'PROSTAJA MOVA', 'KITAB', AND POLISSIAN STANDARD

1. Introductory remarks

For over a hundred years, from Karskij (1962[[1]1897]) through a lively discussion in the 1960s in Soviet Ukraine and Belarus' (Gumeckaja [Humec'ka] 1965, Pljušč 1962, Aničenka 1963, 1969, 11-17, Žuraŭski 1967, 239-240), to linguists writing in the post-Soviet era (Pugh 1996, 2-9, Uspenskij 2002[[1]1987], 388-392, Moser 2002, 221, Zakrevs'ka 2003, Rusanivs'kyj 2001, 61), it has been widely maintained that the 'prostaja mova' was a secular language used in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (hereafter, GDL) in the 16th to 17th c. Yet despite ascertainable progress in the study of this language, some long-standing problems, in particular related to the delimitation of Ukrainian and Belarusian texts, warrant a more detailed consideration, especially in the broader socio-linguistic context of the Polish-Lithuanian society of that time.

This paper seeks to revise some disputable theses in recent studies, dealing with the status of the 'prostaja mova' and its codification, with an eye to offering a multidimensional vision of this language as used in the multilingual and multicultural GDL after the Act of Krėva (1385) and, later, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (hereafter, PLC) in the aftermath of the Union of Lublin (1569) (cf. Bednarczuk 1994, Dini 1997, 279-288, id. 2000, Ivanov 2003). New material will also be presented, pertaining to the long-running controversy on the delimitation of Ukrainian from Belarusian texts of the Middle period, a problem which rather falls by the wayside in most contemporary studies in the West (cf. Pugh 1996, 2-9).

2. Problems of ethno-linguistic attribution of the 'prostaja mova'

Contrary to the latest survey of problems related to the 'prostaja mova' in Moser (2002), who eschewed its ethno-linguistic attribution, some Belarusian and Ukrainian scholars prefer assessing the said glottonym through the prism of a given cultural tradition (either Ukrainian or Belarusian)[1], especially in the light of the problem of delimitation of Belarusian from Ukrainian texts. Quite emblematic in this respect appear recent studies by the Belarusian scholar Svjažynski (2001, 2003) who, along with other

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[1] As Moser (2002, 223, fn. 5) noted, there is no such an entry as 'prostaja mova' in the Encyclopedias of the Ukrainian (Rusanivs'kyj 2000) and Belarusian languages (Mixnevič 1994).

Belarusian slavists (cf. Jaskevič 1996, 4), revived a long-standing debate over the ethnic attribution of the major East Slavic language used in the GDL. To begin with, Svjažynski argued that the term "West Russian", first introduced in Russian imperial historiography and still used today by some modern scholars[2], is obsolete and, by identifying Belarusian as a dialect of Great Russian, barely fits the modern paradigm of East Slavic dialect groupings (Žuraŭski 1967, 239, Wexler 1977, 59, Šakun 1994, 531). Svjažynski also opposes the term, initiated by Stang (1935) of 'a Slavic chancery language' (Lith. *kanceliarinė slavų kalba*) (Zinkevičius 1987, 133f., Palionis 1987, 187). While equating this language with the Middle Belarusian literary language (Bel. *starabelaruskaja litaraturna-pis'movaja mova*), Svjažynski (cf. Šakun 1963, 89, Bednarczuk 1994, 114, Dini 1997, 282) refuted the reasoning of those Lithuanian scholars who, adhering to Stang (1935, 163), argue that the East Slavic chancery language was greatly influenced by the spoken language of the inhabitants in the Volhynja region with its center at Luc'k, intermittently under GDL control from 1239 to 1563; their language is currently called 'Polesian' (Polissian) and they consider themselves descendants of the Baltic Yotvingians (Zinkevičius 1987, 117-119, id. 1998, 87)[3]. According to these scholars, later still, in the middle of the 16th c. (the times of Sigismund Augustus) this language changed significantly, since gradually the characteristics of South Belarusian (North Ukrainian) disappeared. Instead, the linguistic traits of central Belarusian dialects became ever more predominant, thus making the chancery language thoroughly Belarusianized. In any case, 'Polesian' was slowly ousted by Polish, which had become the written language of the entire Polish-Lithuanian state by 1697.

Yet, as pointed out by Dini (1997, 281), both 'Slavic chancery language' and 'Middle Belarusian' appear much less satisfactory than was thought in the Soviet period, especially in the light of the ethnic attribution of the East Slavic literary language used in the GDL. Certain details aside, the

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[2] Ivanov (2003, 262f.) has recently made use of the label 'zapadnorusskij (rutenskij) jazyk' to refer to both the written and spoken East Slavic vernacular as cultivated in the GDL and the PLC. This vernacular, according to him, was very close to a "Belarusian subtype of the West Russian dialects", although the latter subdivision hardly fits into the more or less accepted East Slavic dialect grouping (Šaxmatov 1915, 287-288, cf. Šerech [Shevelov] 1953, 91-93). The above usage, however, should be distinguished from a somewhat compromising stance taken by Humec'ka (1958) who, most likely under political pressure in the 1950s, had to retain the Ukrainian equivalent 'zaxidnorus'ka literaturna mova' ('West Russian literary language') to denote a language of those records which are difficult to identify as Ukrainian or Belarusian, inasmuch as they demonstrate both Ukrainian and Belarusian specific features (cf. Aničenka 1969, 15).

[3] For a bibliography on a new West Polissian literary language (*zaxodyšnopolis'ka lytyrac'ka mova/voloda*), as well as a discussion of its West Polissian dialect basis with "obvious features of the Ukrainian language", see Duličenko 2004, 227-259.

attribution of Belarusian may be accepted only from the standpoint of the history of the Belarusian language system, plucked out of 'the Ruthenian context'. All other interpretations tend to bring about twofold confusion. First, Ukrainian and Belarusian features are both likely to reveal themselves at later developmental stages of the East Slavic chancery language, and second, one can easily confuse a written language and its spoken variety (Martel 1938, 41), which has its own internal history, not identical with the external history of the literary standard.

In Western writings, where the term 'prostaja mova' is conventionally translated as 'Ruthenian', and pre-modern Ukrainian- and Belarusian-speaking territories as 'Ruthenia' (Goldblatt 1984, 139, see Martel 1938), the interpretation of the above name may also appear somewhat convoluted, especially if compared with the more transparent designation 'rusьkij jazykъ' (the Rus'ian language)[4]. First of all, the Latin-based form 'Ruthenian', recently transliterated into Russian as 'rutenskij' (= *zapadno-russkij*) (Ivanov 2003, 264, Ivanov, Verkholantsev 2005), is used sometimes indiscriminately in reference to both the 'rusьkij jazykъ' and the 'prostaja mova' (Strumiński 1984, 20-26), thereby blurring chronological and functional borderlands between the literary, linguistic, and cultural traditions of Ukrainians and Belarusians[5]. In fact, labeled by the learned form, the 'Ruthenian' language turns out to be *more easily* attributed to the common patrimony of Ukrainian and Belarusian speakers in the GDL, albeit demonstrating some deviating assessments of its chronology and status[6]. Because it reflects the historical fate of one huge East Slavic

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[4] The adjective *ruskij/rusьkij* is derived from the name *Rus'*, which clearly bears witness to a territorial, ethnographic and religious unit of East Slavic tribes. However, in the 16th c. this name would refer to the Dvina and Dnieper regions as opposed to the Ukraine, Volhynja, the historic Duchy of Samogitia (Pol. *Žmudž*), and Lithuania. It is noteworthy that ethnic Belarusian territories were included in the GDL, especially after the 1569 Lublin Union, while the Kyiv region, Volhynja, Pidljašja, and Podilja were incorporated into the Polish Kingdom (Žuraŭski 1967, 238); cf. "my Velikii koro/l/(ь) vlodislavъ B(ož)ьje m(i)l(o)sti polьskij, litovьskij i ruski, inyxъ mnohixъ zemlь h/o/(s)/uda/rь" (King Władysław Jagiełło's Charter of 1394) (Rozov, 53, Peščak, 123).

[5] The first writer who used the form *Ruthen-* for the *Rus'* was a Polish chronicler, Gallus Anonymus. Since he wrote in the early 12th c., Gallus is likely to have based his choice on the learned forms *Ruten-* (*Rutenorum rex*) as first attested in the "Annales Augustani" under the year 1089 and *Ruthen-* (*Ruthenorum*) which appears in the Annalista Saxo (ca. 1139). Clearly they both originated from the Gallic tribal name in Julius Caesar's "Commentarii de Bello Gallico", that is 'Ruten' (Pritsak 1986, 61, Danylenko 2004, 16). The form *Ruthen-* is retained today in literary traditions of *Slavia romana* and, partly, of *Slavia orthodoxa*, viz., in the Ukrainian-Belarusian territories which were exposed to the influence of the sixteenth-century Western European intellectual revival (Picchio 1984, 10).

[6] Pugh (1996, 2, cf. Dini 1997, 280f.) identified 'ruskij jazykъ' with the Ruthenian language and treated the latter as the uncodified literary language used by East Slavs inhabiting territories now known as "Ukraine" and "Belarus'" from approximately the 14th

linguistic community, Ruthenian can be regarded as the conscious synthesis of Ukrainian and Belarusian characteristic features *per se* (Pugh 1996, 5). Yet the Ruthenian language, especially for the first formative decades, cannot be easily separated into 'Belarusian-Ruthenian' and 'Ukrainian-Ruthenian' in view of its predominantly south-western (Stang 1935, 115, 122, 163) or even northern-central Belarusian dialect basis, inasmuch as at that time there were allegedly no Ukrainian features for such a synthesis, in particular at the GDL chancery in Vil'na (Vilnius) where that administrative language was given shape (Shevelov 1974, 148)[7].

A more balanced picture of the 'prostaja mova' has been outlined by Moser. Without referring to conflicting approaches in the latest Belarusian and Ukrainian publications, Moser (2002, 223) proposes instead a particular "common Middle Ukrainian and Middle Belarusian standard language" (cf. Gumeckaja [Humec'ka] 1965, 39), thus claiming that the assigning of most records to Belarusian or Ukrainian proves to be of little avail. The author (Moser 2002, 223f.) also argued that one could hardly apply the term 'literary' to the above languages, which by that time were not literarily codified, in particular where used primarily for administrative purposes in the 14th to 15th c.

The above argumentation, however, is premised on only one facet of the problem. The point is that one deals here rather with the history of literary tradition, which, in fact, may be treated as one literary process of two peoples, since the Belarusians and most of the Ukrainians, except for Bukovyna and Transcarpathia, lived in essentially one state and adhered to the same religion with the same church language (Shevelov 1974, 146). The other facet of the problem, touched upon in passing by Moser (2002, 222f.), is the place of the 'prostaja mova' in the socio-linguistic landscape of the GDL. True, this language was used as a secular language in contrast to its ecclesiastic (Church Slavonic) counterpart, while Polish enjoyed an ever growing socio-linguistic status after the Union of Lublin (1569). In the case of the Ukrainian lands, the 'prostaja mova' emerged, according to Besters-Dilger (2005, 102), in the linguistic landscape represented by

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c. until into the 18th c. In the English-language abstract to his article on the 'prostaja mova', Moser (2002, 221) used the term *Ruthenian* to denote the chancery language, which, having become heavily polonized, had given way to the 'prostaja mova' as a language standard, used in the 16th to 17th c.

[7] It should be noted that, according to Shevelov (1974), the Ukrainian element as posited by Stang (1935, 26, 50) for the chancery language used in northern Belarusian lands or Lithuania proper, was of minor importance because the trend was discontinued after the late 15th c. Yet in his seminal "Historical Phonology of the Ukrainian Language", Shevelov (1979, 399-401) further argued that the secular language used in the 14th c. to the early 15th c. in the GDL was basically Ukrainian, with Polissian features, an assumption which looks more in tune with the latest hypothesis of Mojsijenko (2003), see section 4.

three factors: Church Slavonic of the Ukrainian recension ("das Ukrai-
nisch-Kirchenslavische"), the Ukrainian-Belarusian chancery language
("die ukrainisch-weißrussische Kanzleisprache") as used in the GDL, and
the Middle Ukrainian vernacular ("die mittelukrainische Volkssprache").
This is why, according to Besters-Dilger (ib., 103, cf. Pljušč 1971, 239), the
'prostaja mova' may be viewed as an amalgam of Ukrainian, Belarusian,
and Church Slavonic, with Polish adding a strong twofold – socio-cultural
and linguistic – influence.

In this respect, one should also bear in mind no less intricate relation-
ships between the 'prostaja mova' and other languages spoken in the
GDL. To illustrate them, one can name Lithuanian and north-eastern
borderland Polish (*północno-wschodnia polszczyzna kresowa*) (see Kurzowa
1993, Pihan-Kijasowa 1999), Jewish and Karaite communal dialects
(Wexler 1973), various minor languages and dialects used in the GDL
(Bednarczuk 1994, Dini 1997, 279-288, Ivanov 2003), and Tatar. The
Lithuanian Tatars wrote down early religious and secular (folkloric) texts
in Arabic script in East Slavic (see section 3.2.1). The Tatar texts, along
with the literary output of other non-Slavic peoples, were excluded by
Moser (2002, 230; for a modified view, see Moser 2005, 140) from his dis-
cussion of the 'prostaja mova', since these texts were consumed, according
to him, primarily within confessional and ethnic minorities, which adopt-
ed Belarusian as the main means of communication.

Leaving aside a detailed discussion of this problem (cf. Danylenko
2006), it becomes clear, however, that language phenomena, as discern-
able especially in early manuscripts of Lithuanian Tatars, are of utmost im-
portance not only for the ethno-linguistic attribution of the 'prostaja
mova', used by Slavic and non-Slavic speakers, but for the description of its
system (see section 4). Due to the limited (intracommunal) communi-
cation scope of the 'prostaja mova', it is tempting to argue that the literary
output of Lithuanian Tatars might represent rather a spoken medium of
the standard language, although most of their texts were primarily writ-
ten in a (codified) vernacular of the learned milieu (Stang 1935, 126).

Despite the territorial uniformity of the standard language in the late
14th through 17th c., revealing in some cases either predominantly Ukrai-
nian or Belarusian features, there appears to be no unity in spoken lan-
guage. The standard of the 'prostaja mova' was likely to be based less on an
agglomeration of specific dialect features (Ukrainian or Belarusian), than
on a particular configuration, or dialect pattern. Therefore, whoever
studies the history of either the Ukrainian or Belarusian language should
not be deceived by the relative uniformity of the Ruthenian written
language (Shevelov 1974, 149). The latter was used not only in original
texts but also in translations from different languages (e.g., Polish, Czech,

Hebrew, Greek), which were prepared by speakers with various educational and cultural backgrounds (see Besters-Dilger 2005, 103).

It follows that the ethno-linguistic attribution of Ruthenian texts is vital for furthering our understanding of the ‘prostaja mova’, in particular of what is conventionally called its *dignitas* and *norm* (Picchio 1984, 2f., Frick 1985, 25-28). In their turn, these humanistic concepts are closely related to the differentiation of ‘prostaja mova’ and ‘rusьkij jazykъ’, thereby serving as a background for the reconstruction of a dialect basis of the Ruthenian literary standard, probed diachronically.

3. Socio-linguistic background of the ‘prostaja mova’
3.1. ‘Rusьkij jazykъ’ vs. ‘prostaja mova’: construing a functional (stylistic) continuum

‘Rusьkij jazykъ’ (Rus’ian) and ‘prostaja mova’ (Ruthenian), although incorrectly equated in most scholarly writings (Šakun 1963, 88-90, Tolstoj 1988, 71, cf. Pljušč 1962, 93, Uspenskij 2002[^{1}1987], 389), were also sometimes distinguished from one another (Pljušč 1971, 63f., 140): the former was conceived of as the actual language of administration and the latter as the language primarily of confessional literature. Based on chronological and functional argumentation, Miakiszew (2000) proposed to treat the above two systems as separate languages with their own sets of features and stylistic viability. According to this theory, the East Slavic literary tradition of the Middle period falls into two time spans, roughly from the late 14th to the early 16th c., and from the 16th to the end of the 17th c., which are covered correspondingly by the terms ‘rusьkij jazykъ’ and ‘prostaja mova’ (cf. Rusanivs’kyj 2001, 61, 64).

The view of Miakiszew tends to disrupt the continuity of the uniform literary tradition shared by Ukrainians and Belarusians in the Polish-Lithuanian state. In fact, this theory entails an extra language program, scarcely supported by the written records of that time. It is true that the ‘rusьkij jazykъ’ had long been in use in the ducal chanceries before the appearance of literary works written in the ‘prostaja mova’. Still, authors writing in (making use of some elements of) the ‘prostaja mova’, would often call their language ‘rusьkij jazykъ’, as is the case with Francysk Skaryna’s “Bivlija ruska” (1516-1519) and its Ukrainian copy of 1568 made by Vasyl’ Žuhaj in Galicia[8], and Vasilij Tjapinskij’s [Vasil’ Cjapinski] “Hom-

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[8] Žuhaj copied several of Skaryna’s Old Testament books, e.g., Job, Ecclesiastes, The Proverbs of Solomon, Wisdom of Solomon, retaining most of their phonetic, morphological, and lexical features (Aničenka 1969, 136-141). He introduced, however, some obvious Ukrainian forms, e. g., *dotolě* and *tyžъ* in place of *dotule* ‘until’ and *teže* ‘also’, substituted *i*-forms for those with the Belarusian *e* in place of the etymological *ě*: *sviditilь* (~ *svidetelь*) ‘witness’, *priixalь* (~ *priexalъ*) ‘to arrive’ (m. sg. pret.), *ixalь* (~ *exalъ*) ‘to go,

ilary Gospel" of 1570/1580 (Vladimirov 1989[¹1888], 30f., 220, Žuraŭski 1967, 113-116), with the introduction written in a clumsy style with a plethora of polonisms (Dovnar-Zapol'skij 1899, 1034f.). There is also 'rečъ russkaja' as attested in the 16th c. (Žytec'kyj 1941, 1) and, finally, 'dialektъ rossijskij', mentioned by Petro Mohyla in the dedication of the "Homilary Gospel" of 1637 (Titov, 329, 337)[9]. A similar identification of the 'prostaja mova' with the 'rusьkij jazykъ' is discernable in the colophon made by the scribe of the "Peresopnycja Gospel" (1556-1561): "Ju(ž) za pomoču B/o/ži-jeju maješ vsě zuplъna vypisanyi knihy četyre(x) ev/an/(h)/e/listovъ, vy-loženyi izъ jazyka blъharskoho na movu ruskuju čitaču milyi", that is, 'With God's help, you, my dear reader, have now all books, written by the four evangelists, already translated from Bulgarian [Church Slavonic] into the Rus'ian language' (PG, 481v).

More arresting in this respect is a twofold identification of the language used in those genres (polemic and homiletic texts, grammars, dictionaries and other philological works), which are best known to have been pri-marily assigned to the more elevated 'prostaja mova'. To name but a few examples, Lavrentij Zizanij mentions in the foreword to his "Vocabulary": "rečenię […] iz slove/n/skaho jazyka, na prosty ruskij dięle/k/tъ istolko-vany" (Zizanij, 23) 'expressions [which are] from the Church Slavonic into the common Rus'ian vernacular translated'. A similar, combined designa-tion is found in Meletij Smotryc'kyj's preface to the second edition of the "Homilary Gospel" (Vevis, 1616) (Karskij 1921, 38), where he cites 'jazykъ prostyj ruskij' (1x) 'common Rus'ian language', even 'podlějšyj i prostejšyj jazykъ' (1x) 'most vulgar and most common language' along with a term more regular for this text, 'ruskij jazykъ' 'Rus'ian language' (HG 1616, 21)[10].

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travel' (m. sg. pret.); he also changed some spellings in the spirit of the Euthymian orthography, such as word-final *ь*, the use of *ο, omega*, etc. (Shevelov 1979, 400).

[9] A more consistent use of the designation 'common' by (or in the name of) the Grand Hetman of Lithuania Hryhorij Xodkevyč [Hryhory Xadkevič] in the preface to the Church Slavonic edition of the "Homilary Gospel" published in Zabludov (Zablu-daŭ) in 1569: "Pomyslilъ že bylъ esmi i se, iže by siju knihu, vyrazuměnija radi prosty/x/ ljudej, preložiti na prostuju molvu, i imělъ esmi o to/m/ popečenie velikoe" (Karataev 1883, 165, cf. Vladimirov 1989[¹1888], 31, Žytec'kyj 1941, 2, Karskij 1962[¹1897], 253); for an English translation, see Frick (1985, 44): 'I had given thought to translating this book into the vulgar tongue for the sake of its being understood by the simple people, and I was concerned about this'. In fact, the translator/scribe of this Gospel seems to have been more consistent in applying the designation 'common' to the ethno-linguistic cliché used in other Ruthenian texts, e.g., "k naučeniju ljudemъ pospolitymъ ruskaho jazyka" in Francysk Skaryna's Bible of 1517-1519; see a similar de-dication in the Catechism published in Nesvěž in 1562 (Karataev 1883, 41, 139).

[10] Rather tentatively, Frick (1994, 220) adduces another explanation of this designa-tion, thereby claiming that Smotryc'kyj might have called this 'lingua vulgaris' crude.

It is instructive, by way of extrapolation, to place the above twofold designation in the context of both the Reformation argument for 'intelligibility' and the Counter-Reformation concerns about determining the limits for the permissible use of a common vernacular (Frick 1985, 33f.). Accordingly, the designation 'prostyj' 'common' is to be viewed as part of a new, 'democratic' response of Smotryc'kyj in his new edition of the Gospel, designed to serve as something of a *postille* among the Orthodox East Slavs of the PLC in the 17th c., to the older Slavonic versions of the "Homilary Gospel", which by that time had become unintelligible from the viewpoint of language. The designation 'prostyj' is used by Smotryc'-kyj within a wider context of the common tongue, viewed almost at a similar level of *dignitas* as Slavonic, Greek and Latin. Slavonic, forming a sort of trinity of sacral languages with Greek and Latin, was also newly codified by Smotryc'kyj, while partly adapting his version of Church Slavonic (*slavenorosskyj*) to the intricacies of Greek Grammar and partly leaning upon Latin grammars then current in Poland (Shevelov 1979, 568). The opposite end of the scale of *dignitas* is marked by the designation 'rusьkij', conceived as a term bridging Polish with the ethnic label 'rusьkij' of the common ('prostyj') language. Like Polish, the latter was used by the Orthodox Ruthenians in interpretation and explanation for the benefit of the less learned, since both Polish and the 'jazykъ prostyj ruskij' possess the quality which makes them suitable for polemic purposes (Goldblatt 1984, 142, Frick 1985, 36).

A seeming equation of the two designations in Smotryc'kyj appears not incidental. While demonstrating a more intricate relationship between linguistic concepts in disputes over the so-called 'third Church Slavonic language question' (Picchio 1984, 12-22, Goldblatt 1984, 139-143), the designations 'prostyj' and 'rusьkij', though used in parallel, could hardly be viewed as synonyms (cf. Bolek 1983, 28). It is profitable to explain the relationship between the above designations in terms of a functional (stylistic) ethno-linguistic continuum, marked by different levels of *dignitas*, which are sometimes vaguely determined. The one end is covered by Slavonic, with the full *dignitas* of a sacred and apostolic language. The intermediate point is marked by the 'prostaja mova', which as a vulgar tongue may be used under new conditions for secular and religious (apostolic) purposes (Uspenskij 2002[¹1987], 400). This is why, with the newly acquired *dignitas* of the 'prostaja mova', Kyrylo Trankvillion-Stavrovec'kyj resorted in his "Zercalo Bohoslovija" (Kyiv, 1618) to haphazard use of two languages ('prosty jazykъ i slovenskij') instead of only one vulgar tongue (Žytec'kyj 1941, 5), inasmuch as "some difficult words of the Slavonic lan-

This interpretation seems though less plausible in view of Smotryc'kyj's vision of the Ruthenian vulgar tongue as reconstructed, incidentally, by Frick (1985) himself.

guage are not easy to understand even in the vulgar [translation]" (Stru-
miński 1984, 30f.)[11]. Finally, the opposite end of such a continuum is
marked by the 'rusькij jazykъ', primarily an administrative language
which, lacking both primordial and newly-acquired *dignitas*, as well as a
well-established rhetorical *norm*, could hardly serve, except for some
exceptions, as a language for church and literature[12].

Too fuzzy as it may appear, this functional (stylistic) continuum is like-
ly to reveal smaller degrees of representation of the quality of 'common-
ness', as in Smotryc'kyj's "podlějšyj i prostejšyj jazykъ". Different (stylistic)
degrees of 'commonness' are also discernable in such designations as "dia-
lektъ rossijskij prostrannyj" 'a widespread Russian [= Rus'ian] language' in
the preface of the Hieromonach of the Kyiv Cave Monastery Tarasij
Zemka to the "Triodь Cvětnaja" (Pentekostarion) of 1631 (Titov, 251) and
"*barzo* 'prostaja mova' *i dialektъ*" 'very common vernacular and language'
in the "Homilary Gospel" written down in 1670 by the priest Semion
Timofěevič from a small village, Rešetylivka (west of Poltava)
(Žiteckij[Žytec'kyj] 1905, 54f.). All in all, a range of degrees of
commonness is open, depending on the genre of a particular text and its
stylistic load.

The above continuum has two external, or disrupted poles which,
nevertheless, tend not to break away from the main scale. One of these
poles is represented by two sacred and apostolic languages, Greek and
Latin. The opposite external pole is covered by Polish as a language with
intelligibility, analogous to the so-called 'jazykъ prostyj rusькij'. To render
stylistic nuances, one is likely to bridge external poles with the main scale,
in which case switches from the Church Slavonic and Polish codes to the
common code, represented by a so-called 'Ruthenian vernacular standard'
(Goldblatt 1991, 12), and the way around, appeared quite possible. Suffice
it to mention a common practice in the Late Middle Ages to translate
from Church Slavonic ("izъ języka blъharskoho na movu ruskuju") and
Polish ("s polskaho jazyka na rečъ ruskuju") into Rus'ian (Žytec'kyj 1941,
1), as well as the existence of two varieties of the 'vernacular standard',

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[11] Trankvillion-Stavrovec'kyj's stance fits well into the linguistic program of Smotryc'-
kyj, who perceived the 'prostaja mova' as a mixed language belonging to the same gen-
eral system of linguistic conventions as Church Slavonic. This is why, in order to make
up for the 'prostaja mova's' limited expressive capabilities, a varying amount of Slavonic
could be added (Frick 1985, 43).

[12] Similar lines of reasoning can be found in Tolstoj (1998, 61, 71), who argued that
there were no clear-cut boundaries between manifold transitional manifestations of the
language standard, as used in the Ukrainian and Belarusian territories in the late 16th
through the 17th c., from Church Slavonic to the Polish language, while the inter-
mediate (transitional) zone was covered by the 'prostaja mova' created "for the common
people of the Rus'ian nation" (*dlja prostyx ljudej jazyka russkoho*) (cf. Karskij 1962[¹1897],
260).

viz., the Ukrainian variety, closer to Church Slavonic, and the Belarusian, which was more Polonized (Žuraŭski 1967, 226, Uspenskij 2002[¹1987], 391). The Slavonicized Ukrainian variety is clearly visible in Hryhorij Hrabjanka's "Chronicle" (1710), in which Church Slavonic became an emphatic stylistic device (Shevelov 1979, 576f.). The polonized Belarusian basis is found in the "Historical Notes" written by Fjodar Eŭlašoŭski (late 16th or early 17th c.), who liberally used Polish morphosyntactic patterns (Eŭlašoŭski), thereby straying from the norm of the 'prostaja mova' (see section 4). A similar extent of interference is traceable in the "Diariuš" of Afanasij Fylypovyč from Berestja (a copy of 1646), a text, which shows unmistakable features of Ukrainian as spoken in that area (Shevelov 1979, 578, Koršunov 1965, 181). Treated by Aničenka (1969, 149) as Belarusian, these features tend to be identified rather as West Polissian (the Berestja-Pinsk dialects). To adduce several examples: a few attestations of *akanne*, non-consistent dispalatalization of *r'*, the use of unstressed *e* in place of the etymological *ę*, the prevailing use of *e* in place of *ě*. These features seem to be retained, to an even larger extent, in a later, Ukrainian copy of the 18th c., made presumably by a scribe coming from somewhere "in the borderland between Belarus' and Ukraine" (Koršunov 1965, 181)[13]. Remarkably, the Ukrainian copy shows Polissian features even in those places where they are not found in the copy of 1646, e.g., full nominative-accusative plurals of feminine adjectives of the type *ljudskoe* 'human', *pravoslavnoe* 'orthodox' and others, which are traditionally considered to be Belarusian borrowings into Ukrainian, especially in its administrative writings (Aničenka 1969, 126f., 149-154).

Vis-à-vis the unintelligibility of Greek and Church Slavonic among the common people ("foolish" Orthodox Rus') of that time (Žytec'kyj 1941, 6, Frick 1994), it is instructive to note the appearance of parallel texts, written and printed in both Church Slavonic and Ruthenian (Tolstoj 1988, 64f.). Remarkably, such parallel texts were found in both Protestant and Orthodox polemical writings. Among the reformers, one usually cites Vasilij Tjapinskij's [Vasil' Cjapinski] "Homilary Gospel", a translation made in two languages ("dvema jezyky za raz") from the 1572 version of Symon Budny, a first literary record of this type (Vladimirov 1989[¹1888], 2, Dovnar-Zapol'skij 1899, 1033, Žuraŭski 1967, 227), although books with parallel texts were also particularly in favor with the Orthodox authors. To name but a few well-known records, one should cite "Lekcii slovenskie Zlatoustaho otъ besědъ evanhelьskix otъ iereja Nalivajka vybranie"

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[13] As the scholarly tradition suggests, Koršunov (ib.) was quick to identify these features as "orthographic Ukrainianisms", while the whole text, according to him, revealed an "unsystematic mixture of Ukrainian orthography with the Belarusian".

(ca. 1580)[14], "Testamentъ […] Vasilija cesara kgreckoho" in "Lěkarstvo na ospalyj umyslъ čolověčij" (Ostrih, 1607) (Karataev 1883, 309f., Peretc 1926, 50-72, Aničenka 1969, 112f.), as well as other four texts, prepared in Ostrih in the late 16th and early 17th c. (Besters-Dilger 2005, 106). One should also mention the "Triodь Postnaja" (Triodion) (Kiev, 1627) which was translated from Nikifor Kalista's "Synaksarion" by Tarasij Zemka in Ostrih (see Titov, 178). From the point of view of its stylistic viability, Church Slavonic, in its newly codified version of Meletij Smotryc'kyj, could be used in a colloquial discourse, as demonstrated by the "Rozmova/ Besěda", a translation by Ivan Uževyč of the popular "Berlaimont-Collo-quia" in the 17th c. into the 'lingua popularis' (Ruthenian) and 'lingua sacra' (Church Slavonic) (Bunčić, Keipert 2005). This phrasebook seems to reflect not so much "a particular ideal of spoken usage of the *prostaja mova*" (Moser 2002, 238) as a certain degree of colloquial perception of the 'slavenorosskij (slavenorossijskij) jazykъ' under new conditions (Titov, 74, 251, 337, cf. Uspenskij 2002[¹1987], 400).

From the above follows another type of parallelism, which is best represented by liberally published Polish-Ruthenian texts, in particular of the Holy Scriptures and writings of Holy Fathers, lives of Saints, in the late 16th to the early 17th c. (Tolstoj 1988, 67). In the case of "Kazanьe svjatoho Kirilla Patriarъxi ierusalimъskoho […] / Kazanie ś. Cyrylla Patry-archy Ierozolimskiego […]" (1596) by Stefan Zizanij (Karskij 1921, 39f., Martel 1938, 119, 133), or the Volhynian Arian Valentyn Nehalevs'kyj's [Niegaliewski] Ruthenian translation from the Polish Gospel in 1581, which the Calvinist Marcin Czechowić had published in Cracow in 1577, one can speak about a direct transliteration from Roman (Latin-based) into Cyrillic script (Žytec'kyj 1941, 2, Frick 1994, 213, Rusanivs'kyj 2001, 87), with only slight changes in phonetic correspondences, while retaining stable East Slavic morphology (Tolstoj 1988, 63) and revealing some local features. Not numerous but rather telling examples are found in the Orthodox "Apokrisisъ albo otpovědь na knyžky o sъborě berestejskom" (Ostrih, 1598-1599). Its Polish original, written by a certain Xristofor Filalet in 1597, appeared in Cracow in 1597-1598 and immediately after that was translated (transliterated) into Ruthenian by an anonymous author from the circle of Prince Konstjantyn Ostroz'kyj (Besters-Dilger 2005, 88): e.g., Pol. *slinka* 'saliva', *zmierzamy* 'measure' (1 pl. pres.), *omyłka*

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[14] Following Koperžinskij (1928), Besters-Dilger (2005, 89, 91) has recently argued that, from the viewpoint of its content, paleography and textology, the text of "Lekcii slovenskie" may date back to the early 17th c., most likely to 1607, the year when "Lě-karstvo na ospalyj umyslъ čolověčij", also authored by Dem'jan Nalyvajko, was pub-lished in Ostrih. Besters-Dilger also provided a brief description of the linguistic traits of "Lekcii slovenskie" (ib., 134-141), although she omitted some interesting forms like the pronoun/conjunction *ščo*, sorted out by Koperžinskij (1928, 382, 383) as a Ukrainianism.

'mistake', *zamilczywa* 'to quiet' (3 sg. pres.) next to Ruth. *słynka, měrimo, pomylka, zamovčujetъ* ("Apokrisisъ", 1013f., 1023f.; see also Žytec'kyj 1941, 113). Thus, Filalet's and Nehalevs'kyj's translations and other vernacular publications are hardly more than paraphrases in such cases, with confessional bias in the wording of the text and, even more, in the glosses and comments (Nazarevskij 1911, 24, 25f.). All in all, Orthodox Ruthenian authors of this period seemed to be more concerned about script than *jazykъ/mova*, viz., the ritual and symbolic façade rather than the verbal means of communication (Strumiński 1984, 21).

3.2. Languages or styles?

The 'rusькij jazykъ' and the 'prostaja mova' can therefore hardly be regarded as two separate languages (cf. Miakiszew 2000). While leaning on Uspenskij (2002, 391), Moser (2002, 227f., fn. 15) argued that Ruthenian is "but a special variety of the *rusькaja mova/rusькij jazyk*". From his point of view, this 'variety' may be treated as a chronological continuation of the 'rusькij jazykъ', thereby appearing as a manifestation of the common "Middle Ukrainian and Middle Belarusian language" (ib., 221). The latter interpretation seems to be in tune with the traditional approach, maintaining that the 'rusькij jazykъ' was a particular *koiné* used by both Ukrainians and Belarusians in the 14th to 16th c., while the 'prostaja mova' heralded the appearance of a new literature, characterized by a far larger number of new and sophisticated genres (Pjušč 1971, 140f.).

With an eye to breaking the above chronological circle, I propose instead to treat the 'rusькij jazykъ' and the 'prostaja mova' as stylistic varieties of one East Slavic vernacular standard inherited from the times of Kyivan Rus' (Rusanivs'kyj 2001, 60f.). The main difference seems to lie in what genres were covered by which language/style: the 'rusькij jazykъ' was used primarily in administration, while the 'prostaja mova' in "more elevated genres", e.g., polemical and theological writings, poetry, grammars, primers, chronicles, etc. (Shevelov 1979, 572-580). Vis-à-vis the functional continuum, as discussed in section 3.1, the two languages/ styles, revealing various Ukrainian and/or Belarusian features, as well as various Slavonic and Polish admixtures[15], appear to be two stylistic realizations of the quality of 'commonness', covered by Smotryc'kyj's label

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[15] Viewed statistically, some texts, written either in the 'rusькij jazykъ' or the 'prostaja mova' can be identified as 'Ukrainian-Ruthenian' or 'Belarusian-Ruthenian' in view of a particular number of features characteristic of Ukrainian and Belarusian *per se* (Pugh 1996, 5); moreover, one can posit other possible combinations of the constituents like 'Ruthenian-Ukrainian', 'Ruthenian-Belarusian' or 'Polish-Ruthenian', 'Polish-Belarusian', or 'Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian', commonly labeled by Polish slavists 'połnocno-wschodnia polszczyzna kresowa' (Kurzowa 1993), that is, north-eastern borderland Polish.

'jazykъ prostyj ruskij'. Though conceived as the administrative language, the 'rusьkij jazykъ' was also introduced into learned literature, in particular in theological texts (Ohijenko 1995 [¹1949], 103-111). To adduce but a few examples, one can mention the Rus'ian chronicles, written in the GDL essentially in a language mix of Church Slavonic and Belarusian, or the Supraslensis 'short' chronicle, which shows some Rus'ian features of the original under later layers originating from a Belarusian or Russian copyist. Other examples are "Ljucidarъ" (Lucidarius), a Belarusian copy of a Rus'ian-Ukrainian translation from Czech (1636) (Karskij 1962[¹1905], 522), and the "Četьja", lives of Saints (Menaion) and a didactic anthology, written in 1489 in Kamjanec' on the Losna, north-east of Berestja, by two scribes of whom the first was probably Belarusian, the second from Berestja or Pidljašja area (Aničenka 1969, 96, Shevelov 1979, 403f.).

3.2.1. The 'rus'k'ij jezik' of Lithuanian Tatar 'kitabs'

Of utmost importance for our case is the literary output of Lithuanian (Belarusian) Tatars[16]. Having given up their native language but retained Turco-Arabic script, they adopted as early as the 15th c. an East Slavic vernacular, based either on Belarusian or Ukrainian dialects (Danylenko 2006). As newly-minted Slavic speakers, for whom the Arabic of the Qur'an was almost incomprehensible, the Lithuanian Tatars set up in fact a new orthographic system called commonly 'arabica', based largely on phonetic principles. They were likely then to speak the same Slavic vernacular as the Christian populace either in Belarusian (Navahrudak, Mensk [Minsk], Ašmjany districts) or Ukrainian (Žytomyr, Ostrih, Ovruč, and Kyiv districts) ethnic territories, all enumerated in the Polish Constitution of 1659.

What is more remarkable for our discussion is that Lithuanian Tatars themselves identified their language as Rus'ian. Thus, the compiler of a Lithuanian Tatar 'kitab' of 1631 wrote: "ja xōdīna s'ujū knihū is fars'ijskōhō i s tureckōhō jazika na rus'k'ij jezik perelōžil" (41a), that is, 'I, Xodyna, translated this book from the Persian and Turkish languages into the Rus'ian language' (Miškinene, 2001, 101)[17]. Moreover, their literary out-

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[16] A classical survey of Lithuanian Tatar texts and their language is offered in Antonovič (1968); some aspects were later elaborated by G.M. Meredith-Owens and Aleksander Nadson, Shirin Akiner, Czesław Łapicz, Paul Suter and other scholars; yet before Suter (2004), and especially Danylenko (2006), no studies have ever been devoted to the place of the Slavic vernacular, used by Lithuanian Tatars, in the formation of the 'prostaja mova'.

[17] For this citation, Latin-based characters are substituted for Miškinene's Cyrillic transliteration. It would be interesting to mention here the existence of Jewish minority communities in the GDL. According to Wexler (1993, 56f.; id. 1973, 45), there are indications that some Belarusian Jewish communities at one time, especially before the

put, especially religious writings containing interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, shows that Lithuanian Tatars were not actively engaged in polemics with the Christians, defending their own virtues and religion, which were sometimes unjustly chastised, as in the notorious Polish-language "Alfurkan tatarski" by a Polish author under the pseudonym of Piotr Czyżewski[18]. While using Polish along with the 'rus'k'ij jezik'[19], Muslim writers were in fact searching for similarities between different *Weltanschauungen* as encoded in Christianity and Islam, thus unconsiously contributing to the codification of this Slavic language[20].

All the above shows that the Slavic vernacular, attested in early Lithuanian Tatar manuscripts (mainly, 'kitabs') from the mid-17th c., or even earlier, was not a mere communal language used within the ethnic minority only. It is not therefore incidental that their 'rus'k'ij jezik' demonstrates features shared by other Rus'ian speakers in the GDL, and they are the following: 1. if unstressed, *ě* realized as *e*, 2. the syllabization of *r*, 3. the *e* reflex of *ę* in unstressed positions, 4. the *o* reflex after the palatals, 5. the dispalatalization of *r'* (with the *rj* reflex in a crossing zone of sharping and non-sharping dialects) and some other morphological and

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arrival of Yiddish-speaking Jews from Germany and Poland, used an Eastern Slavic dialect exclusively and knew no Yiddish, since these Ashkenazic Jews were predominantly of Slavic, and secondary of other Indo-European, origins. There is evidence of a monolingual (Slavicized) Jewish community in the oft-quoted statement of a Mahiljoŭ rabbi in 1648 that many Jews speak the "language of Russia [Rus']" (ib., 45). However, only circumstantial information is available to determine the existence of a distinct 'Judaeo-Belarusian' or 'Judaeo-Eastern Slavic' communal dialect for that early period. The latter is represented in the so-called Codex No. 262, a calque translation of the Bible, presumably made in the late 15th or early 16th c. This text, however, seems to be less important than most Lithuanian Tatar writings. The fact, that the translation is preserved in Cyrillic rather than Hebrew script, the traditional medium of Jewish calque translations, may suggest that this particular manuscript may have been intended for some Judaizing sects (Lastoŭski 1926, 242). Even if it was designed for a Christian readership (Wexler 1988, 13), we can disregard it for our purpose in view of scarcity of the relevant data (Shevelov 1979, 579).

[18] The text was written most likely by a Catholic, in fact, a Jesuit; for a recent discussion of this work, see Suter 2004, 17-21.

[19] The two languages were complimentary distributed with regard to specific genres. Suter (2004, 43f.) rightly stated that Polish was used by Lithuanian Tatars primarily in confessional writings, viz., in the so-called 'tefsir', a book of the Qur'an written in Arabic with an interlinear translation in the vernacular (in all known cases, in Polish). The 'rusьkyj jazykъ', commonly identified with Middle Belarusian, was used in all other types of Muslim texts, first and foremost in the 'kitab', a collection of ritual prescriptions, stories and moral precepts, apocrypha and other narratives (see Szynkiewicz 1935).

[20] Introducing some biblical motifs into the Islamic works was quite common among Lithuanian Tatars. Drozd (1997, 22) mentioned one of the Muslim polemic works, which begins with Qur'anic verses and then gives a description of heaven, excerpted from Symon Budny's "Biblia nieświeska" (1572), followed by some references to Maciej Stryjkowski's "Chronicle" (1582).

lexical features, i.e., a plethora of Polonisms and orientalisms (Danylenko 2006)[21]. Besides, their language might have undergone a similar level of normalization. It comes as no surprise that the Belarusian *cekanne* and *dzekanne* were not reflected in Lithuanian Tatar texts (Wexler 1977, 169); not reflected either was the Ukrainian non-sharping of consonants before *e* and the change *o > u* in the newly closed syllables, although one might expect the above features to be retained in a text generated primarily on the basis of a spoken vernacular (Antonovič 1968, 110, 128, 209f.).

All features considered, one can legitimately assume that the Lithuanian Tatar 'rus'k'ij jezik' tended to demonstrate in that time a solid configuration of Polissian features (see Danylenko 2006).

3.2.2. The functional distribution of the 'rusьkij jazykъ' and the 'prostaja mova'

Since the erosion of Polissian dialects into (South) Belarusian and (North) Ukrainian proper was in progress, it is not surprising to find them in texts which are commonly treated as Middle Belarusian (Shevelov 1974, 152) and written in the 'rusьkij jazykъ', thus demonstrating allegedly a lower level of normalization as compared with the 'prostaja mova'. Indeed, Polissian features are found in such sixteenth-century tales as "Bova and Tristan", translated from Serbian, "Attila", translated from Polish, and "Troy", translated from a South Slavic original (Veselovskij 1888, 125-131, Peretc 1926, 105, Žuraŭski 1967, 264f.)[22]. Belarusian, and specifically Polissian, features also prevail in the works of the Judaizers, available primarily in later sixteenth-century Russian copies; there is a more sizable portion of Ukrainian traits in the Book of Esther[23]; however, "Tajnaja

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[21] In an interlude to an anonymous play, "Władysław Jagiełło", first staged in 1663, a Tatar speaks a Slavic vernacular demonstrating both Ukrainian and Belarusian features, which can be tentatively treated for this case as Polissian, cf. "szczo heto za puk […]", 'what kind of a knock is this' (Peretc 1905, 92).

[22] These texts seem to reflect not simply a kind of cosmopolitan literary *gusto* of the translator-compiler of the Poznan manuscript, containing the above-mentioned translated tales, but also to a rather well-defined literary process characterized by transition from interest in South Slavic traditions to Polish themes. Glosses and occasional comments made by readers of this manuscript testify that they were primarily interested in the tale about Attila and the Lithuanian chronicle, while the Serbian tales seemed to be neglected (Veselovskij 1888, 129).

[23] As a matter of fact, this text, as was determined by Sobolevskij (1903, 399), does not fit into the "Literature of the Judaizers", since its oldest copies go back to the late 14th c., thus preceding the emergence of the Novgorod-Moscow heresy in 1470, which was subsequently eradicated by Archbishop Gennadij of Novgorod, Iosif Sanin (known to English readers as Iosif Volockij), and Metropolitan Daniil. The Book of Esther belongs to the first group of the corpus of Ruthenian translations made by learned Ruthenian Jews (Taube 2005, 189f.). Although translated from (Judeo-)Greek, not from

tajnyxъ" (also known as "Aristotelevy vrata")[24], reveals a mix of Polonisms, Belarusianisms, and Church Slavonicisms (Shevelov 1974, 152, cf. Žuraŭski 1967, 96), and "Šestokrylъ" (in a sixteenth-century copy from the Xolm manuscript) which shows some typical Ukrainian features[25].

Unlike the 'rusьkij jazykъ', which was used up to 1645, the 'prostaja mova' knew but a short period of flourishing, from the mid-16th c. to 1597, when the first Orthodox work in Polish appeared. Remarkably, from 1605 onward the bulk of Ruthenian polemical writings were in Polish, and from 1628 on Polish was the only language used in the religious polemics (Martel 1938, 142). The 'prostaja mova' was no longer admitted into the texts of the Holy Scriptures by the time of the religious polemics[26] nor, in principle, into the learned genres of poetry and drama, fostered in colleges and at the Kyiv Academy, founded as a fraternity school in 1615 (Shevelov 1979, 566f.). In this respect, it is worthwhile mentioning that the Catholics initially seemed to understand better than the Orthodox the need for the use of the 'prostaja mova' in church literature and devotional practice. Already in his pamphlet "On the Unity of the Church of God" (Vil'na, 1577; revised version, Cracow, 1590), the Polish Jesuit Piotr Skarga recognized the benefits of a well-defined use of the Ruthenian vulgar tongue alongside Polish, and saw one of the failures of

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Hebrew (Altbauer and Taube 1984), this text shares with other Ruthenian translations some common linguistic traits, especially in phonetics and lexicon.

[24] The oldest copy of the Ruthenian translation of Pseudo-Aristotle's text dates back to the mid-16th c., and not to the 15th c., as was assumed by Taube (2005, 189); the Ruthenian translation belongs to the second group of the "Literature of the Judaizers", according to Taube's classification. Most of Ruthenian translations belonging to this group underwent some degree of russification when copied and glossed in Muscovy and Novgorod.

[25] This text is a translation from Hebrew of Emmanuel Bar Yaakov Bonfils' "Six Wings" (Taube 2005, 189); the Ruthenian text, found in the Xolm collection of the 16th c., was popular among the Russian heretics (Sobolevskij 1903, 413-419). Among Ukrainian features in this text, one can mention the coalescence of *i* and *y* in *droblixъ* next to *droblyxъ* 'fraction' (gen. pl.) (414), the use of -*a* in singular neuters like *ponovlenьja* 'renewal', *protivlenьja* 'opposition' (415), the conjunction *ščo* next to *što* 'that' (415), forms like *město*, *městco* 'place' (415) or *vsěxъ* 'all' (gen. pl.) (414); in the text, there are also some Church Slavonicisms which compete, however, with parallel vernacular forms: *ašče xoščeši* (413) vs. *ašče xoščešь* (415) and *koli xoščešь* (414) 'whether you wish'; one finds also a number of Polonisms like *podlugъ* 'according' (415) and Belarusian forms, e.g., *vkažomъ* 'to point out' (1 pl. fut.) (416). Another text, entitled by Sobolevskij (ib., 409-413) "Cosmography", which is in fact a translation of Johannes de Sacrobosco's "Book of the Sphere" (Taube 2005, 189), is replete with Polonisms, e.g., *vsaksa* 'any' (412), *podlugъ* next to Rus'ian *podle* 'according', and Belarusian forms like *kažnyj* (m. sg.) (410, 411) and *kažnaa* (sg. f.) 'every, each'. Both translations belong to the second group of Ruthenian translations, according to Taube's classification.

[26] Chronologically, Nehalevs'kyj's Ruthenian translation from the Polish Arian Gospel seems to be the latest attempt to adapt the Holy Scriptures to the vernacular koiné (Shevelov 1979, 566).

Jesuit activities of that time precisely in the unwillingness to make use of the 'prostaja mova' for apostolic purposes (Frick 1985, 30f.). This is why, a few linguistic publications aside, grammars, dictionaries, and formal study of the 'prostaja mova' were largely neglected among the Orthodox, while the language question was in fact limited to a secondary aspect, viz., Cyrillic script (Strumiński 1984, 43), which would sustain the East Slavic literary tradition in Polish-Lithuanian society.

Last but not least, as Kyrylo Trankvillion-Stavrovec'kyj admitted in his treatise "Zercalo Bohoslovija" (Kyiv, 1618), his use of the vulgar tongue was quite pragmatic, since nothing would be gained by translating abstract words in the 'prostaja mova'. An analogous state of affairs obtains in the language of the tales about Tristan, Bova, Attila, Troy, the Three Kings, and some other Rus'ian-language literary works of the 16th c., copied in hand and circulated in collections. In both cases, there could hardly be conscious striving toward creating a real national (or even regional) language (Strumiński 1984, 31), based purportedly on ever growing suprare-gional leveling of dialect differences, a process which might have been instigated by the spread of printing in the Ruthenian lands (cf. Moser 2002, 229)[27].

All evidence testifies, on the contrary, that during both periods conventionally covered by the terms 'rusьkij jazykъ' and 'prostaja mova' respectively, the written language standard demonstrated a wide range of transitional manifestations with admixtures of those languages which were somehow involved in the solution of the *questione della lingua* in the Ruthenian lands. It comes as no surprise that, for the Rus'ian period, roughly before 1569, Žuraŭski (1967, 112f.) postulated a transition scale which is essentially reminiscent of the functional scale as discussed above for the 'prostaja mova'. Thus, Žuraŭski's scale begins with the "pure bookish [Slavonic] language" via religious writings with Belarusian features (e.g., the "Četьja" of 1489[28] and "Lo[h]ika" in a sixteenth-century copy), secular basically Slavonic-Belarusian texts (e.g., the so-called Lithuanian

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[27] Interestingly enough, despite a conspicuous lack of the Ruthenian Bible translation and only a handful of (calque) translations of the Gospel (without producing a canonic text whatsoever!) along with other not numerous religious texts, published primarily in parallel, Ruthenian-Slavonic or Ruthenian-Polish, texts, Moser (2002, 233) claims that, "remarkably, the Ukrainian and Belarusian *prostaja mova* became quickly a multifunctional literary language". I believe that all the above speaks in favor of the opposite. That was a vernacular with different (native or alien) admixtures, which used to change their configuration depending on genres, albeit with its indigenous (East Slavic) façade retained in phonetics/script and morphology.

[28] Rather cautiously though, Žuraŭski (1967, 85) admitted for this text some orthographic Ukrainianisms, e.g., the use of *ě* in place of *e* of the type *vdarěnьje* 'blow, hit', *znaměnije* 'sign', *molěnije* 'sermon', *moučenije* 'torture, agony', and the confusion of *ě* and *i*.

chronicles, "Aleksandrija" in a sixteenth-century copy[29]), and non-canonical religious writings (e.g., "Strasti Xrista" of the late 15th c.) (Karskij 1899)[30] with a Polish admixture added to the Belarusian vernacular (Aničenka 1969, 97).

A similar line of reasoning was earlier chosen by Pljušč (1962, 96), who, while closely following Žytec'kyj, asserted that the norm of the written language used throughout the 18th c. would depend on various factors, including the genre of a particular literary work, the author's *Weltanschauung*, and his command of the vernacular and Polish. All this might have brought about a wide range of stylistic means in the system of Ruthenian, in particular the ratio of Church Slavonic and Polish forms. This is why there were, on the one hand, works written in a 'bookish vernacular' (e.g., the "Chronicle of Eyewitness") and, on the other hand, texts with a plethora of Church Slavonic and Polish elements (e.g., the writings of Ivan Vyšens'kyj and Zaxarija Kopystens'kyj).

Consequently, for the case of the above two scales, posited for two consecutive periods from the late 14th to the late 16th c. and from the late 16th to the beginning of the 18th c., one can tentatively speak of an analogous perception of the literary language by Ruthenians living in both Belarusian and Ukrainian lands through the above periods.

This hypothesis appears more convincing in popular fictional tales, which, although not being printed, widely circulated in manuscript in the 16th and 17th c. In addition to the above-mentioned tales about Tristan, Bova, Attila, Troy, "Aleksandrija" and other texts, copied and circulated primarily in the Belarusian territories, of particular interest is a collection, "Biblěja malaja", written by the Orthodox priest Hrihorij Dimitrievič from Šarhorod (south-west of Vinnycja) in 1660 (Peretc 1926, 106f.). Along with some collections of miscellaneous texts, many of them sermons, apocrypha and other religious writings, and secular stories, scattered all over

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[29] There are also some later Ukrainian copies of the Serbian translation, dating back to the late 17th and early 18th c., in particular from the manuscripts QN 108 and QN 21, which belonged to the private collection of Volodymyr Peretc. Suffice it to cite Ukrainian forms *čšo* 'that; what' (7), *smilo* 'courageously' (8) next to sporadic Belarusian forms like *katoroho* (gen. sg. m.) (4) ("Aleksandrija").

[30] One can mention here at least two western Ukrainian copies of this apocrypha, one made in the late 16th c. in Trostjanec' (L'viv region) and another also written by Danylo Smotryc'kyj in the second half of the 16th c. in Smotryč (Podolja). From the point of view of its content and language, the latter copy, according to Hrynčyšyn (2000, 416), can be compared not with the Belarusian copy published by Karskij (1899) and Tupikov (1901), but rather with the "Homilary Gospel" of ca. 1560 from Trostjanec'. The two texts were most likely translated from the Church Slavonic original, although "Passio", in addition to few Polonisms, reveals more vernacular features, in particular the use of *i* in place of *ě* in *smotriti* 'to look' (10v), *cisarskyi* '(belonging to) Car' (9r) and other forms, or the confusion of *y* and *i* in *vidali* (pl. pret.) (4r) next to *vyda(m)* (1 sg. fut.) 'to give over' (4v).

Ruthenian lands in different manuscripts, texts from this collection are comparable with fictional tales of the 16th c. from the point of view of their genres and language, identified by Shevelov (1979, 579), as the 'prostaja mova'. Aside from certain texts with religious topics and sources, thus demonstrating a plethora of Church Slavonicisms, the 'prostaja mova' of the "Biblěja malaja", with a noticeable Ukrainian adstratum (Peretc 1926, 114), is remarkably similar to the language of sixteenth-century tales, in particular the fragment of "Stefanit and Ixnilat" (SI) excerpted from a sixteenth-century collection of miscellaneous texts. According to Shevelov (1979, 579), the tale of "Stefanit and Ixnilat" was written in the 'prostaja mova', which shows, along with a number of Belarusianisms and fewer Church Slavonicisms, some obvious Southwest Ukrainian vernacular features, e.g., Belarusian forms *doku(l)* 'until' (46; cf. MUkr. *dokolъ*), *re(k)* 'say' (m. sg. pret.) (44) with the *e*-reflex of the etymological *ě*, *što* 'what' (46), *prišol* 'to come' (m. sg. pret.) (44) and Church Slavonic forms of the type *dobraho* 'good' (gen. sg.) (44). This text has also some Polonisms, e.g., *žadnoho meška(n)ja* 'no lodging' (gen. sg. n.) (44), although Ukrainian forms, to be sure, prevail: *město* (nom. sg. n.) (47), *měsca* 'place' (gen. sg. n.) (44), and especially *o(t)povidi(l)* 'to reply' (m. sg. pret.) (44, 45), *viręti* 'to believe' (44), *nenaviditi* 'to hate' next to *nenavěstei* 'hatred' (gen. pl. f.), *ně vědaju i ni maju* 'I do not know and do not have' (44) and others, with the *i*-reflex in place of the *jat*[31].

Overall, a similar distribution of Ukrainian, Belarusian, and other language features obtains in texts of the "Biblěja malaja". Their ratio, however, varies from one text to another, depending on its topic and genre. As far as Polish forms are concerned, they are especially numerous in "Reestr cesarov rimskix i papěžov", translated from the Polish original "Roczne dzieje Kościelne od Narodzenia Pana i Boga naszego Iezusa Chrystusa" (Cracow, 1603). Church Slavonic forms are primarily used in some biblical texts, in particular in excerpts from the Old Testament Books (Peretc 1926, 114-116). Ukrainian forms are attested in stylistically unmarked narratives, hence already in "Predmova do čitelnika", e.g., *kožъdij* (cf. Bel. *kožnyj*) 'everybody', *byblěju* 'Bible' (acc. sg. f.) (107), *ščo* 'what; that' (2x, 108) and so forth. Ukrainian features are also numerous in "Istorija o prepodobnom Hrihorii", translated from the Polish translation of "Gesta Romanorum", e.g., *otijti* 'to leave' (122, 123), *otrimal* 'to receive' (m. sg. pret.) (122), and in "Povestъ o semi mudrecax", which is also based on the Polish translation of the Latin-language text, e.g., *sokul* 'falcon' (130), if this is not a borrowing from MPol. *sokół* (1424) (SSP/8, 332). Seemingly

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[31] The latter changes is strictly speaking East Slavic, since it has been commonly attested in the bulk of Southern East Slavic and Novgorodian dialects since the 11th c. (Šaxmatov 1915, 322-325, 303).

Belarusian forms of the type *čolnok* 'boat', *mačoxa* 'stepmother', *žona* 'wife' (Peretc 1926, 123, 124, 125) can be treated, in fact, as Ukrainian, especially since the compiler of the text did not adhere to the Church spelling in its Euthymian guise (Shevelov 1974, 151).

Speaking about Polish interference in "Istorija o prepodobnom Hrihorii", remarkably, only a few Polish forms were borrowed into the Ruthenian translation (Peretc 1926, 125):

From "Historye Rzymskie"	From "Istorija o prepodobnom Hrihorii"
Ty, który to dziecię przyjmiesz, wiedz, że to od brata i od siostry rodzone a nie jest ochrzczone […] ochrzci je a złoto weźmi sobie, a srebro chowaj jemu na naukę.	*Kto by najšol otroča sye, vědaj že to est ot brata i sestri sploženo i ne est kreščenno […] a maet pri sobě sumu tuju dlja toho, žebysъ srebro uzjal sobě a zloto xoval na nauku emu.*

The above parallelism is conspicuously less consistent as compared with that in religious and polemic writings of the Orthodox Ruthenian authors of the early 17th c. Contrary to these authors, who were more concerned about script than 'language', the compiler of the "Biblěja malaja" was pragmatic in his wish to make the collection as intelligible as possible to the common readership, hence a minimum of Polonized morphosyntactic patterns.

Interestingly enough, a totally different situation with the Polish elements is observable in the life of Alexius ("Aleksij čelověkъ Božij"), which was copied ca. 1673. Although closely modeled on the Church Slavonic translation by the Russian Arsenij Grek (1660), and primarily on the Polish "Żywot ś. Alexego" from Piotr Skarga's "Żywoty świętych" (1619) (Rezanov 1928, 9), which was popular in the Ruthenian lands at that time, this copy appears less Polonized in comparison with another copy of the life of Alexius, identified by Rezanov as Ukrainian. In fact, the latter is likely to be treated as a mere "literary transcription of the Polish text". The Polish interference is observed not only in the syntax and vocabulary, but in the morphology and phonetics (ib., 13):

From "Żywot S. Alexego, pisany od Symeona Metaphrasta y innych" (1619)	From the Middle Ukrainian copy of the life of Alexius (17th c.)
Był w Rzymie mąż pobożny imieniem Euphemianus, senator wielki, ktoty miał trzy tyśiące sług, pasy złote y iedwabne szaty noszących. Dżieći żadnych nie miał, maiąc żonę niepłodną, a był człek barzo dobry. Trzy stoły zawżdy w domu swym gotował, ktore wdowami, śierotami, pielgrzymàmi y ubogimi y chorymi osadzał; a sam aż o dżiewiątej godżinie z mnichami podrożnemi obiedwał […].	*Byl v Rime muž pobožnyj imenem Evfimijanъ, senator velikij, kotorij měl tri tysjači sluh pojasy zolotye i edwabnye šaty nosjačix, dětej žadnyx ne měl, majuči žonu neplodnuju, a bylъ č/o/lov/e/kъ velьmi dobryj. Tri stoly zavždy v domu svoem hotoval, kotorye vdovami, sirotami, perexožimi, ubohimi i xorimi osažal. A sam ažъ o devjatoj hodině z mnixami podorožnymi obědoval […].*

Clearly, adaptation of Polish originals in different Ruthenian copies might have been determined by various factors, both subjective and objective, thus testifying to flexible norms and stylistic vagueness of the 'prostaja mova'. If this is true, there are shaky grounds for classifying texts, compiled in this language, more literary than those texts which were written in the 'rusьkij jazykъ', inasmuch as the vernacular koiné used as a written medium tended to demonstrate rather vague norms from the late 15th through the late 17th c. Žuraŭski (1967, 58f.) seems right to claim that the 'rusьkij jazykъ' should be treated along with the 'prostaja mova' as constituent parts of a general literary language system, albeit no major grammar or dictionary of the 'rusьkij jazykъ' has ever been compiled (Martel 1938, 38-44). In addition to stylistically vague norms, the two languages were characterized by some common (East Slavic) core features in phonetics and morphology, which may be conceived as basic norms, since only the syntax and, with some reservations, vocabulary were susceptible to medium and heavy interference from Polish (Moser 1998). Ascertaining these features will help specify the dialect basis of the language(s), a necessary procedure in the process of the ethno-linguistic attribution of Ruthenian texts.

4. The norms of the 'prostaja mova': Ukrainian or Belarusian?

The norms of the Ruthenian language, primarily its phonetic and, to a lesser extent, morphosyntactic features[32], are commonly discussed in the context of the delimitation of Ukrainian from Belarusian texts, premised sometimes exclusively on the territorial principle or the nationality of a particular author, approaches which proved to be much less profitable than envisaged (Omel'čenko 1926, 357, 359, Karskij 1930, Ohijenko 1935, 263). It is ubiquitously maintained (Pljušč, Aničenka, Žuraŭski, Pugh, Moser, Rusanivs'kyj) that phonological and grammatical features as found in writings in the 'rusьkij jazykъ' and the 'prostaja mova', are characteristic of both Middle Ukrainian and Belarusian, thus not allowing either Ukrainian or Belarusian deviating dialect features to penetrate into the common language standard. Among the most striking features of Belarusian phonetics which were not admitted into Early Middle texts, one can mention *akanne, cekanne* and *dzekanne* (Stang 1935, 74f., Žuraŭski 1967, 270f.); nor were such Ukrainian peculiarities as *u* (> MoUkr. *i*) from *o* and

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[32] It has long been argued that Polonisms and Slavonicisms were basically admitted in the vocabulary and syntax, especially after 1569 (Žuraŭski 1967, 229, Moser 2002, 244-248). Even more Polonisms are found in the "Historical Notes" written by Fjodar Eŭlašoŭski in the late 16th or early 17th c. (Eŭlašoŭski), which differs from a prototypical text compiled in Ruthenian (Moser 2002, 244).

e in the newly closed syllables and the so-called new *ě* admitted (Žitec-kij[Žytec'kyj] 1905, 6).

Due to insufficient training or slips of the writer or scribe, possible deviations in the treatment of the established general standard were likely to reflect the spoken language, although the written language, used both in the administration and more "elevated genres", was characterized by uniform norms all over the Ruthenian lands in the late 16th to the mid-17th c. (Žuraŭski 1967, 257). These deviations, or 'substitutions' in Shevelov's (1974, 150) terminology, have been treated by default as either Ukrainian or Belarusian, thus serving as dialect earmarks of a particular text. Leaving aside a few morphological deviations as not characteristic for that period of time, Karskij (1962[¹1897], 255f.) sorted out nine phonological features which, according to him, marked 'West Russian' as Belarusian; he admitted, however, that some of them, e.g., *akanne*, dispalatalization of *r'* and spirantization of *g > h*, were shared by other East Slavic dialects, including Southwest Ukrainian, as well as South and North Russian (cf. Šerech[Shevelov] 1953, 7f.). The number of these deviations may vary slightly in different studies, but seems not to exceed ten.

Of interest in this respect are nine deviations/substitutions adduced by Shevelov (1974, 150f.), from which the following five appeared more or less consistently:

(1) the treatment of *ě*, with three possible realizations: *ě > e* in any position in Belarusian proper; *ě > e* if unstressed only, in Polissian, and *ě* kept intact in Ukrainian proper: *mésto* (sg.) – *mestá* (pl.) 'town'; *město – mestá*; *město – městá* (for dialect data, see AUM, vol. 1, maps 48, 112; vol. 2, map 76; vol. 3, 219);

(2) the treatment of *r* from older sequences *rъ* and *rь* between consonants: *ry* in Belarusian and Polissian next to *r* in Ukrainian, e.g., *kryvavyj* 'bloody' alongside SWUkr. *kyrvavyj/kirvavyj* (AUM, vol. 2, map 69) with reflexes of the irrational vowel, and EUkr. *kryvavyj/krovavyj* (AUM, vol. 3, 237), which is of a later date;

(3) the reflex of *ę* in an unstressed position in Belarusian and Polissian is rendered as *e*, in Ukrainian as *'a*; *svetyj* next to *svjatyj* 'holy' (for dialect data, see AUM, vol. 1, map 53; vol. 2, maps 45, 46, 76). In this case the Belarusian deviation was Polissian in origin: there the unstressed *ę* had changed into *e* to be later accepted in Belarusian, where, because of *jakanne*, no distinction was made between *e* and *'a* in unstressed position (Avanesaŭ 1964, 56f.);

(4) the spelling of *i* in oblique cases of the pronoun *(u)vesь* 'all' (nom. sg. m.) as *usixъ* (gen.-acc.-loc. pl. m.), *usimъ* (dat. pl. m.), etc. in Belarusian and Polissian, as a result of the analogical adjectivization of the pronominal paradigm (Karskij 1899, 54); cf. *ě* in Ukrainian forms like *vsěxъ* and the like;

(5) Belarusian and, most likely, Polissian *u* alongside Ukrainian *o* (> *i*) in adverbs ending in -*kule/kulь*, -*tule/tulь*, etc.: MoBel. *adkul'* vs. MoUkr. *zvidkil'* 'from where'.

Four less consistent features were also identified by Shevelov (1974, 151) as Belarusian/Polissian:

(6) the use of *o* after palatals in forms like *žona* 'wife', whereas in Ukrainian texts the form *žena* was used more often than not; the difference is due partly to the

traditional church spelling or the lack of the corresponding change in Southwest Ukrainian of that time;

(7) the dispalatalization of *r'* in spellings of the type *bura* 'tempest', which is less typical of Ukrainian texts with forms like *burja*, where the split palatalization (the insertion of *j*) in transitional dialects suggests a rather recent loss of palatalization (Hancov 1924, 113; AUM, vol. 2, maps 115 and 116);

(8) the dispalatalization of the palatals might have taken place in Ukrainian later, hence parallel spelling of *živyj/žyvyj* 'alive' in Ukrainian texts alongside the *žyvyj* type in Belarusian/Polissian;

(9) contrary to the Belarusian/Polissian genitive plural form in *-ej*, e.g., *nočej* 'night', Ukrainian had *nočyj* and *nočej*, with the desinence *-yj* typically attested in Southwest Ukrainian and the desinence *-ej* in non-Southwest Ukrainian (cf. Žylko 1966[¹1955], 145)[33].

The fact that all the above deviations tended to be no less Polissian than Belarusian or Ukrainian was the corollary of a specific situation in the Polissian dialect area (Shevelov 1974, 155). These were centuries in which the bilateral erosion of Polissian dialects into Belarusian proper in the north and Ukrainian proper in the south was in progress, but the Polissian dialects were still a unit strong enough culturally to develop their own set of deviations, most strikingly, in the case of *ě*: while the standard secular koiné of Vil'na (Vilnius) and the regions around it admitted the use of *e* instead of *ě* in all positions, the Polissian did not allow such a replacement in the stressed syllable and (South) Ukrainian did not allow it at all.

This said, it is worth mentioning Žovtobrjux (1978, 194, cf. Ohijenko 1935, 263)[34], who assumed that in the 16th c. North Ukrainian (Polissian) would extend further south as compared with the present geography of Ukrainian dialects, inasmuch as the southern dialects were proceeding in a northerly direction and not *vice versa*. Historically, this expansion is exemplified by the reflex *e*, which, though appearing today wholly northern Ukrainian, marked also the language of such prominent Galicians as Kasijan Sakovyč [Sakowicz] (17th c.) and Pamvo Berynda (ca. 1555-1632) (Witkowski 1969, 77). It stands to reason that speakers of both North Ukrainian and South Belarusian, still slightly differentiated by that time within the boundaries of the Polissian dialect area, could have taken part in the

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[33] In view of the complimentary distribution of the two desinences in Ukrainian dialects, Shevelov (1979, 279f.) evaluated it as a matter of "dialect preference", although Flier (1987) offered an interesting morphophonemic explanation of this distribution, in particular in Belarusian dialects.

[34] In Hancov's (1924, 4) dialectological map, the boundary between South Ukrainian and transitional dialects that developed on the northern Ukrainian (Polissian) basis, passes through Žytomyr and beyond, only slightly to the north of the cities of Ostrih-Dubno-Hrubešiv (Grubieszów). Remarkably, a similar geographical pattern is found in maps provided by Ivan Zilyns'kyj in 1933 and by Fedir Žylko in 1966, although in a recently updated map, this boundary passes much further to the north of Žytomyr and Dubno (AUM, vol. 3, maps 6, 7, 9).

shaping of the 'rusькij jazykъ' in the Vil'na princely chancery[35]. One should also keep in mind the cultural influence of lands, incorporated into the GDL comparatively late, in particular the Turov-Pinsk principality, which geographically formed a bridge between South Belarusian and North Ukrainian. Among other territories included in the Polissian unit, Volhynja stood out as a culturally advanced region (Stang 1935, 21, Gumeckaja[Humec'ka] 1965, 42f.)[36], thereby strongly influencing the sociolinguistic situation in the GDL and the PLC. However, as was argued by Kuraszkiewicz (1934), the southern part of Volhynja demonstrated features transitional to Podolja, thus belonging, theoretically speaking, to the Galician-Podolja dialect group (Šerech [Shevelov] 1953, 22f.).

In order to substantiate consistent deviations (1) through (5), as outlined above, one should recall in this respect Žytec'kyj and Nazarevskij. Both of them tried to elucidate dialect pronunciation behind the traditional orthography, especially those letters which potentially may sound different in Ukrainian and Belarusian dialects. Žiteckij's[Žytec'kyj] (1905, 7) theory about a deliberate normalization of the language standard by prestige-conscious scribes, allowing primarily those orthographic devices that could render common (Belarusian-Ukrainian) sound patterns, looks like wishful thinking (cf. Moser 2002, 243). No more reliable appears an explanation offered by Nazarevskij (1911, 47). While adducing serious reservations about conscious normalization by Rus'ian scribes, he nevertheless was inclined to admit varying pronunciation of commonly accepted spellings, e.g., the Belarusian *dzekanne* and the Ukrainian *i*-reflex in the word *dĕlo* 'affair', viz., *dzelo* and *dilo* correspondingly.

The controversy may be resolved, if placed in the broader context of the Polissian dialect unit, which even today demonstrates most archaic features shared by North Ukrainian and Southwest Belarusian (Nazarova 1971, 97). Thus, in distinguishing between the core features (consistent deviations) in the bulk of Polissian dialects, overlapping largely with the so-called Berestja-Pinsk or West Polissian dialects[37], and more numerous

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[35] Tentatively, in the light of manifold convergences, highlighted by divergent realizations of common tendencies, in particular, in phonetics, on can speak in this case of one language or, if another term be preferable, two phonetic manifestations of one and the same secular language standard, conventionally called the Ruthenian language (the 'prostaja mova').

[36] Returning to the use of *e* instead of *ĕ*, Shevelov (1974, 155) also argued that the Volhynians more often than not used to retain this Belarusian/Polissian pattern, even against their own pronunciation. If this observation is true, one may speak of two lines in the development of the standard secular language in the Ruthenian, in particular Ukrainian lands: gradual emancipation of West Ukraine from the above pattern and its gradual adoption by all North Ukrainian, including Volhynja.

[37] As has already been noted, these dialects would extend further south and presumably a bit north. But even today they are demarcated by numerous phonological and

inconsistent deviations as attested in transitional dialects, Žytec'kyj's idea about the parallelism between spelling and sounds, commonly accepted by Ukrainians and Belarusians, may be tentatively applied to the core features. Nazarevskij's thesis about varying pronunciation and spelling is likely to refer to the texts which were produced by representatives of territories with the transitional dialects. In other words, more uniform pronunciation and normalized spelling were most likely to characterize the Polissian vernacular standard[38] as used in the late 14th through the 16th c., while deviations from this norm as found mainly since the 16th c. in the rest of Ruthenian lands were becoming ever more differentiated in new literary genres. The latter process could have brought about the appearance of differing Ukrainian and Belarusian language standards of the 'prostaja mova' (Gumeckaja [Humec'ka] 1965, 43f.).

Similar lines of argumentation have been recently revived by Mojsijenko (2002, id. 2003). Leaning heavily on Nimčuk, he postulated, for the Ukrainian-Belarusian borderland from the 14th to the 17th c., the existence of a particular written Polissian vernacular, premised on common northern Ukrainian and southern Belarusian dialect features[39]. According to Mojsijenko, this language demonstrated a set of phonetic and morphological features matching, at closer inspection, those features which were sorted out by Shevelov for the differentiation of Ukrainian and Belarusian texts written in the 'prostaja mova'. It follows that the Polissian venacular standard can be usefully identified with transitional dialects developed on the northern Ukrainian (Polissian) basis; the latter geographically and structurally seem to function as a separate dialect. Contrary to Svjažynski

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morphological isoglosses, which seem to unite them with the Ukrainian dialect (areal) rather than with the bulk of Belarusian dialects; for isoglosses, attaching the Berestja-Pinsk dialects to the Ukrainian-speaking territory, see maps 1-21 in Avanesaŭ (1969).

[38] The proposed term is coined after Goldblatt's (1991, 12) term 'Ruthenian vernacular standard' which aptly reflects "a spoken attribute" of the standard literary language, used and understood over a large territory (see Pugh 1996, 13).

[39] In a reply to this freshly-revived hypothesis, Svjažynski (2003) contended that Ukrainian features, inherently alien to the Belarusian chancery language, are likely to have been borrowed in the mid-14th c. to the mid-15th c. from the language of South Ukrainian scribes working in the ducal chancery. Such "borrowed features" are attested, according to him, in Symon Budny's "Catechism" (1562), translations of Maciej Stryjkowski's "Chronicle" (1582), Marcin Bielski's "Kronika polska" (ca. 1600) (cf. Karskij 1921, 86-90), anthologies of lives of Saints compiled in the 17th c. (nos. 81, 159, 752, 937), an apocryphal parliamentary speech of Pseudo-Meleško (1615-1618) (Struminsky 1984) and other texts written or copied either in Belarusian- or Ukrainian-speaking territories (cf. Aničenka 1969, 201). While leaning on his predecessors, Svjažynski cited, among the phonetic features, the confusions of *i* and *ě* (*isti* ~ *ěsti* 'to eat'), *i* and *y* (*riba* ~ *ryba* 'fish'), and *o* and *y* (*sopernikъ* ~ *supernikъ* 'adversary'), thereby highlighting the Belarusian dialect basis of such texts, albeit the above phenomena are also found in South Belarusian dialects (Avanesaŭ 1964, 47, 54, 66, 80).

(2003, 148f.), who contends that the (modern?) transitional area is far too small to trigger the crystalization of a new language standard, this dialect unit might have had rather vast territories. As have been already mentioned, based on the unstressed reflex *e* of the etymological *e*, *ě* and *ę*, North Ukrainian (Polissian) would extend, in the 16th c., further south as compared with the present geography of Ukrainian dialects. Having analyzed positional variants of the above reflex in the modern transitional dialects (roughly in the area bounded by the low course of the Prypjat' and the Dnieper), Nazarova (1964, 134f.) noted that the northern isogloss of this phenomenon crosses the Dnieper somewhat further south from the boundary of the typically Belarusian reflexes *ô* and *ê* of the etymological *o* and *e*. She assumed therefore that boundaries of this and some other archaic phenomena as attested today in the above area, might have extended further north, and only later, as a result of subsequent innovations, have moved south. The latter geographical changes in isoglosses have been particularly instrumental in this area over the last one hundred years (ib., 139), thus reflecting the retention of some archaic (North Ukrainian) features with a concurrent emergence of hyperistic phenomena aimed at reconciling most characteristic features of the languages in contact.

Archaic features, especially those not conceived of as typically Belarusian or Ukrainian, e.g., the unstressed *e* in place of *e*, *ě* and *ę* as opposed to the diphthongs from etymological *ě*, *o*, and *e*, appear to be regularly attested in that time[40]. Remarkably, albeit comparatively new, hyperistic phenomena are also found in Ruthenian texts. To give a few arresting examples, there are some irregular forms in the West Rus'ian collection of the late 15th c., containing texts of "Strasti Xrista", a tale about the Three Kings, and "Aleksij čelověkъ Božij", which all show predominantly Belarusian features (Karskij 1899). Thus, consciously avoiding forms with *akanne*, the compiler of the collection clearly prefers *o*-forms to parallel *a*-forms, e.g., *zorę* 'dawn' (acc. sg. f) (38b), *Lazorę* 'Lazarus' (gen. sg.) (26b), or derived hyperistic *okanne*-forms of the type *dvonadcetъ* 'twelve' (86).

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[40] They are not found in the Polissian literary standard, except, perhaps, for the use of *e*, which has multiple attestations in the official and literary writings of the 16th to the 17th c.; see core Polissian feature (ii) below. As for the archaic features, not all of them could be adequately reflected in writing, e.g., the moderate sharping (palatalization) of palatals and an *r* before *y* with a subsequent fronting of the vowel as in *r·yʲba* 'fish' (Nazarova 1964, 135). At first sight, the latter palatalization may be tentatively identified in some spellings discussed by Stang (1935, 78f.), although they may simply represent the process of the dispalatalization of *r'*. Apparently, because distinctive sharping (palatalization) was more narrowly specified in other Ukrainian and Belarusian dialects, the transitional dialects tended to distribute subphonemic sharping across a great number of natural classes, including not only velars, but palatals (West Polissian) and labials as well (peripheral West Polissian and Central Polissian) (Flier 1988, 367f.).

Due to the historical influence of *akanne* upon transitional dialects (Naza-rova 1964, 128f.), one finds in these texts examples of hyperistic *a* in place of *e* after palatals, e.g., *žana* 'wife' (35), *čalo* 'head' (33b) (Karskij 1899, 34). Another 'hyper-correct' change, of stressed *e* into *o* after the palatals and before etymologicaly plain consonants (Nazarova 1964, 129), may be re-flected in such spellings as *čosny(x)/ъ/* 'honest' (gen. pl.) (61b), *slozy* 'tears' (15b), *učьnovъ* 'pupil' (gen.-acc. pl.) (2b) and others; one can add also the appearance of *e* in place of *a* of any origin (see the discussion of feature (ii) below), exemplified in numerous forms like *hledeli* 'to see' (pl. pret.), *slyšeti* 'to hear' (72) and many others (Karskij 1899, 35).

All in all, dialect and historical parallels open solid grounds for positing a Polissian type of the vernacular standard, used in the chanceries of Troki (Trakai), Navahrudak, Mensk (Minsk), Berestja (Brest), Vil'na (Vilnius), Xolm, Luc'k, Ovruč, and Kyiv in the 14th c. to the 16th c., as well as in literary works, copied and circulated in collections, and in non-canonical religious texts. This Polissian vernacular standard was influencing no less efficaciously the written language of that time[41] than the vernacular, which tended to be used in a less learned milieu, where a pre-romantic linguistic democratism was paving the way for the arrival of the new Ukrainian literary language of Kotljarevs'kyj and Kvitka-Osnovjanenko in the 18th c. (see Markovs'kyj 1962, 104, 122). Based on newly-revived de-mocratic principles, remarkably close in spirit to the language program of Constantine and Methodius (Shevelov 1988-1989), this vernacular was typical of folkloric works, realistic descriptive poetry (e.g., Ivan Velyčkov-s'kyj and Klimentij Zynovijiv, late 17th c.; Archimandrite Onufrij, late 17th-early 18th c.), and interludes (e.g., Jakub Gawatowicz, 1619; nine interludes from Dernovo, late 17th c. or early 18th c.) (Voznjak 1924, 234-238, 239-246)[42]. That was in fact a new language standard, developing

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[41] The written language in the late 16th–early 17th c. had in fact three manifestations, viz., the 'prostaja mova', used within certain limits in both ecclesiastical and secular matters, a Church Slavonicized ecclesiastical variety of the language, and a heavily polonized high style secular variety (Shevelov 1988-1989, 617).

[42] Interludes, interspersed in "Aleksij čelověkъ Božij" ("Aleksij", 145-153f.), despite its sizable Church Slavonic admixture, reveal all-Ukrainian (southwestern Ukrainian) features: *koždyj* 'every' (148), *svjatoe* 'holy' (nom. sg. n.), *ščob* 'in order that' (149) next to *pujte* 'to sing' (2 pl. imper.) (151) with the *u*-reflex of the etymological *o*, which can be treated either as a southwestern or northern Ukrainian (Polissian) change. Similar features are discerned in the substandard Ukrainian vernacular used by a Tatar in the interlude to "Władysław Jagiełło" (1663), e.g., *vsie* (= *vsě*) (91), *stuj* next *stoj* 'stay' (2 sg. Imper.) (93) (Peretc 1905, 90-93). With a plethora of examples of non-dissimilative *akanne*, the Ruthenian text is written in Southwest or rather Central Belarusian (see Avanesaŭ 1964, 45). Of interest are some Polish-Ruthenian interludes (late 17th c.), published by Brückner (1891).

concurrently with the Ruthenian standard, whose *dignitas* was in decline by the late 17th c. as a result of Polish acculturation.

At the phonetic level, the Polissian vernacular standard showed the following core features, rendered more or less consistently in writing:

(i) the use of *e* in place of *ě*, as discussed in Shevelov's feature (1); the only reservation regards the phonetic treatment of the etymological *ě*: if stressed, this sound was rendered in a threefold manner: *e*, *i*, or *ě*, e.g., *vsě*, *vsi* 'all', but not *vsixъ* (gen.-acc.-loc. pl. m.) (Berestja, 1588) (AVK, 6/7), which is a result of adjectivization of the pronominal paradigm. Different reflexes are likely to evidence a diphthongal pronunciation of *ě* by Rus'ian scribes; this kind of articulation is still found in (transitional) Polissian dialects (Nazarova 1971, 95); cf. *zwiera* 'animal' (gen. sg. m.) next to *dility/dylity* 'to share' (Gawatowicz, I, 17, 21);

(ii) the use of *e* in place of the unstressed etymological *ę*, as discussed in Shevelov's feature (3) (see Stang 1935, 70f.), e.g., *svetuju* 'holy' (acc. sg. f.) (Vil'na, 1577) (AVK, 8/406); one should add here a reversal change, *'a > e*, in both stressed and unstressed positions after the palatals and *r*, e.g., *knehineju* 'princess' (instr. sg. f.) (Volodymyr, 1570) (VH 16th c., 84), and *Koste(n)tinъ* as attested in Luc'k records (1561), a form which testifies to a much broader area of the *'a*-umlaut in that time (Shevelov 1979, 548), *obledaiesz* (2x) 'to look' (2 sg. pres.) (Gawatowicz, I, 18; cf. Markovs'kyj 1962, 101), *vezavъ* 'to tie' (m. sg. pret.), and other forms in interludes from Dernovo (ib., 102); for dialect data, see Nazarova 1971, 95, AUM, vol. 2, map 49. All in all, forms like *žedalъ* 'to wish' (m. sg. pret) (Berestja, 1568) (AVK, 6/178) with *e* in place of the etymological *'a* are known to be hyperistic; attested to the north of the Prypjat', they are typical of the transitional (Polissian) dialects (Nazarova 1964, 128f.);

(iii) the use of the *okanne*-forms, especially if they are opposed by regular *a*-forms. In addition to the examples cited above, there is an *o*-form *monastyru* 'monastery' (dat. sg. m.) with the dispalatalized *r'*, as found in Afanasij Fylypovyč's "Diariuš" (56; Koršunov 1965, 103). It is tempting to treat this spelling (cf. Tymčenko, 1/420) as hyperistic next to ChSl *manastyrь* (Berynda, 65) with a final front *jer*. Although abundantly attested in modern transitional dialects (Buzuk 1928, 22f.), the hyperistic *o*-forms are not yet (?) very common in the Late Middle Polissian vernacular standard;

(iv) the dispalatalization of *r'*, *c'* and palatals (Stang 1935, 78f.), e.g., *vradu* 'government' (acc. sg. f.) (Vil'na, 1556-1557) (AVK, 8/132), *dvoraninъ* 'nobleman' (Berestja, 1599) (AVK, 6/159), *howoru* 'to say' (1 sg. pres.) (Gawatowicz, I, 20), *Branskъ* ('Diariuš', 55), *zverъ* 'animal' (Biblěja, 1660) (Peretc 1926, 116, 117); *čolomъ* 'head' (instr. sg. n.) (Berestja, 1564) (AVK, 6/3) (see Mojsijenko 2003, 301), *žona* next to *žena* 'wife' (Biblěja, 1660) (Peretc 1926, 121, 124); split (hyperistic) dispalatalization as reflected in a form *twaryū* 'face' (instr. sg. f.) in a LithuanianTatar 'semi-kitab' of the mid-17th c. (Danylenko 2006) is scarcely attested (see Nazarova 1964, 131);

(v) the use of *ž* (< *dž* < *dj*), in particular before *o* or *e*, e.g., *priroženy(m)* '(in)born' (instr. sg. n.) (Volodymyr, 1570) (VH 16th c., 84) (cf. Karskij 1899, 43-44).

At the morphosyntactic level, arresting for our hypothesis are the following phenomena:

(vi) the use of *e* in the sequence *ije ~ ьje* in neuters, e.g., *vyměrenье* 'measurement' (Berestja, 1599) (AVK, 6/162), *roskazane* 'order' in an interlude in "Aleksij čelověkъ Božij" ("Aleksij", 152);

(vii) the retention of full nominative-accusative plurals, as well as of genitive singulars of feminine adjectives and pronominal forms with the *e*-reflex of *ě*, attested word-finally: *-ye < -yě*, *-oe < -oě*, e.g., *tajemnoe rady* 'secret council' (gen. sg.) (Gumec-

kaja [Humec'ka] 1965, 42); demonstrating a rather old (East Slavic) contraction of *ě* in this position (Durnovo 2000[¹1924], 247), these forms are still found today in Polissian (Nazarova 1971, 95) in both the attributive and predicative functions (Shevelov 1979, 676);

(viii) the use of the preposition *ku* 'to', e.g., in the introduction to Tjapinskij's "Homilary Gospel" of 1580 (Dovnar-Zapol'skij 1899, 1045f.), *ku B(o)hu* 'to God' (Berynda, 56); this is most likely a loan form from Polish unlike a true Polissian *ik*.

These and certain other less representative morphosyntactic features (see Mojsijenko 2003) are instrumental in assigning texts as Polissian. As fas as the vocabulary is concerned of this standard, it was East Slavic at its core, though gradually absorbing more and more Church Slavonic and Polish elements, as evidenced in the later Belarusian and Ukrainian variants of the 'prostaja mova' starting from the late 16th c. onward. From the viewpoint of syntax, texts written in the Polissian standard, especially when not a translation from Polish, initially showed an East Slavic basis and a minimum dependence on Polish of that time. Gradually, as Ruthenians became more culturally, politically and linguistically Polonized, the Polish interference increased from moderate to high, especially in the conditions of Polish-Ruthenian bilingualism, when some Ruthenian texts were in fact transliterated from Polish originals[43].

5. Conclusions

The foregoing analysis suggests that the 'rusькij jazykъ' and the 'prostaja mova' should be treated not as different languages (Miakiszew) or two chronologically consecutive developmental stages of one language system, shared by Ukrainians and Belarusians (Moser), but rather as two stylistically differentiated varieties of one secular vernacular standard. The 'rusькij jazykъ' was continuously used in administration, and also sporadically in some literary writings (e.g., tales about Tristan, Bova, and Attila), as was wholly predictable from the functional (stylistic) continuum as pos-

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[43] The process of Polish acculturation of the Ruthenian 'szlachta' has long been the focus of manifold studies. Yet Martel (1938, 289f.) was the first to assume that conversion to Roman Catholicism came, on the whole, as a result of Polonization by the 17th c. and not the other way around. This process was clearly painful for the Ruthenians. Unlike the Lithuanian gentry who learned a totally new language, the Ruthenians learned a new alphabet, but spoke a language related to Polish. This is why the potential for tensions in individual identities became greater (Frick 1994, 212f.). Linguistically, this process manifested itself in the fact that, starting in the late 16th c., more and more Ruthenian charters were signed in Polish (*ręką własną*, *renkon własnon*, or *ręką swą*) not only but noblemen by also by Orthodox and Uniate clergy (Martel 1938, 255). To give an example: in the introduction to his "Homilary Gospel" of 1580, Tjapinskij[Cjapinski], who would sign all official documents in Rus'ian, chastised those noblemen who did not dare sign them in their native vernacular (Dovnar-Zapol'skij 1899, 1037). Moser (2002, 255) asserted that, having abandoned Cyrillic script, the Ruthenian elite also lost the ideological basis for promoting the Ruthenian language, since the prototypical Ruthenian text differed from the Polish original primarily by its Cyrillic script.

ited for representing different degrees of 'commonness' of the 'jazykъ pro-
styj ruskij' (Smotryc'kyj). The 'prostaja mova', in its turn, was a result of
gradual and concurrent systemic adjustments in the vernacular system to
match ultimately the emergence of new, especially 'learned' genres, e.g.,
polemical and theological writings, poetry, grammars, primers, chronicles,
and so forth.

From the viewpoint of its dialect basis, the above vernacular system,
realized as the 'rusьkij jazykъ' and the 'prostaja mova', was neither pure
Ukrainian nor Belarusian. Nor was it an amalgam of common, Ukrainian
and Belarusian, features, consciously sifted out by Ukrainians and Bela-
rusians. The underlying vernacular system showed, in addition to con-
stantly fluctuating Slavonic and rather solid Polish admixtures, a particular
configuration of Polissian, viz., southern Belarusian and northern Ukrai-
nian features, which genetically were of the same provenance. Labeled in
the ducal chanceries as 'rusьkij jazykъ', this vernacular was widely used in
the 14th to the late 16th c., gradually bringing forth two ethnically dif-
ferentiated varieties, the more Slavonicized (southwestern) Ukrainian re-
gional variety and the more polonized (central?) Belarusian variety (She-
velov 1974, 148) of what was self-designated by that time as the 'prostaja
mova'.

Due to the constant influx of speakers from different dialect regions to
Vil'na (Vilnius), the above regional differentiation was engendered most
likely earlier than in the 16th c., although at the very outset, Polissian
features were most likely represented in most secular and religious texts
circulated in the Ruthenian lands, in particular in the 'Literature of the
Judaizers', available in sixteenth-century Ruthenian manuscripts, as well
as subsequent Russian copies made in Novgorod and Moscow. Yet, in ad-
dition to 'Polissianisms', some Ukrainian features proper are already dis-
cernable in the Book of Esther, Pseudo-Aristotle's "Secret of Secrets"
("Tajnaja tajnyxъ"), and most of all in "Šestokrylъ" (in a sixteenth-century
copy from Xolm). Socio-linguistically strong, these features were also at-
tested in writings of non-Slavic speakers, although the situation with
Lithuanian Tatar manuscripts was somewhat different (Danylenko
2006)[44]. In early 'kitabs', the Lithuanian Tatars used the 'rus'k'ij jezik' with
typically Polissian features. However, unlike the Polish-language 'tefsir'
(Suter 2004, 9-13), their later works were written exclusively in Bela-

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[44] In the GDL, there were also Karaite kinsmen of Lithuanian Tatars, who con-
sidered themselves an offshoot of the Jews. Unlike Tatars, who represented different
dialect communities from Central Asia and the Golden Horde, the Karaites lived in a
closely knit community and spoke one Kipčak Turkic dialect (Dubiński 1982, 86-88).

rusian or a Polish-Belarusian mixture (north-eastern borderland Polish), especially with the demise of the 'prostaja mova' by the early 18th c.[45].

All in all, the above hypothesis can serve two purposes. First, the concept of the Polissian vernacular standard may help in resolving manifold problems connected with ethnic attribution of the 'prostaja mova', especially in the writings of those scholars who seek to trace modern ethnolinguistic groupings to the Late Middle Ages. Second, this theory will flesh out the somewhat misleading learned term 'Ruthenian' as covering the literary language of both Ukrainian and Belarusian lands without any reference to its dialect basis. The latter is an indispensable constituent in the study of the 'prostaja mova' and its speakers.

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[45] One should not confuse the 'prostaja mova' as discussed in our study with the so-called 'mowa prosta' or 'język tutejszy' –, known since the late 19th c. This language is basically an uncodified Belarusian vernacular spoken in the border region of contemporary Belarus', Lithuania, and Latvia (Wiemer 2003).

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