

## On the Name(s) of the *Prostaja Mova* in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth

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**Abstract:** A variety of names are traditionally used to refer to the literary language as cultivated by the Belarusians and Ukrainians in the late Middle Ages. It is maintained that the emergence of the term *prostaja mova/prostyj jazyk* was brought about by the (German) Reformation in the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Based on a comparative analysis of the names of the *prostaja mova* attested in Ruthenian, Polish, and Lithuanian writings, the author surmises that the coinage and the use of the corresponding terms was primarily determined by the revival of the indigenous “linguistic democratism” dating back to the time of Constantine and Methodius.

**Keywords:** the history of Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian; Ruthenian, *prostaja mova*, *ruskij jazyk*, *slavenskij jazyk*; *lingua rustica*, *die Gemeine Sprache*; *mova prosta*, *język prosty*; the Polish Kingdom, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Prussia; “linguistic democratism” of Constantine and Methodius

### 1. The name *prostaja mova*: problems of interpretation

It has been maintained that problems in the interpretation of the *prostaja mova* (Ruthenian), used in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (hereafter, GDL) and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (hereafter, PLC) in the late Middle Ages, are largely determined by a variety of names which are applied in reference to this language (GUMECKAJA 1965; GARZANITI 1999: 169; MOSER 2002: 223). Without even trying to indicate all pitfalls facing the specialist in this field, I would prefer instead to concentrate on an old view of the origin of the above term, which, although largely overshadowed by new hypotheses and suggestions, may shed light on some long-running controversies around the name(s) of the vernacular used by Ukrainians and Belarusians in the late Middle Ages.

Remarkably, Belarusian and Ukrainian scholars prefer assessing the name *prostaja mova* through the prism of its ethno-linguistic attribution, thereby identifying this language either with Middle Belarusian or Ukrainian (PLJUŠČ 1971:

33–34; RUSANIVS'KYJ 2001: 64f.; cf. ANIČENKA 1969: 11–17). The most straightforward position has recently been revived by SVJAŽYNSKI (2001; 2003) who identified the *prostaja mova* with the Middle Belarusian literary language (Bel. *stara-belaruskaja litaraturna-pis'movaja mova*) (ŽURAŪSKI 1967: 239; ŠAKUN 1994: 531; BEDNARCZUK 1994: 114); moreover, he refuted the existence of the “Slavic chancery language” (Lith. *kanceliarinė slavų kalba*), first postulated by STANG (1935) and subsequently propounded by Lithuanian linguists (ZINKEVIČIUS 1987: 133f.). For Svjažynski, the latter name seems most unacceptable (cf. JASKEVIČ 1996: 4), perhaps because it hinders peeling off the Ukrainian element in the East Slavic chancery language, which was most likely influenced by the vernacular of the inhabitants of the Volhynja region (Luc'k being the second capital of Vytautas in the later 14th–early 15th c.

The validity of these terms appears vulnerable if approached from the viewpoint of the history of literature(s) and literary language(s), on the one hand, and from the viewpoint of the history of spoken language(s), on the other (cf. SHEVELOV 1974: 146). To begin with, functions of “the Slavic chancery language” are likely to be more stylistically diversified, since it was subsequently even introduced into learned literature, in particular in theological texts (OHIJENKO 1995: 103–111). The term “Middle Belarusian” also generates confusion, inasmuch as the ratio of Belarusian elements is known to be changing in the literary language over time, which was different from the spoken language(s) used in the Belarusian and Ukrainian ethnic territories (DINI 1997: 280). To draw an analogy with Ukrainian of the Middle period, which is conventionally called in Ukrainian linguistics *staroukrajins'ka literturna mova* of the 14th to the 18th c. (RUSANIVS'KYJ 2000: 593), neither Middle Ukrainian nor Middle Belarusian records can be taken for granted as evidence of two separate languages (SHEVELOV 1979: 571). Aside from some early Belarusianisms, and a sizable number of Church Slavonic and Polish components, as attested throughout the whole period, and the Russian admixture, which appeared in its final decades, text written in the *prostaja mova* might reflect the vernacular *koiné*. The latter was likely to be based on a specific, in particular transitional dialect, or a deliberate (and sometimes distorted by exaggeration) mixture of dialects. Yet in the view of two literary languages, Church Slavonic and Ruthenian (another name for *prostaja mova*), used in Ukraine in that time, one can hardly expect the written evidence to represent facts of the spoken language. All things considered, the identification of the *prostaja mova* with exclusively Middle Belarusian or Middle Ukrainian may be used, with a good deal of abstraction, in the context of the history of Belarusian and Ukrainian literatures and their records correspondingly.

Vis-à-vis the above reservations, of less controversial and more transparent derivation appears another name, viz., *rusьkij jazyk* (the Rus'ian language), which clearly bears witness to a territorial, ethnographic and largely religious unit of East Slavic tribes, although the referential scope of this term might have undergone some changes, in particular in the sixteenth-century GDL, where this name referred to the Dvina and Dnieper regions as opposed to the Ukraine,

Volhynja, and Lithuania, including Samogitia (ŽURAŪSKI 1967: 238). This is no doubt that speakers of the *prostaja mova*, who lived in the Rus'ian lands in the GDL, were likely to describe themselves as members of one ethno-linguistic group, being called, for instance, *rusy* and *rusyny* in the *Homiliary Gospel* (1570 or 1580) of Vasilij Tjapinskij [Vasil' Cjapinski] (DOVNAR-ZAPOL'SKIJ 1899: 1035, 1049). These appellations, derived from the name Rus', proved viable and are still retained, along with other analogous ethnonyms, by the Rusyns of the Carpathian region (RUSINKO 2003: 7). Viewed broadly, common ethno-linguistic patrimony of the East Slavs is observable in the identification of the *prostaja mova* with the *rusьkij jazykь* by Francysk Skaryna (Francisk Skorina) in his *Bivlija ruska* (1516–1519), published in Prague and Polack, and by Vasyľ Žuhaj in a Ukrainian copy (1568) prepared in Jaroslavl' (ANIČENKA 1969: 136–141), and by Vasilij Tjapinskij in Polack. It comes therefore as no surprise to find a synthetic ethno-linguistic identification of the language of the Rus', as proposed by Lavrentij Zyzanij in the forward to his vocabulary: “rečenię [...] iz slove(n)skago jazyka, na prosty ruskij dięle(k)ть istolkovany” (NIMČUK–ZIZANIJ 1964: 23) ‘expressions [which are] from the Church Slavonic language into the common Rus'ian vernacular translated’. A similar identification is found in Meletij Smotryč'kyj's preface to the second edition of the *Homiliary Gospel* (Vevis, 1616) (KARSKIJ 1921: 38), where he cites the *jazykь [naš] prostyj ruskij* (1×) ‘[our] common Rus'ian language’ beside the *podlějšyj i prostejšyj jazykь* (1×) ‘most vulgar and common language’, which both are contrasted with a more regular for this text term, *ruskij jazykь* (HG 1616: 21).

Elsewhere (DANYLENKO 2006b) I tried to interpret the above synthetic appellation in terms of a functional ethno-linguistic continuum, marked by different levels of *dignitas* as represented by the *slovenskij/slavenskij jazykь* ‘Slavonic’, *prostaja mova* ‘common vernacular’, *jazykь prostyj rusьkij* ‘common Rus'ian language’, *barzo prostaja mova i dialektь* ‘very common language and vernacular’ (Semion Timofěvič) (ŽYTECKIJ 1905: 54–55), and the *rusьkij jazykь* ‘Rus'ian language’. I argued that, certain details aside, the *rusьkij jazykь* and the *prostaja mova* should be treated not as different languages (MIAKISZEW 2000) or two chronologically consecutive varieties of one language system, shared by Ukrainians and Belarusians, but rather as stylistically differentiated versions of one secular language. The point is that the *rusьkij jazykь* was continuously used in administration, and also sporadically in some literary writings (e. g., tales about Bova and Tristan, Attila, and Troy). 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.

I also argued (DANYLENKO 2006b) that, without serious reservations, one could hardly treat the *prostaja mova* as the “common Middle Ukrainian and Belarusian literary language” (cf. MOSER 2002: 223). What is not immediately obvious for this case is that a straightforward postulation of the common Ukrainian–Belarusian literary language is premised basically on modern ethno-

linguistic groupings of East Slavic peoples and comprises the concepts “Ukrainian” and “Belarusian” which are known to have emerged only in the 19th c. Moreover, as has been already mentioned, the above view does not account for the historical distribution of dialect features, which might have been constantly changing their pattern, along with loan components, making the *prostaja mova* “even more artificial and ugly” (KARSKIJ 1962: 259). Within this theory, facts of the spoken language remain confined to the background, while representing a particular pattern of dialect features which in different periods might have been predominantly either Ukrainian or Belarusian.

As evidenced by historical dialect facts, there seem to be solid grounds for positing the existence of a particular Polissian vernacular standard in the late 14th c. onward (DANYLENKO 2006a; id. 2006b). The latter hypothesis largely fits with the thesis about “the common literary Middle Ukrainian and Belarusian” based on the assumption that speakers of the *rusʹkij jazyk* considered themselves as “one Rusʹian people” (MOSER 2002: 224). Although having common ethno-linguistic heritage, one should note the vagueness of the concept “rusʹian” as used by Belarusians and Ukrainians in the Late Middle Ages for the purpose of self-identification. To take the ethnic consciousness of Belarusians as an example, most arresting appear fluctuations in their self-identification till the mid-19th c. as exemplified in such (self-)designations as *kriviči*, viz., descendents of the (Polack-Smalensk) *Kriviči* tribe,<sup>1</sup> *tutejšy* in the meaning “autochthones” as opposed to all other peoples (Jews, Poles, Russians, Latvians and so forth), *rusʹki* in the religious sense (Orthodox) (ULAŠČIK–BYXOVEC 1966: 60), *litviny* denoting the Belarusian inhabitants of the (former) GDL (cf. KOTLIARČUK 1997), hence the appearance of the name *litovskij jazyk* in the early 19th c. in reference to the official language used in the Polish–Lithuanian state (OHIVENKO 1930: 235; cf. DINI 1997: 280; XARLAMPOVIČ 1914: 105).

To trace the latter coinage, commonly used in the Russian imperial historiography as a synonym of the term “West Russian”, it would be useful to dwell on terms found in a well-known entry of *pětelʹ* ‘cock’ in Pamvo Berynda’s *Leksikonʹ* (1627): *česki i ruski, kohutʹ. volynski, pėvenʹ. litovski, petuxʹ* (NIMČUK–BERYNDA 1961: 104 These terms are commonly translated as ‘(in) Ruthenian’, ‘(in) Ukrainian’, and ‘(in) Belarusian’ (USPENSKIJ 2002: 389), although some

<sup>1</sup> This designation is obviously in tune with the prehistoric distribution of Slavic tribes as enumerated in the Primary Chronicle (HYP. 1908: 8), which locates *Kriviči* somewhere in the basin of the Upper Volga, Dvina, and Dnieper. Moreover, this term seems to rebut, along with other linguistic arguments (KRYŠKO 1998), the long-standing theory of the Lechitic origin of *Kriviči*, *Vjatiči* and other north-western East Slavic tribes (ŠAXMATOV 1915: 101–102). According to Shevelov (ŠERECH 1953: 88), the well-known dialect differences between the so-called South and North *Kriviči* are results of the North *Kriviči* (of Novgorod) merging with one substratum, and the South *Kriviči* (of Smalensk and Polock) with another substratum. Yet, in light of historic designations of Belarusians, in particular that of *kriviči*, it is useful to adhere to Kryško, tracing Old Novgorodian back to a tribal dialect of the Ilʹmen Slavs who might have had contact with the original, South *Kriviči*.

objections can arise, in particular about the spoken basis of the Ruthenian literary standard (PUGH 1996: 13). Yet, without going into details of possible objections, one can agree with NIMČUK'S (1961: 23) interpretation of the above terminology, who clearly differentiated between West Ukrainian (*ruski*), some right-bank Dnieper dialects, including Volhynian (*volynski*), and finally Belarusian (*litovski*). Unique as it may seem, Berynda's use of the name *litovski(j)* is corroborated by another example, dating to the late 17th c., as encountered in a collection of poems compiled by Klymentij Zinovijiv somewhere in Southern Černihiv or Northern Poltava region: *O tesljax, abo tež o plotnika(x) po mosko(v)ski(i): a o deilida(x) po lito(v)ski(i)* (ČЕРИНА–KZ 1971: 135). НЕРОКУПНУЙ (1971: 57) argued that in this passage the adverb *po litovski* is used in the same meaning, '(in) Belarusian', as in Berynda's entry. Apart from this derivational similarity, of utmost interest here is also a strange form, *deilidь*. Attested already in the *rusьkij jazykь* at the Princely Chancery in the early 16th c., the meaning of this word, *dojlidь*, however, is not explained by ТУМЧЕНКО (1930: 761). Yet, premised on his examples and the above citation from Zinovijiv, it is most likely 'carpenter'.

To be pedantic on the distributional ground outlined already by Nimčuk, there is limited space, if any, for the *rusьkij jazykь/prostaja mova/prostyj jazykь* as the "common [Rus. *obščij*] Middle Ukrainian and Belarusian literary language", which is likely to be a product of modern research abstraction. I would cite, in this respect, Rusanivs'kyj (2001: 61), according to whom, only the chancery language (the *rusьkij jazykь*) can be regarded as a common language of Ukrainians and Belarusians, thus belonging to the history of the literary languages of both peoples. But to heavily outweigh this quibble, one had better perceive the above commonness primarily in terms of common territories, religion with the same church language as opposed to the same secular vernacular, finally common interests and common enemies (cf. SHEVELOV 1974: 146).

In Western writings, the term *prostaja mova* is conventionally translated as *Ruthenian*, while pre-modern Ukrainian- and Belarusian-speaking territories are called sometimes *Ruthenia* (GOLDBLATT 1984: 139; see MARTEL 1938). The first writer who started to consistently use the form *Ruthen-* for the *Rus'* was a Polish chronicler, Gallus Anonymus, of French origin. Since he is known to write 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 as early as in the *Annalista Saxo* (ca. 1139), although both originated from the Gallic tribal name in Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, viz., *Ruten* (PRITSAK 1986: 61; DANYLENKO 2004: 16). The form *Ruthen-*, which in the late Middle Ages denoted East Slavs as opposed to all other Slavs and the rest of the world, only by the 16th c. began to refer to Ukrainians and Belarusians in contradistinction to *Moscovitae* (UNBE-GAUN 1969: 134–135). All in all, the above opposition within the East Slavdom is retained today in Western scholarship, as well as in literary traditions of *Slavia romana* and partly of *Slavia orthodoxa* in the Ukrainian–Belarusian territories

exposed to the influence of the sixteenth-century Western European intellectual revival (PICCHIO 1984: 10).

Thus, while being deeply rooted in Western scholarly tradition, the learned form *Ruthenian* has fewer connotations as compared with the names *rusʹskij jazyk* and, in particular, *prostaja mova* which seems to have been introduced somewhat later in the confines of *Slavia orthodoxa*. At any rate, in view of the purely Western rationale of the form *Ruthenian*, one wonders whether it is reasonable to introduce this derivative into East Slavic scholarship, especially in the transliterated form *rutenskij jazyk* (IVANOV 2005: 100–101). Used in reference to both *rusʹskij jazyk* and *prostaja mova*, as has been practiced now and then in Western scholarly tradition (STRUMIŃSKI 1984: 20–26), the *rutenskij jazyk* could hardly compete with indigenous terms, Rus. *rusʹskij/prostoj*, Ukr. *rusʹkyj/prostyj*, in East Slavic scholarship. Needless to say, the above-transliterated form is not synonymous with the outdated term *zapadnorusskij*<sup>2</sup> in some present-day Russian-language publications (cf. IVANOV–VERKHOLANTSEV 2005). TOPOROV (1998: 23) prefers speaking about a particular hybrid, “the West-Russian-Lithuanian version” (Rus. *zapadnorussko-litovskij variant*), which, according to him, was used equally by Ruthenians and Lithuanians. Clearly, this use differs from the long-running term *litovsko-russkij jazyk* referring to what is designated by the term *rusʹskij jazyk* (OHIVENKO 1930: 235).

Overall, all the above terms, denoting a secular East Slavic language as practiced in the GDL and the PLC in the late Middle Ages, fall into two groups. The first comprises self-designations of the type *rusʹskij jazyk* and *prostaja mova* or their combinations like *prosty rusʹkij dialekt* (Lavrentij Zyzanij) (NIMČUK–ZIZANIJ 1964: 23), *prostaja mova i dialekt* (Semion Timofěevič) (ŽITECKIJ 1905: 54–55) and *jazyk prostyj rusʹkij* (Meletij Smotrycʹkyj). The second group includes the learned form *Ruthenian* and artificially construed concepts of the type “the Slavic chancery language”, “Middle Belarusian” or “Middle Ukrainian”, and finally the term “zapadnorusskij jazyk” (= the *rutenskij jazyk*).

The first group can be expanded by another rather interesting learned form,

<sup>2</sup> The term “West Russian”, coined in the Russian historiography in the 19th c., looks obsolete and, as a geographical identification of Belarusian as a dialect of Great Russian, barely fits the modern paradigm of East Slavic dialect groupings (ŽURAŤSKI 1967: 239; WEXLER 1977: 59; cf. ŠERECH 1953: 91–93). This tradition (cf. KARSKIJ 1962), although in a modified version, is observable in GUMECKAJA (1965), who endorsed the existence of “the common Belarusian-Ukrainian written literary language”, viz., West Russian, to refer to those texts which could hardly be identified either as Ukrainian or Belarusian proper. A similar compromising stance is found in RUSANIV-SʹKYJ (2000). To his mind, the terms “West Russian” (Rus. *zapadnorusskij jazyk*) and “South Russian” (Rus. *južnorusskij jazyk*) are “obsolete” and modeled geographically (metropolis vs. colony). What is more remarkable, he claims that these terms are commonly interchangeable in special literature with the term “Ukrainian-Belarusian literary language” of the 14th to the 16th c. which became, in fact, a first stage in the development of Middle Belarusian and Ukrainian. A similar line of argumentation is found in HUMECʹKA (1958) who, most likely under political pressure in the 1950s, had to retain the Ukrainian equivalent *zaxidnorusʹka literaturna mova* ‘West Rusʹian literary language’ to denote a language of those records which demonstrate both Ukrainian and Belarusian features.

*rossijskij*, as encountered in seventeenth-century expressions like *dialektъ rōssijskij* written with the *omega*, the latter clearly demonstrating the Middle Greek (Byzantine) influence in the derivative base as evidenced in ‘Ρῶσία in Constantine Porphyrogenitus’s “De administrando imperio” (MORAVCSIK–CP 1967: 37: 1.43). Certain derivational details aside, the East Slavic adjective *rōssijskij* seemed to denote originally the common (*prostyj, pospolityj*) Rus’ian (Orthodox) people, as found, for instance, in the text of the statute of the Orthodox Brotherhood in L’viv of 1586 and in the comparative Greek-Slavonic grammar produced by this Brotherhood in 1591 (SOLOV’JOV 1957: 149). A similar meaning is manifest in the expression *narodъ rosiskij* in Meletij Smotryč’kyj’s preface to the second edition of the *Homiliary Gospel* (Vevis, 1616) (HG 1616: 21). The only difference is that the latter adjectival form might have derived from a competing Middle Greek form, ‘Ρῶς, also recorded, among other Byzantine texts, in “De administrando imperio” (MORAVCSIK–CP 1967: 4:1.11) (see MARTEL 1925: 272–273).<sup>3</sup> As a parallel specification of the underlying meaning, one should note a fully “autocratic” interpretation of the adjective *rōssijskij* in Russia, where, already in the late 16th c., it was associated with the Russian autocratic ruler and his state.

The above process was accompanied by a gradual decline, on the one hand, of the toponym *rus(s)kaja zemlja* ‘Rus’ian country’ and *Rusija*<sup>4</sup> in the Muscovite Rus’ and Kyiv, and, on the other, of the toponym *Rus’*, as used in the GDL, under the influence of the form *Rosija*. To take the Latin form *Rossia*, as attested twice in *Bellum Pannonicum* of an Italian historian and spy, Pietro Bizzarri (1525?–1586?), as a first example, this toponym denoted Galicia only, e. g., in *palatinus Rossiae* ‘the country of Galicia’ and *Rossia et Podolia* ‘Galicia and Podolja’ (BP 1746: 715–716). Another geographical reference is observed in the late fourteenth-century title of the Metropolitan of Kyiv and, correspondingly, in the name of the Ukrainian lands. Thus, in the preface to the Book of Hours published in Kyiv in 1616, the Hieromonach of the Kyiv Cave Monastery, Zaxarija Kopystens’kyj, wrote “отъ narochityхъ mestъ v Rōssii Kiiovskixъ”, that is, ‘[...] from the mentioned places in Kyiv, in *Rossia*’ (TITOV 1924: 6). Finally, there is a remarkable Middle Greek compound, Λιτβορωσία, literally *Litvo-rosija* or *Lithuanian Rosia*, which is attested in a charter of 1397, addressed by the Patriarch of Constantinople to Jagailo (1348–1434), Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland (RIB 1908: appendix: 298).

Interestingly enough, ‘Rus’ian’, with a new meaning designating a specific language in reference to the East Slavic literary language in the GDL, also emerged in the late 16th c. and also in the Ruthenian lands. To give the earliest

<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive survey of the corresponding derivative forms in Byzantine, German-Latin and Islamic texts, see DANYLENKO 2004.

<sup>4</sup> The form *Rusija* seems to be first attested as early as 1270 in a letter of the Bulgarian Despot Jakov Svjatoslav (1246–1272) to the Metropolitan of Kyiv, Kirill, where this form is used concurrently with a more traditional toponym, *ruskaja zemlja* (SREZNEVSKIJ 1879: 12–13). Preserved in Serbian and Bulgarian, this form was, nevertheless, dropped in Russian in the mid-17th c. (SOLOV’JOV 1957: 149).

example, the meaning is discernable in the writing (1592) of the Kyivan Orthodox Metropolitan Mychajlo Rahoza who labeled the language *slovenskij rosyjskij*. Only in the 18th c., in the eastern Ukraine under the political and ecclesiastical control of Moscow, the adjective *slovenoros[s]ijskij* began to mean a common redaction of Slavonic for all East Slavs (STRUMIŃSKI 1984: 18). Still in the late 16th–early 17th c. a new version of Church Slavonic, designed originally for the Orthodox Slavs (Ruthenians) in the GDL, was known as *slavenskij/slovenskij jazykъ* (ТИТОВ 1924: 22, 74, 251), as found in the titles of Lavrentij Zyzanij's *Hrammatika slovenska* (Vil'na, 1596) and Meletij Smotryč'kyj's *Hrammatiki Slavenskiej pravilnoe sintagma* (Vevis, 1618), cf. also *slovenskaja hrammatika* 'Slavonic grammar' in Ivan Vyšens'kyj's writings (VYŠENSKIJ 1955: 175). Finally, a more Hellenistic-like adjectival form occurs in the title of Pamvo Berynda's *Leksikonъ slavenorosskij* (1627), written with the *omega* and derived with the help of the native suffix *-sk* from the Middle Greek stem 'Ρῶς.

Keeping in mind the type of bilingualism obtained by that time in the Ruthenian society, exemplified by the *jazykъ slavenskij* as opposed to the *prostaja mova* (USPENSKIJ 2002: 388, 397), one can legitimately assume that the form *rossijskij/rossijskij (jazykъ/dialektъ)* could have been used in its generic (ethnolinguistic) meaning. First, this assumption fits well into the context of the overall glorification of Slavonic-Rhossic (*slavenorosskij*), which was placed in that time on an equal footing with Greek (*hreckij, ellinskij, ellinohrečeskij*).<sup>5</sup> Second, there is an obvious parallel with the name *rusьkij jazykъ*, which is known to designate in the late 16th c. several languages, namely, Church Slavonic of the Ukrainian recension, the spoken (Rus'ian) language and even the *prostaja mova* (BESTERS-DILGER 2005: 70, fn 9; cf. BOLEK 1983: 27–28). Remarkably, the above triad seems to be reflected in a linguistic system outlined by Ivan Uževyč in his *Gramatyka slovenskaja* (1643) (BILODID–KUDRYC'KYJ 1970); he distinguished herein between *lingua sacra sclavonica*, *lingua popularis* and *lingua sclavonica*, although the last term could also refer to the *rusьkij jazykъ*. In the *Rozmova/Besěda*, a translation of the best-selling *Berlaimont-Colloquia* in the 17th c., Ivan Uževyč contrasted the term *lingua popularis*, viz., the *prostaja mova*, and *lingua sacra*, viz., Church Slavonic (BUNČIĆ–KEIPERT 2005).

In this respect, of interest is a later expression found in Pamvo Berynda's preface to the *Triodъ Postnaja* (Triodion) (Kyiv, 1627), which was translated from Nikifor Kalista's *Synaksarion* into the *rossijskaja besěda obščaja* by Tarasij Zemka in the time of his study in Ostroh (ТИТОВ 1924: 178). In Ruthenian, the above expression may be glossed as *prosta(ja) rusьka(ja) mova*. A somewhat

<sup>5</sup> In the dedication to Prince Stefan Svjatopolk Četvertynskyj, as found in one copy of John Chrysostom's [Іоаннь Златoustъ] *Homilies* (Kyiv, 1623), Zaxarija Kopystens'kyj compared the system of Slavonic with Greek, ranking both languages higher than Latin (STRUMIŃSKI 1984: 17): "[...] maje(t) bovēm' jazykъ slavenskij takovuju v cobě silu i zacnostъ, že jazyku hreckomu jakoby prior(d)ne съhlasujetъ, vlastnosti jeho съčinętetъ", that is, '[...] because the Slavonic language has such a power and dignity that it agrees with the nature of Greek, and is in tune with its property' (ТИТОВ 1924: 74).

anachronistic expression for Ruthenian traditional terminology, the *rossijskaja besěda obščaja*, was modeled upon the Greek glottonym λόγος κοινῆ γλώσση, thus going in step with the analogous sixteenth-century translation, *obštīmъ jazykomъ*, in the Bulgarian *damaskinari*. The latter form apparently antedated the appearance of the expression *na prostomъ jezikomъ* (1755) through, most likely, the contamination of *prostym skazuvaniem* and of *obštīmъ jezikomъ*, cf. also *tlъkuvanie ot elinъski ezikъ na prostoj besedi* ‘a translation from Greek into the common vernacular’ (DELL’AGATA 1984: 158–159). All this allowed MOSER (2002: 225) to refute rightly any translation of the above Greek name into Ruthenian as *prostaja mova*. According to him, this term could hardly have been patterned on the learned Latin designation *lingua rustica* (PICCHIO 1984: 21; see USPENSKIJ 2002: 388, 407), since the *prostaja mova* ‘common vernacular’ fails to parallel the meanings ‘(related) to the countryside’, ‘local’ and ‘people’s, popular’ (Rus. *narodnyj*) (OHJENKO 1930: 135).

Among the foregoing, the most remarkable appears the term *prostaja mova*. Stripped of any ethnic connotation, its uniqueness lies in a contradiction between its use as a literary language (“a Ruthenian vernacular standard”, according to Goldtblatt), and the underlying meaning of the adjective *prostъ/prostyj* ‘common, simple, unsophisticated (style)’ (USPENSKIJ 2002: 388f.), which is in its turn derivative from two interrelated meanings ‘common’ and ‘secular’ (SREZNEVSKIJ 1895: 1583–1584).

With an eye to resolving that controversy, MOSER (2002: 225–226) postulated a non-indigenous basis for *prostaja mova*, a term as being modeled on the German expression *die gemeine (deutsche) Sprache* ‘the common German language’, attested as early as 1384 in writings of an Austrian literate, Leopold Steinreuter, and used subsequently during the Reformation. Apart from some secondary meanings, the German adjective *gemein* coincides, according to MOSER (ib.), with Ruthenian *prostyj*, both having the meaning ‘common; simple’. To prove the alleged parallelism, the author cited the above-mentioned adjectives as found in the titles of Jan Seclucian’s *Katechizmy tekst prosti dla prostego ludu. wkrolewczu [...]* (Königsberg, 1545) and Martynas Mažvydas’s *Catechismusa prasty szadei [...]* (Königsberg, 1547), which was in fact a translation of this Polish Catechism (see STANG 1929: 179). Thus, MOSER (2002, 226) concluded that the German expression *die gemeine Sprache*<sup>6</sup> had in fact been an ultimate source for the borrowing of the Ruthenian name *prostaja mova*.

## 2. *Mova prosta* in the Polish Kingdom

The above hypothesis is rooted in the scholarly tradition (Žytec’kyj, Vladimirov, Peretc), dealing primarily with the Reformation and Counter-Reformation

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the title of Martin Luther’s *Enchiridion* of 1529: *Der kleine Catechismus für die gemeine Pfarrherr und Prediger*, that is, ‘The Small Catechism for the Common Pastors and Preachers’ (LUTHER–ENCHIRIDION 1910: 239)

discussion about the admissible use of the vulgar tongue in the Polish Kingdom, in particular, in the Ruthenian lands. One can cite here most interesting expressions as found in Gregorz Knapski's *Thesaurus polonolatinograecus* (Crakow, 1621) under the lexical entry "mowa": *mowa gruba, prosta, pospolita, stilus rudis, ὁ λόγος ἄκοσμος, ἰδιωτικὸς* (KLEMENSIEWICZ 1974: 353, 354), with the Polish term *mowa prosta* which is remarkably reminiscent of the Ruthenian term *prostaja(m) mova*. Moreover, in view of the similarity in names, it is even tempting to parallel the MPol. *mowa prosta* with the so-called *mowa prosta* (or *język tutejszy*), which is basically an uncodified Belarusian vernacular spoken in the border region of contemporary Belarus', Lithuanian, and Latvia (WIEMER 2003). Yet both chronologically and structurally, the two identical names are different in their relation to the *prostaja mova* which denoted a vernacular *koiné* as cultivated by representatives of different East Slavic speech communities.

Chronologically, the Polish adjective *prosty* as used in similar expressions, might have antedated the emergence of the Ruthenian counterpart, which seems to speak indirectly for the borrowing of the latter from Polish. At first sight, several arguments may be adduced in favor of this claim, which, nevertheless, stands on shaky grounds. To start with, first attestations of the Polish adjective *prosty* in the meaning 'simplex, facilis, perspicus' are found in the *Kazania Gnieźnieńskie* extant from the late 14th c., e. g., *proste pyszmo* 'simple writing' and *prosty vyklath ewangely szwyanthy* 'simple language of the Holy Gospel' (SSP 1973–1977: 68), where *prosty* seems to allude to the embryonic literary dignity of the local vulgar tongue as opposed to Latin and also to German and Czech.

Strikingly enough, until the 16th c. there was in the Polish Kingdom no major attempt to affirm the literary dignity of Polish, although the language was used in different intellectual milieus, especially in fifteenth-century Cracow, and was accepted in the Polish Church for pastoral use. The level of Latinization of Polish culture was so high that it seems impossible to elevate the local vernacular to the dignity of an apostolic and sacral language. In addition, the supranational character of Latin was the expression of a political ideal aiming at the creation of a new Empire which would include, among other peoples, the whole of *Slavia orthodoxa* (PICCHIO 1984: 35). Only in the late 16th–early 17th c., with the collapse of the political system of what was called by Picchio (ib.) *Latinitas polona* and the emergence of national linguistic trends within the *Rzecz Pospolita*, the dignity of Latin was replaced by the local vernacular without any direct struggle (MAMCZARZ 1972: 279–284). The latter fact was obviously inconceivable for the case of Ruthenian developing at a time of the general decline of the humanistic ideal of tolerance and gentrification of the elite. Consequently, the creation of "political Poles" was compensated by the retention of minor national identities, in particular, *Ruthenianness*. The latter is notoriously exemplified by a Catholic priest and publicist, Stanisław Orzechowski (Orichevius Ruthenus, 1513–1566), a Ukrainian by birth, who authored a well-known formula: "gente Ruthenus, natione Polonus sum" (FRICK 1994: 213, 215–216).

Under new conditions, when the Polish language became the carrier of the basic spiritual trends of the European Renaissance, the literary dignity of Polish was promoted by the Protestants. Yet this promotion went on sluggishly, with the only towering figure of the Calvinist Mikołaj Rej who consistently defended in his confessional writings the use of Polish, *język przyrodzony*, while identifying it with the simple (mother, vulgar) tongue or simple words (*proste słowa*). Quite remarkable, from this point of view, appears the title of his famous *Postilla* (Cracow, 1557): *Świętych słów a spraw Pańskich [...] kronika albo postylla polskim językiem a prostym wykładem też dla prostaków krótce uczyniona*; the native, Polish language is declared here to be simple and, therefore, intelligible to all common people.<sup>7</sup> However, activities of Rej and of some other Protestants and members of the Catholic establishment were most likely exceptional rather than typical of the Polish language question, since the new Polish literature in the vernacular came into being without provoking serious polemics with the supporters of other languages, save, perhaps, of the Ruthenian language. In the case of the Ruthenian language, however, which differed from the Polish in that the *prostaja mova* was not, in fact, a vulgar tongue but a vernacular koine, PERETC (1926: 7–10) accepted the mediation of Polish Protestantism and Catholicism in the spreading of the German reformation. He referred in this case to Polish *postylli* which, to his mind, might have influenced the content and the language of Ruthenian Homiliary Gospels. Among Polish confessional publications, he mentioned, in addition to the Calvinist Mikołaj Rej's *Postilla*, the Catholic Jakub Wujek's *Postilla* (Cracow, 1573), as well as the Dominican Ferus's *Postilla* published in Antwerpen in 1555, who in his turn followed Johannes Faber, Bishop of Vienna (1530–1541).

All in all, Rej's linguistic primitivism and his limited coinage of the corresponding term(s), with their possible influence on Ruthenian, can be explained through the prism of multidimensional relationships between Polish and Ruthenian. To be sure, while debating over somewhat vague terms *mowa prosta*, *język (wykład) prosty*, and the *prostaja mova* in the time of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, one should bear in mind the prior impact of Italian Renaissance Humanism for Polish and even of some earlier discussion of the *questione della lingua* for the *prostaja mova*. In the case of Polish, which, in view of a smooth transformation of its dignity, has not acquired any regular term covering the authority of the new Polish literary standard, it would be legitimate to assume two sources of possible cultural influence. The first source is associated with the European (Italian) Renaissance, the second with the German Reformation, although Luther was hesitant to demand the exclusive use of the vernacular in the Mass (FRICK 1985: 40). Finally, in case of the *prostaja mova* the overall alien impact might have been much less than traditionally purported (see § 4).

<sup>7</sup> Basically, similar lines of reasoning were also used by Catholics, e. g. Jakub Wujek, for whom, however, the strict distinction between the language of the liturgy and the language of the homily had to be maintained (FRICK 1984: 43).

### 3. The vernacular in Lithuania Major and Lithuania Minor

Speaking about the vernacular standard as used in the GDL (Lithuania Major) and the Duchy of Prussia (Lithuania Minor) (hereafter, DP), Lithuanian functioned under different conditions in Lithuania and Prussia. In the DP, the Lithuanian element did not fade, but eventually grew stronger through the reforms undertaken by the last Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Albrecht von Hohenzollern. Advised by Luther, Duke Albrecht dissolved the Teutonic order, secularized the state, restructured it into the Duchy of Prussia and introduced Protestantism. This prompted him to favor the preparation and publication of Protestant books in Prussian and Lithuanian. He also ordered that in Prussia church sermons for Lithuanians, who enjoyed a privileged position as compared with the Prussians, be given in Lithuanian (ZINKEVIČIUS 1998: 227–229). It comes then as no surprise that a first Lithuanian book, the Calvinist *Katekizmas* (*Catechismusa prasty szadei, makslas skaitima raschta yr giesmes* [...] ‘Simple words of the Catechism, the Art [skill] of Reading, and Writing, and Hymns’), was published in Königsberg (1547) by Martynas Mažvydas from Lithuania Major.

Since the author used for this translation primarily the Polish catechism by Jan Seklucjan, also published in Königsberg in 1545 (STANG 1929: 179), his way of writing was patterned upon the Polish original. Apart from linguistic traits characteristic of the South Žemaitian dialect area, from where Mažvydas originally came (ZINKEVIČIUS 1988: 173–180), the language of the *Katekizmas* is somewhat influenced by Latin. In the Latin-language preface, entitled “Pastoribus et ministriis ecclesiarum in Lituania gratiam et pacem” (‘Grace and peace to the Pastors and Ministers of Churches in Lithuania’), the author criticized the clergy for their disdain for the *lingua vernacula* ‘vernacular tongue’, viz., *lingua Lithuanica nostra* ‘our Lithuanian language’ (MAŽVYDAS-KATEKIZMAS 1993: 49, 53; FORD 1971: 6–7). However, Polish interference in the morphology, vocabulary, and syntax is observable to a much greater extent. Some of the religious terminology, which reveals a “Ruthenian-Belarusian mediation” (DINI 1997: 282–283), might have been created by other translators (Abraomas Kulvietis (Culvensis), Jurgis Zablockis, Stanislavas Rapolionis et al.) whose texts were used by Mažvydas. Taken statistically, the vocabulary of the *Katekizmas* has some bookish Latinisms, borrowed as a rule via Polish or East Slavic, and a handful of Germanisms, e. g., *kunigaikštis* ‘prince’, *kunigaikštienė* and *kunigė* ‘princess’ borrowed from O(L)Gr. *kunigas* (ZINKEVIČIUS 1988: 39–40). There is, however, a plethora of (East Slavic and Polish) Slavicisms (including borrowings mediated by Slavic), which constitute almost all non-Lithuanian lexemes in this book (STANG 1929: 180). To show a close resemblance between the Lithuanian translation and its original, it is helpful to cite the very beginning of the text translated word for word from the Polish (TOPOROV 1998: 75–76): *Catechismusa prasty szadei del prastu zmaniu o didziaus del suneliu ir scheiminas hukiniku*, ‘The simple words of a catechism for simple people and especially for the sons and households of householders’ (GERULLIS 1923: 17; FORD 1971: 28–29)

Thus, despite the fact that the first Lithuanian book was published in a Germanized society, where, however, Lithuanian was more widely rooted in the public life than in the Lithuania itself, the direct German influence in this book is reduced to nil, in particular in what regards the alleged use of the names *Gemeinsprache*, *die gemeine Sprache*. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Mažvydas, invited by Duke Albrecht from the GDL (Lithuania Major), did not know German at all (STANG 1929: 180), albeit he might have had a good command of the *rusьkij jazыkъ* as used in the GDL. Two years after the publication of the *Katekizmas*, in his letter of 1549 to Duke Albrecht, the author, who was conceivably highly versed in his mother tongue, disclosed his complete ignorance of the German language: “[...] non calleo aliquantulum Germanice. Etsi vero ignorem Germanice tamen quia meam nativam linguam Lituanicam, dico, perfectissime scio” (TOPOROV 1998: 43–44; cf. MAŽVYDAS–KATEKIZMAS 1993: 653f.).<sup>8</sup> Only much later, after having been appointed pastor in Ragainė (Ger Ragnat) parish, where he worked until his death in 1563, did he master German so that he was able to communicate with his German-born wife and publish a small book *Forma krikštymo* (1559), which he translated from the original *Kirchen Ordnung* (1558), including one hymn composed by Martin Luther (ZINKEVIČIUS 1988: 44–45).

It would be instructive, in this place, to track down the adjective *prāstas* in writings of Mažvydas as compared with other Lithuanian authors of that time, which will indirectly allow us to determine if this lexeme was used in names similar to the *prostaja mova* or *die gemeine Sprache*. What is remarkable in this respect is that, semantically, the adjective *prāstas* was loosely connected with MHGr. *gemein*. In the seventeenth-century manuscript German–Lithuanian Dictionary, attributed to Friedrich Prātorius Senior (1624–1695) from the DP, the word *gemein* has two translations. The first is ‘mužikkas’ as found in Konstantinas Sirvydas’ *Dictionarium trium linguarum* (first edition in 1620), cf. MoLith. *mužikas* ‘peasant’, Bel. *muzyk* (LKŽ 1972: 491). The second meaning is exemplified with the help of two adjectives, *paspalitas* and *prastas* (CLAVIS 1995: 191). The adjective *paspalitas*, derived from Pol. *pospólity*, was commonly used in the meaning ‘usual, common’, e. g., in Baltramiejus Vilentas’s *Enchiridion*, a translation of Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism* (VILENTAS–ENCHIRIDION 1882: 39), and even ‘catholic’ (SKARDŽIUS 1931: 160). Having produced, by that time, a lot of derivatives like *paspalitvas* ‘common’, *paspalitva* and *paspalstva* ‘community’ and some others (ib.), this adjective was more likely to occur in the expression ‘common people’ as in Mikalojus Daukša’s *Postilla Catholica* (1599): *žmones paspalitos* (pl.) (84.31; LKŽ 1973: 519). Interestingly enough, this adjective is attested only one time in the writings of Mažvydas: *paspalita Malda* ‘common

<sup>8</sup> Remarkably, the Latin-language introduction was not written by Mažvydas, either; as far as some hymns are concerned, e. g., “Giesme ape swetasti” which may be juxtaposed with a German song from Luther’s *Geistliche Liede* (‘Sacred Songs’), they were translated from Seklucjan’s original, primarily from *Pyesíy duchowne, a nabožne nowo zebrine y wydane przez Jana Secluciana* (1547). At any rate, none of the three hymns in the *Katekizmas* was translated directly from German, in particular by Mažvydas (STANG 1929: 180).

prayer' (GERULLIS 1923: 590; URBAS 1996: 273). This may be tentatively related to a less Polish influence in the DP as compared with the GDL, where the Union of Lublin (1569) accelerated Polish acculturation of Lithuanian aristocracy.

The adjective *prāstas* 'poor, fair; common, simple, regular' (LKŽ 1976: 549–550), along with numerous nominal and verbal derivatives, is commonly regarded as a Slavic borrowing (ZINKEVIČIUS 1987: 140), either from Polish *prosty* or Belarusian *prosty* (SKARDŽIUS 1931: 176; FRAENKEL 1962: 646); a similar borrowing scenario is also postulated for the Latvian parallel form *prasts* (KARULIS 1992: 77), which is likely to speak of the East Slavic origin of this adjective. In the works of Mažvydas, this adjective is used 13× in the meaning 'priprastas' ('usual, common') and 4× in the meaning 'šiokia diena, ne šventė' ('week day, non-holiday'), e. g., *prastosu dienosu* 'ordinary day' (loc. sg.) (481. 7; URBAS 1996: 300). Among them, there are two well-known examples in collocations *prasty szadei* 'simple words' (2×) and *prastas Textas* 'simple text' (1×) (1.17, 583.1; URBAS 1996: 300), which are related somehow to "simplicia [...] verbi Catechismi" (Mažvydas's letter of 1551) (MAŽVYDAS–KATEKIZMAS 1993: 679) and therefore can bring about an association with the *prostaja mova* or Polish vernacular, called by Gregorz Knapski "mowa prosta" in his *Thesaurus polono-latinograecus* (see § 2).<sup>9</sup> All other uses are also characteristic of more or less set expressions, which are encountered as clichés in later confessional publications. The first, most representative collocation is *prastas wando* (3×), as attested in: *Kriksstas ne esti tektai prastas wando* (24.5; URBAS 1996: 300), literally, 'Baptism is not only simple water'.

It is not surprising that the above collocation is repeated only twice in the so-called Lysius Catechism, *Mažasis Katekizmas* (1719): *Krikštas esti ne prāstas tiktay Wandū* 'Baptism is not only simply water' (24.5) and again, in the next page, *prāstas Wandū* 'simple water' (25.13) (LYSIUS–KATEKIZMAS 1993: 168–169, 255). This was a new version of the Lithuanian translation of Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*, specifically designed, under the sponsorship of Heinrich Johann Lysius, to accommodate Prussian Lithuanians, living in new conditions of heavy German influence (DINI 1997, 359; cf. ALEKNAVIČIENE 2001). Yet, remarkably, no mention of vulgar Lithuanian is made in the revised text of the *Mažasis Katekizmas*, although Luther himself designed his Catechism for common priests and preachers (LUTHER–ENCHIRIDION 1910: 239; see fn. 6).

Finally, to shape a fuller socio-linguistic picture of the Lithuanian-speaking territories, it is peremptory to briefly dwell on Lithuania Major, where Lithuanian, due to the Polonization of the aristocracy, was relegated by the late 16th c. to the lower class, rural masses who both preserved and continued to develop their ancient vernacular (ZINKEVIČIUS 1988: 157–172). Since the authors of the first Lithuanian books in the GDL belonged to the Polonized upper class, open to the Reformation (mostly Calvinism), their publications were primarily transla-

<sup>9</sup> Today, the idea of 'common, simple language' is associated in the Lithuanian language, first of all, with a poor command of the language: *Jis prastaĩ kalba lietuviškai* 'he speaks Lithuanian poorly' (LKŽ 1976: 549).

tions from Polish, sometimes not only transferring lexical items, but also imitating the syntax (see DANYLENKO 2005: 155–158).

Because of the threat of the Reformation, mediated in particular by the Polish language, more radical in their argumentation in favor of the propagandistic use of the vernacular were Catholics. Among them, one can name Mikalojus Daukša, the canon of the Episcopal College of the Samogitian diocese (ZINKEVIČIUS 1988: 173–180), who was the most prominent partisan of the written language of the former Duchy of Samogitia. He published two books, the *Katekizmas* (1595), a translation of Jacob Ledesma's *Catechism*, and the *Postilla Catholicka* (1599), a translation of Jakub Wujek's *Postilla Catholicka Mnieysza*, published in Cracow (1590) (LOCHER 1972: 178, 181). Interestingly enough, in his *Katekizmas* (DAUKŠA–KATEKIZMAS 1995: 711), there is no attestation yet of the adjective *prāstas* which may be somehow associated with the status of Lithuanian in the Polish–Lithuanian society.<sup>10</sup> However in the Polish-language “Preface unto the benevolent reader” to his *Postilē* Daukša condemns the neglect and rejection of own (Lithuanian) vernacular, caused by the domination of Polish; this is why he urges that Lithuanian be introduced into everyday life in the church, state and society, because “[j]ęzyk iest spólnym związkiem miłosci, matką iedności, oycem społecznosci, państhw strożem” (“The language is a common bond of love, mother of unity, father of community, and a defender of the country”). It is important to note for our case that, throughout the preface, he consistently calls this language either *język (swój) własny* or *język ojczysty*, without any derivative form from *prosty* (PALIONIS–DAUKŠA 2000: 42, 43, 45), although the lexeme *prāstas* is encountered more than 10× in different lexical environments in the main text of his *Postilē* (KUDZINOWSKI 1977: 142).

In this regard, of utmost importance are works of another prominent representative of Lithuania Major, Konstantinas Sirvydas, an ardent Jesuit who worked hard on the normalization and the popularization of the eastern variant of the written language as used in the center of the GDL, in Vilnius. From the outset of the Polish–Lithuanian Union, this language was most exposed to Polish interference and subsequently underwent drastic changes due to Polish acculturation, accompanied by the influx of newcomers from the Slavic-speaking territories. All this had a disastrous effect on its dialect basis and the status of this literary language, which subsequently demised in the early 18th c. (ZINKEVIČIUS 1998: 253–255). As if foreseeing the future disaster of the Vilnius vernacular, Sirvydas hastened to record its norm in his *Dictionarium trium linguarum* (‘A Dictionary of Three Languages [Polish–Lithuanian–Latin]’) (first edition in 1620) and *Cla-*

<sup>10</sup> The only example of this adjective is found in the expression [...] *idqnt manús prastoimus* (acc. pl.) ‘coming empty-handed’ (DAUKŠA–KATEKIZMAS 1995: 189.13) with the accusative case which may be identified with the so-called “Greek accusative” as attested in Latin and other Indo-European languages, in particular Slavic and Baltic (HAUDRY 1977: 283). However, for our case, of utmost importance is not the archaic construction with the accusative similar to the “Greek accusative”, but the idiomatic realization of the adjective ‘simple’ as ‘empty’.

*vis linguae Lithuanicae* ('A Key to the Lithuanian Language Grammar') (purportedly in 1630, although there is no extant copy) (SCHMALSTIEG 1982).

Yet most valuable material for our analysis can be found in Sirvydas's two-volume *Punktai sakymų* ('Gospel Points') (PS), which was published in 1629 (vol. I) and 1644 (vol. II, posthumously prepared for the publication by Jonas Jaknavičius). A synopsis of the author's sermons, the book was originally written in the eastern variant of Lithuanian and subsequently translated into Polish, thus presenting a more or less normalized native usage against the background of Polish (ZINKEVIČIUS 1988: 254–256). A comparative survey of the meanings of the adjective *prāstas* in this work will allow me to decide whether the unique attestation of this adjective in the title of Mažvydas's *Katekizmas* has any validity for the history of "Prussian Lithuanian", the "Samogitian language", and the eastern (Vilnius) variant of the literary Lithuanian language (ZINKEVIČIUS 1998: 224–255).

On the whole, there are six examples of the adjective *prāstas* which are the following in the order of their attestation (see SERAFINI AMATO 2000):

	Lithuanian text	Polish text	Translation
1.	<i>Nes kita ira nusidet wagisty daykto prasto, o kita nusidet wagisty daykto Dieuwu paszwisto</i> (PS, I, 147.7–11)	<i>Abowiem insza iest zgrzebyć kradzieża rzeczy prostey, a insza zgrzebyć kradzieża rzeczy Bogu poświęconey</i> (PS, I, 147.7–12)	'Because it is one thing to commit the thievery of an ordinary thing, but it is another thing to commit a thievery of a thing, dedicated to God'
2.	[...] <i>ne wiena prasta žmona ir pawargusi sunaus ne turetu</i> (PS, I, 168.1–3)	[...] <i>żadna prosta niewiasta y uboga synaby nie miała</i> (PS, I, 167.30–168.1–2)	'[...] no simple and poor woman would have a son'
3.	[...] <i>nereykia skirt nusideimu ing dalas, kaip kartais prastieji daro</i> (PS, I, 247.21–24)	[...] <i>nie trzeba dzielić grzechów na części, jako czasem prości czynią</i> (PS, I, 247.22–24)	'One should not divide sins into parts, as sometimes the common people do'
4.	<i>Wel buwo ne iz didžiu giminiu, ney auksztu namu, bet prasti leti pokim swieto</i> (PS, I, 298.25–28)	<i>Ktemu byli nie z wielkich familij ani wysokich domow ale prości podli w świata</i> (PS, I, 298.24–28)	'Besides, they were not of the great families nor of the noble houses, but simple ordinary people in the eyes of the world'
5.	[...] <i>ir beweliia prastu duonu ir sausu krimst</i> (PS, II, 85.2–4)	[...] <i>y wolą prosty y suchy chleb gryść</i> (PS, II, 85.2–3)	'[...] and they wish to gnaw only simple and stale bread'
6.	<i>Er didis žmogus? er prastas?</i> (PS, II, 196.23–24)	<i>Czy to wielki człowiek? czy prosty?</i> (PS, II, 196.23–25)	'Is this a great man or simple?'

While demonstrating a semantic parallelism with the Polish adjective *prosty* (SSP 1973–1977: 68), all the above examples fall roughly into two groups, covering correspondingly two basic meanings of the adjective *prāstas*, viz.,

‘simplex, communis’ (1 and 5) and ‘simplex, modestus, qui nulla re excellit’ (2, 3, 4, 6); yet some semantic fluctuations are possible, as in sentence 4, where the adjective can be interpreted in a twofold manner. However, the most remarkable thing is that, save for the two regular meanings, there is not a single example of the adjective *prāstas* in the meaning ‘facilis, perspicuus’ in reference to the (Lithuanian) vernacular, thus stressing its intelligibility to all common people.

Altogether, there are no solid grounds for drawing a parallel between the Lutheran term *Gemeinsprache*, the Ruthenian *prostaja mova*, let alone the Polish *język (wykład) prosty*, with the Lithuanian expression *prasty szadei*. Attested reliably only once in a translation from Polish, this expression has never acquired a terminological status, comparable to that of the *prostaja mova*, thus remaining in the periphery of the Lithuanian language question. It is not surprising since the socio-linguistic situation in Lithuania was radically different from that in the Ruthenian lands. As FRICK (1994: 213) pointed out, the process of acculturation was clearly smoother for the Lithuanians who did not have a radical confessional difference from the dominant culture in Polish–Lithuanian society. Speaking in linguistic terms, as the Lithuanians became Polonized and Catholicized, they learned an entirely new language. Moreover, this language might have been perceived by the majority of the Lithuanian élite as an important vehicle for strengthening the political Union of two states, thus placing Polish within a hierarchic system of other rhetorical and linguistic norms represented by the vernacular, Latin, and (in the case of Lithuania Minor) German.

In the Ruthenian lands, on the contrary, in addition to confessional differences, the Ruthenians learned a new alphabet, but spoke a vernacular related to the new, Polish language and could thus be perceived as speaking a social variant of the better-positioned Polish language (FRICK 1994: 213). As Ruthenians became more and more linguistically, culturally and politically Polonized, the potential for tensions became greater. Clearly, there was no such potential in the Lithuanian society, which may tentatively explain the lack of extensive polemics about the rights of the Lithuanian language as compared with the Ruthenian writings. Yet one can hardly adduce persuasive arguments in favor of the alien nature of the name *prostaja mova* rather than of its old indigenous tradition, sprung up, most likely, in the time of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission.

#### 4. The *prostaja mova* – Ruthenian or “Lutheran”?

To resolve the above conundrum, it is expedient to investigate the emergence of the *prostaja mova* in the context of Constantine and Methodius’s linguistic program, which, according to SHEVELOV (1988–1989: 596), was unusual enough in the ninth-century Byzantium and even far beyond, in all of Christian Europe. The point is that the brothers considered the local vernacular not simply as a means, e. g., in translating some prayers and the Gospel, but as a program for employing Slavic as a missionary and a liturgical language at the cost of Greek and Latin.

Vis-à-vis this unprecedented “linguistic democratism” of Constantine and Methodius, it is interesting to note some arresting examples of the adjective *prostъ* as used in *Vita Constantini* (VC) (LAVROV–VC 1930) and *Vita Methodii* (VM) (LAVROV–VM 1930) (see DVORNÍK 1933: 339–343). In these texts, the adjective occurs in the expressions *prosta čadъ* (LAVROV–VM 1930: 5, 72; see LLP 1967–1973: 382) or *neknížnaa čedъ* (LAVROV–VC 1930: 10, 21),<sup>11</sup> as opposed to *oumnaę čadъ i knížna* (LAVROV–VC 1930: 6, 8). A detailed analysis of the meaning of *prost-* in Old Church Slavonic aside (cf. SHEVELOV 1988–1989: 603–604), it is clear that the adjective *prostъ* in both *Vitae* is fairly synonymous with *neknížnaa* and antonymous to *oumnaę* and *knížna*. There are six meanings of this adjective as glossed in the LLP (1973–1982: 382–383): (1) ‘simplex, rusticus’ (‘unsophisticated’), (2) ‘purus, lucidus’ (‘sincere’), (3) ‘profanus’ (‘usual’), (4) ‘idiota’ (‘uneducted’), (5) ‘rectus’ (‘straight’), and (6) ‘remitti’ (‘free of something’).<sup>12</sup> Meanings (2) and (5), and partially meaning (6), seem basically to be lost. As SHEVELOV (1988–1989: 603) assumed, meaning (4) is likely to be a Slavic innovation, since it is persistently used along with meanings (1) and (2) in VM and indirectly, through synonyms, also in VC. Remarkably, meaning (4) is retained in the Lithuanian *prāstas*, as found in FRAENKEL (1962: 646) and examples 2, 3, 4, and 6 excerpted from Sirvydas’s *Punktai sakymų* (see § 3), the most representative text from the point of view of the usage of *prāstas*. Moreover, meanings (4), (1), and (2), which as a whole agrees with Shevelov’s thesis about the brothers’ “linguistic democratism”, proved to be historically most viable since they are found in most Slavic languages, first and foremost in Ukrainian.

The question arises as to the parallelism in the semantic spectrum of OCS *prostъ* and MUkr. *prostyj*. Is this a common patrimony or a result of the specific development of the adjective *prostyj* in the “glottonymic meaning” under the influence of Lutheran Reformation as postulated by Moser? The linguistic material prompts us to opt for the latter possibility. To begin with, the semantic amplitude of *prostyj* in the name *prostaja mo(l)va* or *prostyj jazykъ* (ŽURAŮSKI 1967: 238) is basically identical with that for the Cyrillo-Methodian period, but the main meanings now activated were (1) and (4) (SHEVELOV 1988–1989: 618). What was new in the occurrence of the adjective *prostyj* with the noun *jazykъ*? This collocation was dubious in the time of VC and VM, since the noun *jazykъ* was primarily used in the meaning ‘people’. This is why, in order to avoid

<sup>11</sup> As SHEVELOV (1988–1989: 600–601) rightly noted, these characterizations of either the Moravian or the Khazar flock were by no means derogatory. There is, however, a rather similar expression, *groub(a)ja čadъ* (LAVROV–VM 1930: 9, 75), which, however, conveys a derogatory attitude toward German clerical adversaries. Speaking about the noun *čadъ*, its meaning in VC and VM as ‘people’ (SHEVELOV 1988–1989: 605), although the etymological meaning was ‘children’ (SREZNEVSKIJ 1912: 1469).

<sup>12</sup> To maintain the argumentation of Shevelov as a whole, in particular in terms of its chronological order, we keep numbers of the meanings as proposed by the author, albeit the LLP (382–383) glosses them in a somewhat different order: (1) ‘simplex, rusticus’, (2) ‘purus, lucidus’, (3) ‘profanus’, (4) ‘idiota’, (5) ‘remitti’, and (6) ‘rectus’, which in no way effects our own line of reasoning.

possible ambiguity of the word *jazykь*, the author of CV made use of some other lexemes, e. g., *glagolati besědoju* ‘to speak a language’ (LAVROV–VC 1930: 11, 12) next to *glagolati jazyky* ‘to speak languages’ (LAVROV–CV 1930: 31); *rečь* (ib.: 11) with a remarkable seventeenth-century parallel, *rossijskaja besěda obščaja*, in Tarasij Zemka’s translation (1627) of Nikifor Kalista’s *Synaksarion* (see § 1). SHEVELOV (1988–1989: 618) concluded that the formation of the expression *prostyj jazykь* was naturally determined by two factors. First, the lexeme *čadь* went out of use. Second, and this is more important, the word *jazykь* underwent cardinal semantic changes, with the meaning ‘people, nation’ relegated to archaisms virtually alien to the active vocabulary.

Altogether, one can posit here a development from *prosta čadь* to *prostyj jazykь*, to be later replaced by (*prostaja*) *mova*, a simplification which SHEVELOV (1988–1989: 621) was ready to perceive as a manifestation of the “linguistic democratism” that marked, according to him, so many phenomena in the history of the Ukrainian language (see VAKULENKO 1995: 144). It follows from the above, that the adjective *prostyj* was by no means limited to the “rustica lingua” (PICCHIO 1984: 21), but denoted the city dwellers, clergy, and intellectuals, in short all Ruthenians of Orthodox denomination (OHIJENKO 1930: 135). According to SHEVELOV (1988–1989: 618–619), in the same vein Constantine’s and Methodius’s *prosta čadь* included not only peasants, but also princes.<sup>13</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

The Ruthenian “linguistic democratism”, which became palpable in the mid-16th c., just a few decades after the Reformation, but without any obvious reference to it (SHEVELOV 1988–1989: 616), was brought about by, strictly speaking, “domestic reasons”. The point is that the vernacular character of Church Slavonic in the 9th century was entirely lost, and the vernacular itself was essentially put outside of church already in the Bulgaria of Boris and Symeon and especially during the enforced Hellenization of the Bulgarian Church in the 11th c. onward. (GOLDBLATT 1984: 130–131). After centuries of petrification of the Church Slavonic language, which underwent a new codification by Smotryč’kyj for the

<sup>13</sup> VAKULENKO (1995: 144) gives an interesting survey of the modern distribution of the words *jazykь* and *mova* (< OCS *mlъva* ‘tumultus, turbatio’) (LLP 1967–1973: 220) in modern Slavic languages. The author does not accept Shevelov’s thesis about the “linguistic democratism” which might have ousted the noun *jazykь* associated with the Old Church Slavonic tradition; he claims instead that the latter lexeme was aptly used in Ukrainian linguistics in the beginning of the 20th c. to refer to the Saussurian *parole*. However, this argument does not look much convincing since Vakulenko discusses the only known to him use of the lexeme *jazyk* in the translation of Kristian Sandfeld’s first edition of *Die Sprachwissenschaft*, published by a Ukrainian linguist, Jevhen Tymčenko, in 1920. Interestingly enough, Vakulenko’s position, reviving the term *jazyk* in modern Ukrainian linguistics, is reminiscent of that of Ivan Vyšens’kyj. The latter belonged to a more conservative wing of Ukrainian intellectuals in the late 16th–early 17th c. Although the word *mova* had advanced so far that, by the 1580s, it was used in a high style poem along with Church Slavonicisms (SHEVELOV 1988–1989: 621), Vyšens’kyj consistently employed the word (*prostyj*) *jazykь*, which sometimes even could be associated with peasants, e. g., *xlop prostyj* ‘a common peasant’ (VYŠENSKIJ 1955: 25).

church use, the admittance of the *prostyj jazykь/prostaja mova* in the secular milieu became the only way out of the overall cultural stagnation of the “Hlupaja Rus” (“Foolish Rus”) (VYŠENSKIJ 1955: 179), especially in the face of ever-growing Polish acculturation in the late 16th c. Viewed as a resurrection of the indigenous Slavic Orthodox tradition of “linguistic democratism”, first engendered by the mission of Constantine and Methodius, one can legitimately wonder whether there are any ideological grounds for juxtaposing the Ruthenian *prostyj jazykь/prostaja mova* with the Polish *mowa prosta, język (wykład) prosty*, let alone the Middle Lithuanian expression *prasty szadei*.

The Polish and especially Lithuanian terms were unique derivatives compared with the Ruthenian analogous form. Their productivity and usage in the written records reflect cardinal differences in the vernacular language question in other than Ruthenian lands in the PLC. Unlike the Ruthenians who returned to their “linguistic democratism” to stand firm against Polish acculturation, the Poles did not feel any necessity to make any major attempt to affirm the literary dignity of their language until the 16th c. The relationship between Latin and the Polish vernacular was not seen as a conflict at all, since the *Latinitas polona* was the expression of a political ideal aiming at a new *imperium* (PICCHIO 1984: 35); hence the lack of terminological use of the name *mowa prosta* or *język prosty* to refer to Polish which replaced Latin “peacefully” after the collapse of the PLC (MAMCZARZ 1972: 279–284).

As was emphasized, the Lithuanian vernacular question was somewhat similar to the Polish in that Lithuanians seem not to have engaged in any direct struggle against Polish in the GDL. In Lithuania Minor, however, Duke Albrecht favored the preparation and publication of Protestant books not in German, but in Prussian and Lithuanian. Unlike the Ruthenian lands, the Polish acculturation in the GDL went comparatively smoothly. Polish might have been perceived by the Lithuanian aristocracy, striving to become “gente Lithuani, natione Poloni”, as a banner of the political Union of the two states. Remarkably, after its demise and subsequent partitions by Prussia and Russia, the Lithuanian literary and spoken language also underwent a prolonged period of decline, never even narrowing its dependence on Polish in Lithuania Major (ZINKEVIČIUS 1998: 256–258). This is why, having used the expression *prasty szadei* only once in a direct translation from the Polish original, the Lithuanians did not even take any effort to coin a term similar to that used by Ruthenians or, sporadically and in a non-terminological use, by Poles.

To sum up, the emergence of the name of the vernacular(s) used in different lands of the Polish–Lithuanian state took place in various socio-linguistic conditions. However, save for a few calqued translations in Polish and Lithuanian, the coinage and the use of the corresponding names, as discussed above, were not directly determined by the debate about the dignity of the vulgar tongue(s) in the Protestant devotional works. The core term, the *prostyj jazykь/prostaja mova*, as well as early Polish attestations of the adjective *prosty* in the *Kazania Gnieźnieńskie* (late 14th c.), are most likely products of the historical revival of the

Slavic linguistic democratism dating back to Constantine and Methodius's programmatic principles.\*

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