhoods were still operating fully and when the discipline of the guild life still pertained.

The senior ranks of the brothers, called "*panotsi*" (панотці), had completed their studies, were initiated, had the right to sing and play freely, and to teach. They had taken a second-level oath and were familiar with the contents of the twelve "Ustyian books." They constituted the elders of the guild and its leaders. At a lower level of the hierarchical structure of the organization were the "younger brothers" (*molodsha bratiia*, молодша братія), who had the right to sing and play "in all four directions" or in one or two districts. Students, still younger, were completely subordinate to their teachers and did not have a voice in the guild (Kushpet 2007: 145-149).

Issues related to the inner life of the association and goals for the future were resolved at meetings of the elders. For this, the brothers gathered at an appointed time at a fair or in a city during a holiday, such as the patron feast day of a church.

> During these gatherings they held court over accused persons, assigned punishments ("and sometimes beat them"), admitted new members, designated who should take and who should not take on pupils, examinations for the students, their initiation into the brotherhood, awarding of the rank of "master" and bestowing the authority to take on students, and other matters. (Sperans'kyi 1904: 113)

According to the charter, each person who was admitted into the brotherhood and "walks around the villages with a lira (or *kobza*) and songs that he has learned" was obligated to bring payments into the treasury of the local guild. At their councils, the brothers entrusted one of their number to receive the contributions and retained them in a chest for expenses that the brotherhood identified. Another brother, often one who lived far away from the first, was assigned to keep the lock and key to that chest. Together, the brothers made decisions to buy candle holders, candles, and oil for the church (Sperans'kyi 1904: 115).

Almost all the bandura and lira players in the 19th century lived in small towns or villages. Much like their neighbours, they had their own house, land, garden, and tended to their farmsteads. They got married, created families, had children and grandchildren – leading a normal domestic life. Returning from a journey and having rested, they engaged with their domestic chores, adjusted because of their lack of sight. They braided ropes by touch, for example, and in this way contributed to their family's material standing. Young bandura and lira players, who did not yet have their own homes, typically lived with their parents or relatives (Kushpet 2007: 153-155).

Having an itinerant lifestyle, the *kobzari* constantly required the help of seeing people and particularly their guide (*povodyr*, поводир). These guides were hired labourers who were not only responsible for leading the *kobzar* as he was walking but also warning him about dangers, such as the approach of police or *other* potentially threatening people. The guides were most often orphans or children from poor families, boys up to fifteen years old. Agreements were made with the parents or guardians of the children regarding the length of the work, the pay, the conditions for staying at the *kobzar*'s place, as well as the provision of food and clothing (Sperans'kyi 1904: 115-116; Revuts'kyi 1930: 45; Kushpet 2007: 150-151). The guides did not have the right to attend the guild meetings or ritual events (Kushpet 2007: 150). Sometimes, a *kobzar*'s own children or his wife served as his guide, if they were sighted (Malynka 1929: 106).

The bandura and lira players' traveling took place throughout the year, and depended entirely on the strength and health of each singer-musician, and their right to go "in all four directions" (Kushpet 2007: 159). They stayed at home mostly in the winter and in the fall; they also stayed home in the summer, especially during harvest or played at the annual fairs and in the towns (Maslov 1902: 222). When a *starets'* visited a house, his ritual normally included the recitation of prayers, singing of psalms appropriate to the church calendar date, asking for alms and giving thanks for what he received. Villagers often invited them to read an *akathist* (акафист, hymn dedicated to a saint, holy event or person of the Holy Trinity), a prayer for health or a prayer for repose of someone's soul. In some areas, if there was no priest, the *kobzar* led more formal church rituals: the service for the dead on days of commemoration (*panakhyda,* панахида), the service of supplication (*moleben'*, молебень), *akathists* and others (Kushpet 2007: 156-157).

The *kobzar*'s journeys had pre-planned itineraries, depending on what, where and when certain events were organized. The trips extended across the entire ethnic Ukrainian territory. Since parish feast days, religious holidays and major fairs all took place on consistent schedules, the journeys of the minstrels were also stable, sometimes not changing for decades. It was necessary to plan out places of rest and overnight stays. They stayed typically at inns in the towns and with their blind brethren in villages (Kushpet 2007: 159-161). One known exception was the banduryst Butenko, who "once and for all took up summer residence in the Kurliazh monastery, established himself firmly there, and it was very hard to compete with him there" (Kryst 1902: 112).

At large gatherings, the performers tended to sing moralizing, satirical songs and psalms with an educational-biblical theme, such as "Potop" (Потоп, the flood)" "Adam and Eve" (Адам та Єва), and the historical-epic *dumy*. One could not sing every psalm at a bazaar, however, because at this time the villagers were busy with buying and selling, and not every one had the time to stay and listen to the lira player. But on religious holidays, when people assembled for spiritual motivation, there was every chance to stop and be attentive to "Godly songs." In the same spirit, it was not acceptable to sing secular pieces at those times (Borzhkovs'kyi 1889: 662, 665). Satirical and humorous songs were sung primarily by request on celebratory occasions, perhaps in a tavern (Borzhkovs'kyi 1889: 661; Kushpet 2007: 157). Lira players were also sometimes invited to play for dancing at weddings and other family events (Maslov 1902: 223).

At approximately the middle of the 19th century, itinerant singers, especially bandura players, started being harassed by the police, by various administrations and by the Russian Orthodox Church, related to the anti-Ukrainian and anti-societal politics of the Tsarist Russian state. This made it impossible for *kobzari* to remain in the cities, and thus, if they sang in the city at all, most came only in groups and without their instruments.

> Even though all the *bandurysts* that I know personally live not far from Kharkiv, they come rarely to the city, and only some of them. I have met only two, and they strive to sing at the bazaars together with the other blind singers, without bandury, because the police hounds them. *Bandurysts* complained about police persecution back in the 1870s, and it continues like this until today. (Kryst 1902: 122)

Lira player M. Dubrova described maltreatment of singers by the police in the Poltava Governorate (Maslov 1902: 222).

At the beginning of the 20th century, bandura and lira players reappeared in the streets of Ukrainian cities in connection with the democratization of society and the establishment of Ukrainian statehood (1917-1921). However, this situation was short-lived – after the defeat of the Ukrainian National Republic and the establishment of the next occupying regime, the Soviet empire – the playing and singing became illegal and was not permitted by the 1920s and 1930s.

The songs of the bandura and lira players evoked strong emotional responses in the listeners. Valerian Borzhkovs'kyi describes this situation as follows:

> A dense crowd gathered around each one, villagers of each gender and age group; some of them sat directly beside the lira player for best access and convenience. The circle was quiet… I come up to another group and hear weeping, which sometimes intensifies, and sometimes devolves into quiet sobbing. In this group there were mostly women and girls. Who knows, maybe there were orphans here, about whose very fate the lira player was singing: "Though the orphan labours, the work is for nothing – Always the step-mother repeats: that orphan is a laggard." (Borzhkovs'kyi 1889: 663-664)

In another description of such a scene, "Six or seven women-widows stood around him, pressing their heads into their right palms; some were crying, others repeated the blind man's recited words and interpolated their own commentary" (Kryst 1902: 124).

A substantial pedagogical system was developed to provide *kobzari* with professional knowledge. The first stage in this process was the status of pupil: all – bandura players, kobza players, lira players and non-instrumentalist singers should go through training with a *panotets'* for several years. After the ceremony of initiation, they earned the right to "earn their own bread" as recognized *kobzari*.

Even at the beginning of the 20th century, when most of the old customs were breaking down, the expectations of the teachers remained high. No lira player nor banduryst had the right to be a *panotets'* and have his own pupils. This right was granted by the brethren, as mentioned by almost every researcher (Sperans'kyi 1904; Maslov 1902; Borzhkovs'kyi 1889 and others). The *panotets'* himself reported to his brothers about the level of accomplishments of his pupil during a special type of examination procedure *odklinshchyna* (одклінщина, end of bowing ceremony), and *vyzvilka* (визвілка, releasing ceremony). In connection with this, the right to take on pupils was given to a master only when he had established his own professionalism and life experiences and reached a minimum of 40 years of age (Kushpet 2007: 180-181). Each year, the council of *panotsi* decided on the number of students to accept and to which masters they were assigned. When making these decisions, the council considered maintaining sustainable norms – the balance between the number of minstrels and donors. They strove to avoid a worsening of relations between the general population and the blind singers, thus decreasing their good will and generosity (Kushpet 2007: 181). Sometimes, one master might have several students at the same time (Rusov 1874: 12). Lira playing schools also existed where twenty or thirty students studied together (Borzhkovs'kyi 1889: 675; Chykalenko 1896: 79; Studyns'kyi 1894: 260; and others). It is not certain whether such schools existed for bandura players.

Young men with physical disabilities could become students. Most often, they were blind and aged 12 to 25 or even 30. They should have a natural good memory, a capacity for music and a willingness to be subservient to their teacher, to fulfill all his instructions. This respect for the teacher lay at the centre of a *kobzar*'s education. Petro Dryhavka (Drevchenko), described how his master trained him: "Here you are … my child, three lessons. The first lesson is called: honour your master more than your parents. The second lesson: don't forget your master *panotets*', your assistant teacher, and your brother the key-holder, and account keeper. And after that, your father and mother, and your relatives, your sisters, and your neighbours near and far" (Martynovych 2012: 230).

The *kobzari* themselves found potential students. Alternately, the parents of blind children, thinking about their future, found a *banduryst* or lira player and gave them to him for apprenticeship. In Halychyna, Bukovyna and Podillia, there were cases when sighted people became lira players (Studyns'kyi 1894: 259; Hnatiuk 1896: 3; Borzhkovs'kyi 1889: 665-668). There is no documentation of such cases among bandura players. The teachers and parents or guardians of a pupil made an explicit agreement about the length of study, the conditions of room and board for the pupil, acquisition of a musical instrument and the form of payment for this training. Parents paid money for this apprenticeship or they might arrange for the student to repay the master over a designated period. The duration of the studies thus varied, depending also on the age and skill of the student. Bandura players normally had the longest apprenticeship, since it is harder to learn to play, and especially to tune the bandura. Thus *bandurysty* typically remained pupils for three years, while lira players for two years. Petro Dryhavka explained that studies on a lira were shorter than for a bandura – only one year – "that's the way it has always been" (Martynovych 2012: 236). However, during Dryhavka's own time (ca. 1863-1934), the old tradition started to be disrupted and the period of studies was sometimes reduced to half a year and ten *karbovantsi* (карбованці, monetary unit) extra payment. Later, it became only three months and five *karbovantsi*. Eventually, just a cash fee. At the end, not even for money, but a lira player simply sometimes trained a singer collegially (Martynovych 2012: 236). Indeed, the *stykhivnyky* had a different tradition. "They were instructed for money. They gave a quarter pay-off in today's value for their graduation. They paid another quarter to the *panotets*'. And [the rest to the brotherhood] for standing in front of the brethren to live by begging" (Martynovych 2012: 236). Young women were trained for six months,

without any payment, but they worked off their education for one year. "So it has happened in all our brotherhoods – bandura players, lira players, and male singers and female singers – everyone has come to forget about those days" (Martynovych 2012: 236).

The entire system of instruction and teaching was built upon the principles of Christian morality. "One can speak about the master's tutoring as a folk model for spiritual training. It was truly of the people, because the entire content of this training was filtered through the folk environment and any item in the repertoire of the *starets'* took into consideration the way the folk would receive it and the realities of life in general, as they relate to this specific piece" (Kushpet 2007: 195). Researchers have indicated that pupils first learned the prayers, then the texts for asking for money (*zhebranky*, жебранки), then the songs and the secret language of the blind singers, ritual incantations, and only after this they turned to mastering their musical instrument (Studyns'kyi; Hnatiuk). Dryhavka described his experience:

> My first lesson, when I entered into studies with my master, he taught me the prayers. the first prayer was "Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us" (Молитвами святих отець наших, Господи Ісусе Христе Боже наш, помилуй нас). This is the very first prayer. The second: "My beloved Jesus, heart of sweetness, my one comfort in suffering, my joy…" (Ісусе мій прелюбезний, серцю сладосте, Їдина ти в біді утіха, моя радосте …). My second psalm was "Zemlia plachet'stia" (Земля плачеться, The earth cries). He taught me that after the Jesus one. (Martynovych 2012: 229)

Among the other prayers that the students studied, more general ones are common "Otche nash" (Отче наш, Our Father), "Sviatyi Bozhe…" (Святий Боже, O Holy God…), "Viruiu …" (Вірую, The Nicene Creed), "Pomylui mia, Bozhe …" (Помилуй мя, Боже, God have mercy…) (Kulish 1856: 47). Other prayers included "Na son hriadushchyi" (На сон грядущий, For the dream to come), "Anhelu khranyteliu" (Ангелу хранителю, Oh guardian angel), "Svyiati patronesi" (Святій патронесі, To the Holy patroness), "Sviatomu Khrystovi" (Святому Христові, To Holy Christ), "Materi Bozhii" (Матері Божій, To the Mother of God) and others. There were many prayers and each one had an appropriate designation (Kushpet 2007: 211-212).

Near the beginning of their studies, the apprentices mastered *zhebranky*, texts designed to arouse pity in the listener and to generate alms. Having learned at least one of these texts, the pupil ventured out to nearby villages

to collect donations. Notably, *zhebranky* were recited only by students (Kushpet 2007: 197-198). When visiting houses and hoping to receive a piece of cloth or a shirt, initiated bandura or lira players addressed the homeowners with a request which they called a "*zapros*" (запрос), in which they explained the reason for their appeal – their blindness – and solicited a concrete donation and appealed to the Higher Powers to show mercy to the homeowners (Kushpet 2007: 199). After they received the gift, the singers thanked their benefactors, reciting prayers.

Ritual greetings among brethren were also an essential part of their training. They used these religious formulae when they met each other and during house visits. Kushpet argues that these greetings "demonstrated their special devotional standing to the villagers and clerics" (Kushpet 2007: 210).

The process of learning religious and secular songs was as follows: at first they memorized the words and melodies of specific pieces, and only then they learned how to play them on their instrument and to sing and play simultaneously (Kryst 1902: 121; Tykhovs'kyi 1902: 135). The most widespread works in the repertoire of the *kobzari*, *bandurysty* and *lirnyky* were psalms and canticles (*kanty*, канти) with biblical themes. Kushpet produced a listing of psalms, far from complete, which included 90 items (Kushpet 2007: 218-219). Among them were instructional texts about the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, the great flood, Adam and Eve, about the life and deeds of the saints, including "Marii Magdalyni" (Марії Маґдалині, To Mary Magdalene), "Mykolaiu Velikomy" (Миколаю Великому, To Saint Nicholas the Great), "Mykolaiu Malomu" (Миколаю Малому, To the Minor Saint Nicholas), "Ivanu Bohoslovu" (Івану Богослову, To Saint John the Theologian), and others. They also learned moralistic psalms "About Lazar" (Про Лазаря), "Pro Bludnoho syna" (Про Блудного сина, About the prodigal son), "Syritka" (Сирітка, The orphan girl) and prophetic works "Pro strashnyi sud" (Про страшний суд, The last judgement) and consoling texts such as "Isusu" (Ісусу, To Jesus), "Zastupnytsi" (Заступниці, To the Protectress), "Anhelu kranyteliu" (Ангелу хранителю, To the guardian angel) and others (Demuts'kyi 1903; Kushpet 2007: 215).

All itinerant singers knew many psalms. For example, the bandura player Khvedir Kholodnyi knew 70 (Slastionov 1902: 308). Hnat Khotkevych reported that *bandurysty* from Kharkiv knew on average 12-20 psalms and some knew many more: P. Hashchenko – 42; P. Drevchenko

– 44 (Khotkevych 1903: 94). The same could be said for lira players: Slastionov indicated that the lira player Iu. Maksymovych knew 120 psalms (Slastionov 1902: 307). Knowledge of many works dedicated to religious holidays allowed a singer to travel the whole year, since not all the psalms were appropriate at all times and in all places. For example, certain psalms were appropriate only during the Great Lent before Easter, during house visitations. The repertoire thus changed in accordance with the church calendar.

Moralistic songs were closely related to psalms and also contained religious motifs. The repertoire dealt with the difficult fate of orphans in "Syritka" (Сирітка, The orphan girl), about relations with parents and the elderly in "Oi, hore, hore na sim sviti zhyty" (Ой, горе, горе на сім світі жити, Oh, woe, woe to live in this world) and "Pro udovu" (Про удову, About the widow), about profligate children in "Bludiashchyi syn" (Блудящий син, The prodigal son), about social conflicts in "Nema v sviti pravdy" (Нема в світі правди, There is no justice in the world) and other themes designed to correct human vices. Satirical songs were similar in that they were also moralistic, though they had no overt religious content. These songs decried family discord in "Teshcha" (Теща, The mother-in-law], "Dvorianka" (Дворянка, The noblewoman), "Mishchanka" (Міщанка, The townswoman) and "Kysil" (Кисіль, The starch drink), marital infidelity in "Buhai" (Бугай, The bull) and other topics. Unlike the psalms, moralistic and satirical songs were not limited to certain parts of the year. They could be sung at any time, which may explain their popularity among performers and listeners.

Dumy were the oldest works in the repertoires of kobza, bandura and lira players. These are epic songs with a recitative form, non-standardized number of syllables per line and verbal rhyme. The term "*duma*" with this definition was first introduced into the academic discourse by Mykhailo Maksymovych in his collection of Ukrainian songs in 1827 (Maksymovych 1827). The singers themselves called them "*nevol'nyts'ki psal'my*" (невольницькі псальми, psalms about captives), "*kozats'ki*" (козацькі, Cossack) or "*lytsars'ki*" (лицарські, knightly) songs.

The first documentations of *dumy*, in latin letters, were the "*Duma* pro kozaka-netiahu" (Дума про Козака-нетягу, *Duma* about Cossack-netiaha) and the "*Duma* pro Vivcharia" (Дума про Вівчаря, *Duma* about the shepherd), which, together with the historical song about Baida, a satirical song about the Mother-in-law and other Ukrainian songs were published by Mykhailo Vozniak from the Kondrats'kyi manuscript, from

the Dnister River area or Volyn' (Vozniak 1927; Hrushevs'ka 2006: 5, 7-8). Vozniak believed that Kondrats'kyi wrote these songs down as a part of the *kobzar* repertoire prior to 1693 during the campaign of King Jan Sobieski to Wallacia (Vozniak 1927: 177-178), in which Cossack units under the leadership of Right Bank Hetmans (Cossack leaders west of the Dnipro River): Hetmans Stefan Kunyts'kyi (1683-1684), Andrii Mohyla (1685-1689) and Hryhorii Hryshko (1689-1692). Later, in the 19th century, these same works were recorded from *kobzari* and lira players from Left Bank and parts of Right Bank Ukraine. The Kondrats'kyi manuscripts indicate that in the second half of the 17th century *dumy* already had their recitative form, characteristic of later documentations from the 19th century (Kolessa and Hrushevs'ka 2006: A11; Hrytsa 1995: 70). A full bibliography of collections and publications of *dumy* can be found in the recently republished foundational work by Kateryna Hrushevs'ka. This work also contains the most complete collection of *duma* texts, including 33 narrative lines documented in more than 200 variants (Hrushevs'ka 2006-2007).

Duma researcher Filiaret Kolessa categorized all *dumy* into two layers: an older one, to which he assigned "mostly chivalrous *dumy* of a lyrical-epic character, whose central kernels remind us of folk songs, and some of which give the impression that they truly developed out of earlier folk songs. These are *dumy* about the struggles with Turks and Tatars, a group of *dumy* about captivity, and moralistic texts, in which the setting is mostly the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries." The second layer ones, "formed later, are more realistic, and give indications about life, personnages and events of the middle and end of the 17th century. They depict their subjects with an immediacy, are less connected with folk songs and seem to reveal some associations with literary works of this period. There is little lyrical content in this group; rather they are colored with humor and a little critical jesting. These include the *dumy* about the Khmel'nytskyi uprising and three others, similar in realism and humorous tone: the "Duma pro Hanzhu Andybera" (Про Ганжу Андибера), "Kozak Holota" (Про козака Голоту) and "Kozats'ke zhyttia" (Козацьке життя) (Kolessa 1920: 9).

Evidently, in the earlier times, *kobzari* knew numerous *dumy*. For example, twelve dumy were recorded from Andrii Shuta (1790-ca.1873) in the Sosnytske district in the Chernihiv region. He established his own school and had many students. Between 1845 and 1853 his versions of the following were written out: "Ivan Konovchenko" (Іван Коновченко), "Khvedir Bezridnyi" (Хведір Безрідний, Fedir with no family), "Khves'ko Andyber" (Хвесько Андибер), "Veremii Voloshyn"

(Веремій Волошин), "Pro udovu" (Про Удову, About the widow), "Pro nevil'nykiv (Про невільників, About the captives), and six dumy about the times of Khmel'nyts'kyi: "Khmel'nyts'kyi ta Barabash" (Хмельницький та Барабаш), "Orendy" (Оренди, The tenancy), "Moldavs'kyi pokhid Khmel'nyts'koho" (Молдавський похід Хмельницького, The Moldavian campaign of Khmel'nyts'kyi), "Pro Bilotserkivshchynu (Про Білоцерківщину, About the battles around Bilotserkva), "Smert' Bohdana Khmel'nyts'koho" (Смерть Богдана Хмельницького, The death of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi) and "Pro Ivana Bohuna" (Про Івана Богуна, About Ivan Bohun). As we see, *dumy* about the Khmel'nyts'kyi revolt were popular in the Chernihiv area in the first half of the 19th century. However, as time passed between the events and the singing of the *dumy*, interest in them waned. A student of Shuta, Andrii Beshko (?- 1855) and Beshko's student Pavlo Bratytsia (1843-1887) sang only "Khves'ko Andyber" and "Khmel'nyts'kyi ta Barabash," which shows the decreasing popularity of such *dumy* at that later time. The tendency of a decrease in the singers' repertoire of *dumy* can be followed through the second half of the 19th century in other areas as well. However, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, responding to a growing interest in *dumy* on the part of the intelligentsia, more and more *kobzari* began introducing them into their repertoires.

It is notable that texts with an irregular number of syllables per line and verbal rhyme were used not only for *dumy*, but also in other genres, psalms in particular. These verbal forms were used as the *panotsi* taught their pupils.

The *kobzar* repertoire also included so-called "street" songs – common pieces with historical, Cossack, balladic and other themes. *Kobzari* typically played them upon request. Bandura players, and especially lira players, also frequently played dance music. Several dozen names of dances are documented, though we know fewer actual melodies. Lira players were invited to play for dances at weddings or other family celebrations. In these cases, the lira was sometimes played independently and sometimes in combination with other instruments.

An essential element of training for a *kobzar* student was his mastery of their specific professional language. All *kobzari* who completed their apprenticeship knew it. In the various regions of Ukraine this language was called: "*startsivs'ka*" (старцівська, old men's, beggars'), "*didivs'ka*" (дідівська, grandfathers'), "*lebiis'ka*" (лебійська, from the word "лебій" – old man, beggar), and others. The first publications about the occupational argot of blind singers appeared only at the end of the 19th century. There is

no information about it at all prior to that. This suggests that the language was carefully concealed from outsider ears, and only with the beginning of the decline of the brotherhoods did it become accessible to the non-initiated. It had been created for internal guild use and thus was to remain a secret. Several theories have been proposed as to the source and timing for development of this language, though it is clear its structure is connected with the Ukrainian vernacular language, indicating it was local. Most likely it was founded together with the *kobzar* guilds (Kushpet 2007: 173). The most complete dictionary of the *kobzar* argot, compiled on the basis of 19th and early 20th century ethnographers, is published in the monograph *Startsivstvo* (Kushpet 2007: 388-433).

After the completion of his studies, the apprentice should undergo an initiation ceremony (одклінщини), after which he acquired the right to sing and collect alms independently. Each region of Ukraine had its particular variant of this ritual, but its common core function was to give witness in front of the brethren that this student had finished his schooling and was transitioning to "earn his own bread": "so that everyone knows that his master has let him go wherever he wants; so that everyone knows that he is honest, well prepared, and decent" (Martynovych 2012: 197). Kobzar Trykhon Mahadyn explained to Martynovych that

> When a master has coached the boy to play and that it is time for him to go out to earn his own bread, then the master sends word to his brothers, 'I have a boy who plays well already – it is time to give him his own bread; come to us for the *odklinshchyny*.' To perform the ceremony properly, so that there would be many brothers there, they choose an appropriate time – a market day. At the end of the bazaar, in the evening, the brothers slowly gather at the home of the master. On the road they buy groceries and alcohol … the brethren sit at a table. In the summer, it takes place outdoors. Then the master takes a loaf of bread into his hands, comes to the company, and says: 'By the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us!' (Молитвами святих отець наших, Господи Ісусе Христе, Сине Божий, помилуй нас!) The company responds in a group 'Amen.' 'Peace to your words' (Мир бесіді вашій). Together, 'Come in peace, Christ God himself, to bless you.' (С миром приходь Сам Христос Боже благослови). [The initiate speaks] 'A penny begged for some whiskey. I beg you for the honour, the love, and for this initiation' (Просила копійка на горілку. Я прошу вас на честь, на любов і на одклінщини). (Martynovych 2012: 74)

The ceremony took several hours. The brethren followed the procedure conscientiously. The established prayer was recited many times ("By the prayers of our holy fathers…"), and the dialogue continued among the

master, the brothers and the apprentice. At the end of the ritual, "they dance, until they disperse" (Martynovych 2012: 74-75).

To gain the right to take on students, some ten years after an *odklinshchyny*, the ceremony of "*vyzvilky*" (releasing ceremony) promoted a *kobzar* to the next status. This ritual was similar to the *odklinshchyny*, except that more prayers were recited, more alcohol was offered, and the ritual took more time: "Sixty prayers are recited for an *odklinshchyny*, but for the *vyzvilky* you need who knows how many! You can't count how many," Dryhavka explained to Martynovych (Martynovych 2012: 231). M. Doroshenko commented, "when I was released – they started after noon, then overnight they finished at dawn" (Martynovych 2012: 202).

Kobzar brotherhoods were guided by the so-called "Ustyian books" – a collection of oral narratives which outlined the content and goal of the association's activities, and were passed on for long periods from generation to generation. The mode of transmission and preservation of these narratives are indicated in their very name: "its called Ustyian because it is passed on by the '*usta*' (mouth), and is remembered in our heads" (Kushpet 2007: 297). Information about the Ustyian books started to become public only at the beginning of the 20th century, in the period of decline of the *kobzar*-lira societies, when the old rules almost stopped operating. Maryna Hrymych's article (1992a), as well as the books by K. Cherems'kyi (2002) and V. Kushpet (2007) reveal information about their content.

Banduryst and *panotets*' Petro Drevchenko described how the Ustyian books were consolidated and consecrated at the Twentyfathers Council (Дванадцятиотча Рада) on the Feast of the Savior (Спаса, 6/19 August) 1775, in very difficult historical times for Ukraine (Cherems'kyi 2002: 5-6; Kushpet 2007: 297-300). In 1764, the independent Ukrainian state, Het'manshchyna, was liquidated and in June of 1775 the Muscovite army destroyed the Zaporizhzhian Sich which had been the last bastion of Ukrainian sovereignty. The existence of the *kobzar* tradition was also threatened. At the council, they foretold "O blind brothers! Don't allow our brotherhood to be put down. Don't become dull in your spirit, in your memories nor in the embodiment of the Ustyian books, because Ukraine is no longer and our Cossack freedom is locked in chains forever by the Tsars and the nobles" (Kushpet 2007: 300).

The Ustyian books (there were twelve such books and eleven interludes) were the most important secret of the brotherhoods. It was severely forbidden to reveal their contents among the uninitiated. Brothers could become familiar with the contents of all twelve books only after taking

their second initiation and swearing not to share their contents among the uninitiated. Given this, only the *panotsi*-guildmasters, the *panotsi*-advisors and the great masters knew all twelve books by heart.

> The Ustyian books had a particular structure: each book had a firmly established content. To shorten, change, or create additions was strictly forbidden. An "interlude" (проміжок) was formalized between each two subsequent books, which included performance of musical works. Unlike the books themselves, the textual content of the interludes could change or become elaborated by an appropriate decision of the council. (Hrymych 1992a: 19)

Researchers observe that the Ustyian books represent a vernacular method for mastering the *kobzar* profession (texts of the prayers, formulae for almsgiving, invitations, thanksgiving, psalms, *dumy*, songs, playing instruments, songs, customs and advice on where to play, how to protect oneself from dogs, how to manage money, how to save oneself from physical sins and other matters) (Hrymych 1992; Cherems'kyi 2002; Kushpet 2007). As Kushpet poignantly expressed it, "the Ustyian books were a sort of encyclopedia of *kobzarstvo*, its moral codex and constitution, handbook, and anthology of repertoire" (Kushpet 2007: 374).

The loss of Ukrainian statehood at the end of the 18th century brought about the repression and ravaging of Ukrainian culture on the part of the occupying Russian state. From the 19th century, the *kobzar-lirnyk* associations were persecuted. Struggling to survive, they were forced to adapt to the new circumstances, which led to the decline of the traditions. The national uplifting at the beginning of the 20th century and the restoration of Ukrainian independence in 1917 revived the *kobzar-lirnyk* guilds for a short time. However, after the defeat of the Ukrainian national project and the demise of the Ukrainian National Republic in 1922 and the establishment of a new occupying regime based in Moscow, the *kobzar-lirnyk* brotherhoods were subjected to new persecutions, unprecedented in their brutality, and the physical death of the singers. The new state also established new legal acts to control the activity. One of the first laws passed was the interdiction of almspersons, which involved the "registration of beggars" and "initiatives to deny professional mendicants," "regular organization of roundups" in places of public gatherings, bazaars, train stations, churches and others (Cherems'kyi 1999: 31-32). The *kobzari* were seized in groups, kept in special facilities, were arraigned, beaten and abused in various ways. They could be sent out to Siberia or shot (Cherems'kyi 1999: 32). The registration of beggars continued, and in the 1930s a new

decree of the government of the Soviet Union on 27 December 1932 was entitiled "The establishment of a unitary passport system across the USSR and the compulsory registration of passports," the goal of which was "to relieve settled places from people who do not contribute valuable labour to society and also to clean these settled places from *kurkuly* (куркули, Soviet term for rich peasants, a euphemism for anyone they targeted for suppression), criminal and other antisocietal elements, which hide there" (Cherems'kyi 1999: 33). This decree required that every person coming from a different settlement should register his or her passport in the local police detachment within 24 hours. Otherwise, they were to be fined and repeat offenders were subject to criminal liability (Cherems'kyi 1999: 33). After the establishment of the passport system, a verification program of the "unorganized population" was undertaken each year under various pretexts. This population was defined as "all people who do not work in institutions and enterprises and are not members of professional unions or corporate organizations" (Cherems'kyi 1999: 33, 35). It is understood that bandura and lira players were categorized as part of the "unorganized population."

Another governmental decree that hindered the itinerant lifestyle of the *kobzari* was established in 1933 and was entitled "On the ban on arranging private boarding houses," which was punishable as a criminal act and resulted in confinement up to three years (Cherems'kyi 1999: 35). This law made it impossible to maintain the traditional meeting places of the *kobzari*. The occupational regime also established severe censorship on the repertoire of the singers, which had to be registered in the Politosvita (Політосвіта, Political education) offices (Cherems'kyi 1999: 41-42).

Since the repertoire of the bandura and lira players featured mostly religious and moral themes, their work was also subject to antireligious initiatives of the Soviet government, which included systematic control over all clergy and anyone who promoted a religious worldview. People who conducted "religious agitation" were to be punished. On the other hand, religious buildings – traditional places of *kobzar* performances – were massively shut down and demolished. As churches were destroyed, so were the sacred contents of the *kobzar* guilds (religious banners, icons, perpetually burning lamps), as happened, for example, in the Kostiatynohrad Annunciation cathedral (Cherems'kyi 1999: 42-43).

Practically any song performed by the *kobzari* could easily be designated as an element of "counterrevolutionary agitation material" and thus traditional singers were most often accused of "propaganda and agitation which calls for the overthrow or weakening of Soviet rule," "belonging to a counterrevolutionary organization with objectives to overthrow the

existing state" and were tried under the relevant paragraphs of the criminal code (Cherems'kyi 1999: 45-46). At the same time, the *kobzar* instruments were confiscated and destroyed, being characterized as "bourgeoise," "nationalist," "*kurkul*," and in other negative ways.

In this climate, the *kobzar* tradition found itself outside the law and was destined for dissolution. The singers were denied traditional modes of existence, and needed to abandon their *kobzar* activities and look for other work. "In these adverse conditions, *kobzari* and *lirnyky* often lived the rest of their lives at home, abandoning their itinerant activities" as observed in 1924 by ethnographer Klyment Kvitka (Kvitka 2010: 96). And yet the *kobzar* tradition continued and until the end of the 1920s, one could still find bandura and lira players at bazaars in all oblasti of eastern and central Ukraine, as documented by researchers and eyewitnesses (Cherems'kyi 1999: 12-15). The death blow was administered against *kobzarstvo* by the totalitarian regime at the beginning of the 1930s. The extent of the repressions is not fully known (the Ethnographic Commission was disbanded, and its members repressed by then), but it is clear that many of these folk singers were stopped through individual and group repressions: some were shot, others sent to Siberia or the northern districts of the USSR and few returned; others died during the Holodomor of 1932-1933. Only a few singers survived these difficult times: those who managed to leave Ukraine, to hide somewhere in an isolated village or hamlet and those that adjusted to and collaborated with the regime.

To gain an insight into the dimensions of the catastrophe, we might compare the statistical information from the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century with those of 1938. According to Martynovych's calculations, there were 337 bandura and lira players specifically in the Poltava region in the 1880s, and overall in Ukraine there were probably up to 3,000 (Cherems'kyi 1999: 12). At the beginning of the 20th century in eastern and central Ukraine, there were "several hundred" bandura and lira players (Cherems'kyi 1999: 12). In 1938, in preparation for the so-called "First Republic-wide Congress of *Kobzari* and *Lirnyky*," the Folklore Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian RSR collected information about these folk singers in the Poltava, Kharkiv, Sumy, Chernihiv and Dnipropetrovs'k oblasts and found fifty. Thirty-seven people came together for this meeting (Lavrov 1980: 155-156), but no more than ten were traditional singers; the remainder were amateurs. The amateurs had not undergone training from any customary master and their repertoire had undergone ideological censorship. They no longer used a kobza or bandura.

Eyewitness accounts indicate active blind lira players in the villages of Vyshhorod and Ivankiv districts of the Kyiv oblast and a few districts of the Khmel'nyts'kyi region in the 1930s and 1940s (including during German occupation) and in the 1950s (Tykhenko 2017, 2018, 2019; Koryts'kyi 2022: 155-156). These were old men (55-60 years old), who traveled from house to house and to markets; they played near churches or at weddings or other family celebrations. Some of these had returned from prison. They sang a traditional repertoire, mostly psalms, for which the villagers gifted them generously, regardless of their own troubles. Based on their age, we might suppose that these were the last remaining members of the former *kobzar-lirnyk* guilds, who had managed to survive the hard times. In the 1940s they had not yet abandoned the basic fundamentals of the brotherhood and had not changed their worldviews (Tykhenko 2018: 214). Villagers' accounts indicate that in the 1950s the lira players were harassed by the police (Tykhenko 2017: 207). In numerous locations (not only in the Polissia region of Kyiv oblast), disabled veterans of World War Two learned how to play the lira. Some were blind, while others could see (Tykhenko 2017: 204; 2018: 214, 223). Unfortunately, we have no information as to how they learned to play. Did they undergo training under *panotsi*, and did brotherhoods exist? The question remains open.

The situation in Volyn', western Podillia, Halychyna, and Hutsul'shchyna was different. These areas were not occupied by the Soviet empire until the mid-20th century. Traditional lira players continued to operate there until the end of the 1980s.

During the wave of national awareness that came at the beginning of the 20th century, groups of sighted amateur bandura players were formed into capellas and ensembles. They operated outside the *kobzar* guilds and did not undergo traditional apprenticeship, and thus were not traditional bandurysts. In fact, this represented the birth of a new artistic phenomenon with a completely different set of goals, forms of organization, repertoire, training and musical aesthetics. Handbooks for playing on the bandura were created for their needs, oriented towards concert performance. In opposition to the will of the professional singer-musicians, efforts were made to change the construction of the vernacular diatonic bandura with the goal of adapting it to play a new repertoire that had not been designed for this instrument. These efforts resulted in the creation of a chromatic and extended scale. At first, this was achieved by adding additional separate strings (halftones) on the body of the instrument and basses on the neck. After several intermediate steps, this process culminated at the

end of the 1940s with a completely chromaticized instrument, a change of the scale and tuning, an increase of the number of strings by 250%, by arranging the strings in two rows, an addition of mechanical tone-changing mechanisms, an alteration of the means of creating sounds from the strings and a substantial increase in the dimensions and weight of the bandura. In reality, a completely new and different instrument had been created, which shared perhaps only its name with the traditional bandura. After the repressions against bandura playing ceased in the 1940s, this new bandura was used for education in musical schools and conservatories, and continues to be used as such until today.

The only person who continued to play on a folk (**старосвітська**, old world) bandura and retained the actual *kobzar* repertoire in an undistorted form was Heorhii Tkachenko (1898-1993). In the decade of the 1910s in Kharkiv, he learned the traditional "Zinkiv" style of playing from itinerant blind bandura players, including a substantial part of their repertoire. He retired from his employment in the 1950s, moved to Kyiv, started playing at concerts and giving lectures for students. He gained admirers and apprentices. They learned the construction of the folk bandura from him, his system of play, repertoire and his performing style. New *kobzar* guilds were created in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Lviv in the 1980s and 1990s which strive to continue the *kobzar-lirnyk* tradition.

The kobza, bandura, and lira have long been the *kobzars'* musical instruments. They each differ in their construction, tuning and method of play, but they all serve the same function – as an accompanying instrument for the performance of the traditional *kobzar* repertoire.

Kobza. The kobza is a lute-like instrument. The oldest references to the Ukrainian kobza are found in Polish literature of the 16th century (Khotkevych 2013: 141-142). We do not know exactly how these kobza looked. Volodymyr Kushpet believes that this may have been an instrument with four strings, tuned in a "quarto-secundo scale (D, G, A, D). Accompaniment to singing was built on a quarto-quintet bass drone, overplaying – unison, in the scale" (Kushpet 2016: 3: 6). We do have images and a detailed description of the construction, tuning, style of play and repertoire of the 19th century kobza played by Ostap Veresai (1803-1890) (Lysenko 1874).

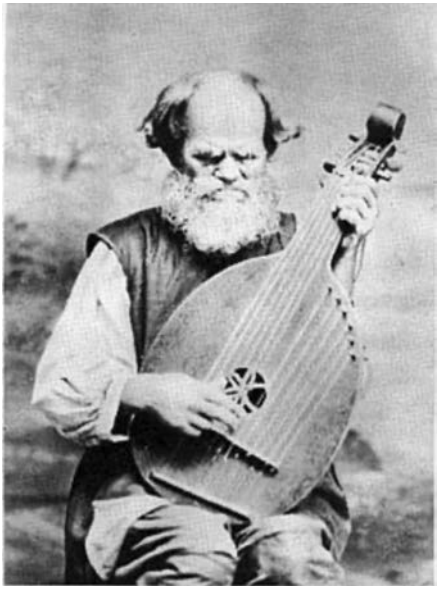

Figure 1. Kobza player Ostap Veresai.
Source: Kushpet 2007: 40.

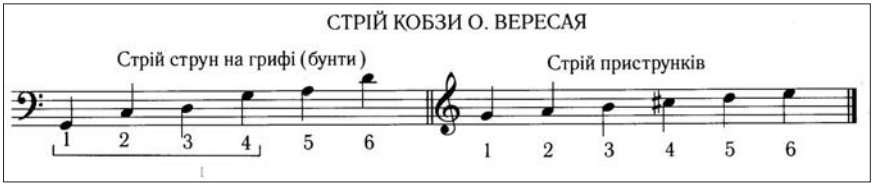

Figure 2. Tuning of Ostap Veresai's kobza.
Bass strings (*bunty*, бунти) on the left, body strings (*prystrunky*, приструнки) on the right
Source: Kushpet 2007: 40.

The body of this kobza is symmetrical, with six long strings stretched above the neck of the instrument and six shorter strings (*prystrunky*, приструнки) on one side of the main body. Similar to all lute-like instruments, the kobza was held at an angle. Notes played during singing were mostly on the long strings which were pressed against the neck at various locations with the fingers of the left hand. The fingers and thumb of the right hand plucked the strings.The short strings were played with both hands, not pressing them to change their pitch (Lysenko 1874: 38). It was possible to play in several keys on this kobza: G, C, D major and minor (Kushpet 2007: 41).

Bandura. The bandura is a harp-like instrument. The earliest written references to Ukrainian bandury and bandura players are also found in

Polish sources from the 16th century (Khotkevych 2013: 160-162). However, we do not have illustrations nor descriptions of the bandury of that time. The oldest surviving bandura, associated with Nedbailo, is preserved in the State Museum of Theatrical and Musical Arts in Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation), and dates to 1740. It has a clear assymetrical form, five long strings extending over the neck and eighteen shorter *prystrunky* on the body.

Figure 3. The Nedbailo bandura of 1740.
Source: Kushpet 2007.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, bandury most commonly had four or five strings on the neck and 14-16 strings on the body of the instrument. Each bandura was tuned in connection with the voice of the bandura player. Since it was a diatonic instrument, it was not possible to change keys while playing. "The main (initial) key of the old-world bandury was major ("*na veselo*," "на весело," "in happy mode"). In addition, a significant part of the *kobzar* repertoire required performing in a minor key ("na zhalib," "на жаліб," "in sorrowful mode") (Kushpet 2007: 41). For changing the instrument from "happy" to "sorrowful" or vice versa, the players used "compromise" transitional tunes for convenience.

Figure 4. Banduryst Hnat Honcharenko with his guide boy and Engineer Oleksandr Borodai. Source: Wikipedia.

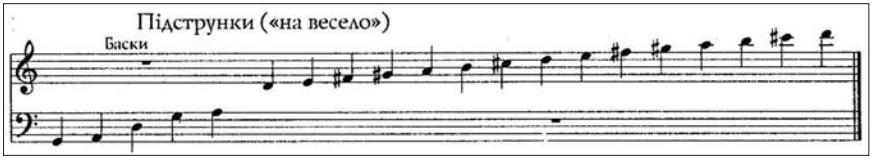

Figure 5. Tuning of Hnat Honcharenko's bandura.

It is notable that Ukrainians developed a unique technology for building *kobzy* and bandury, different than western European instruments. The body of the instruments (*spidniak*, спідняк) was carved out of a single piece of wood (willow, linden, maple or pear). The top deck (*verkhniak*, верхняк) was made out of wood from coniferous trees: spruce or pine. The pegs were made of hornbeam or pear. The nut (*porizhok*, поріжок, *kobylka*, кобилка) was made of hardwood – oak, maple or pear. The bottom bridge – attachment for the strings – was made of metal. In earlier times, the strings were made of sheep intestines (жильні, of gut). In more recent times, they were metal.

Lira. The lira is a keyed-bowed instrument in which a wheel serves as the bow. This instrument has been distributed widely over Europe, known

as an "ordanistrum" since the 9th century. It is not known when the lira first arrived in Ukrainian territories, but here it generally found its way into the hands of blind itinerant singer-musicians. In Ukraine, the lira is violin-like. It has three strings: the center string is called the "*spivanytsia*" (співаниця, singing one), and the two side strings are the "*bas*" (бас, bass) and the "*pidbasok*" (підбасок, small bass). The lira was tuned higher or lower, depending on the singer's voice. Most often, it was at G – d – d^1. The scale of notes was tuned on the singing string with the help of the keys (нити, nyty): d^1, e^1, fis^1, g^1, a^1, h^1, c^2, d^2, e^2, fis^2, g^2 ("in happy mode"). To retune to a "sorrowful" tone, it was necessary to lower the fifh key h^1 a half-tone to create a b^1. The bass and small bass retained the same pitch at all times.

Figure 6. Tuning of the lira.

Figure 7. "Lira player" by Zygmunt Ajdukiewicz (painter), 1898.

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