

Constructing Canons: Ruthenian Literatures of the 17th-18th Centuries in Plurilingual Context.

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Over the last few decades, and mainly since the dramatic changes triggered by the events of 1989, literary and cultural studies have introduced several new methodological proposals and interpretation patterns aimed at a clearer understanding and conceptualization of the literatures of Eastern Central Europe. These are especially useful for the lands historically belonging first to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, later to the Hapsburg and the Russian Empires and lastly – at least partially – to the Second Rzeczpospolita. Polish literary criticism has questioned the main methodological premises and the conceptual frames of previous interpretations: at the center of contemporary literary and cultural discourse are: the need to reconsider the concept of *kresy*, the usefulness of the broader and more ‘friendly’ intellectual tool of *pogranicze* and the possibility of reconciling plurilinguism and multiculturalism with the old or newly formed independent countries’ desire to “construct” (or re-construct) the history of their own cultural and literary identity (Bakuła 2000: 22ff; Bakuła 2006, 2007; Nycz 2012; Marinelli 2005; Fazan, Zajas 2012, with the quoted literature). Suggested comparative approaches indicate possible means of shedding light on the multilayered linguistic, literary and religious entities known politically today as Belarus’, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine: the need to find correspondence between the geographical or political boundaries of today and the real situation of the past often leads to results which, on the one hand, remain incomplete while, on the other, lose credibility in the effort to appropriate all possible writers and works to one literary ‘canon’ or another. The fact that many scholars still lack sufficient understanding of the above-mentioned literatures and methodological skills, often makes comparative studies difficult. The generally accepted fact that the literature of the 16th-18th centuries was expressed in several languages in most European countries is not enough to understand the relationships between several literary systems. Moreover, the very existence of a Ukrainian, a Belarusian or a Lithuanian literary system has not yet been described satisfactorily, especially for the pre-modern periods. The ‘inclusiveness’ of Polish literature with respect to the Polish language works written by Ruthenian literati within the political boundaries of the Rzeczpospolita is still under discussion. On the other hand, serious doubts may arise about the ‘appropriation’ of Polish language masterpieces by Belarusian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian literary histories simply on the basis of their authors’ Ruthenian origin or the existence of Ruthenian ‘realia’ (often merely of a folk, ‘arcadian’ or ‘bucolic’

character). Efforts to single out various components of the complex literary system of the Commonwealth from the perspective of 'national narratives' follow various 'models'. Polish and Latin language poets and writers are included in the Belorussian and Ukrainian 'narrative' respectively by Saverčanka (1998) and Pachlovska (1998). McMillin (1977: 5-68) extrapolated Belorussian writers by their place of birth and linguistic specificities connected to Belorussianisms and *prosta mova*. It is not always easy to distinguish Belorussian and Ukrainian writers inside the common 'Ruthenian literary space', though in many cases differences may be proved. In other cases it is difficult to accept a consideration of such Polish and Latin language writers as S. Szymonowic, S. and B. Zimorowic, and P. Skarga as Ukrainian or Belorussian writers respectively. In some cases, the legitimate desire to single out a 'national' narrative is at odds with the equally legitimate belonging of a writer to another narrative. Belonging to various overlapping literary narratives and the existence of common features and of a supra-national literary narrative seem unavoidable. 'Internal comparative' studies as postulated by Ziembra (2005) may be a useful methodological perspective for each of these literary histories and for the examination of their functional and intertextual connections.

Problems about whether works belong to one literary system or another or about whether one system of works and authors has been appropriated by another system also concern the relationship between Ukrainian and Russian literature, mainly from the second half of the 17th century. The main difference is that Russian literary criticism seems to find it harder to question the issue with methodological approaches pertaining to postcolonial studies, to the conceptualizations of 'frontier' and 'borderland' or to investigations about identity (be they linguistic, religious, regional, proto-national or social).

My aim in this paper is to pinpoint certain elements concerning the possibility of 'constructing' a Ukrainian history of literature of the 17th-early 18th centuries, taking into account the function of language in the development of that literature. Very similar considerations concern Belarusian literature as well. It must also be stressed that in the period in question a more general Ruthenian system included works belonging to both Belorussian and Ukrainians literature, plus works belonging to Eastern Slavic literature as a whole, while at the same time partially being part of the literature of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. A more flexible approach would allow us to examine the apparent contradictions between several literary 'canons' in such a way as to outline the existence of a Ukrainian (and a Belarusian) literary system in that period, while at the same time focusing on the mutual integration of one literary system into a complex of other neighboring literary systems. The choice of languages by various authors with respect to the situation of communication may help to shed some new light on the whole issue.

Let us briefly recall that from the early 1600s cultural pressure exerted by the Polish language was very strong, but Ruthenian literati had already elaborat-

ed a language (*rus'ka mova*)¹ in which to express their thoughts and write prose and verse with evident marks of identity and aesthetic values. No less important points of reference were Latin and Church Slavonic. What prompted a writer to choose one language rather than another? How strongly was this choice related to a question of 'proto-national' identity? Did the possibility of multiple linguistic choices undermine the existence and nature of a literary system? Unlike during the Inter-war and Soviet periods, recent literary criticism easily accepts the existence of literature expressed in as many languages as represented in the Ruthenian lands: Church Slavonic, Latin, Polish, Ruthenian (Ukrainian or Belarusian) – in alphabetical order. This list could include even Greek, for the end 16th-early 17th centuries (Frick 1985: 33) and – although with a different function – between the 1730s and the 1780s. By then, German was also one of the languages of the Academy of Sciences, while Polish played an important role in Western Ukrainian ecclesiastical tradition. Although the issue of plurilinguism is of interest for practically any epoch, I will limit my observations to some aspects concerning the main four languages used in Ukraine in the late 16th-early 18th centuries.

Early 17th century poems written in Western Ukraine contain interesting identity markers coming from language and expressed ideas. In the *Lament* for the death of Oleksandr of Ostrih (1603) the author (possibly Demjan Nalyvajko) has the deceased Prince himself recommending his sons to maintain “their loyalty to their ancestor’s belief and [defend] the honour of the ancient and noble family”. Simplicity, piety and courage are the virtues to be followed, as if modeled on Ancient and Renaissance examples. The recommendation not to betray the true Orthodox faith is preceded by a no less important declaration to respect the Polish state (Служѣте речи посполитой потужне а вѣрне (Rothe 1976: 120, v. 46). The language is a good *prosta mova*, the versification follows the Polish rhyme system, but has some typical Ruthenian peculiarities with an irregular number of syllables. In other poems, Demjan Nalyvajko proudly recalls that “То герб продков, его стародавних, / Влодимера, и потомков славных” (Rothe 1976: 142). He exactly defines the geographical and political space of his belonging when invoking the knight to be ready to fight and die for the “отчизна и реч посполитая”: the Ostrih principality and (or, preferably: “in”) the Polish Commonwealth (Rothe 1976: 141). The mythologem of the armed knight fighting for the fatherland and the ‘true faith’ belongs to the whole of the Polish-

¹ I use this term (together with *prosta mova* and ‘middle Ukrainian’ or ‘middle Ruthenian’) because it is more often used by the authors of the 16th-17th century. For a synthetic but clear discussion of the issue (cf. Mozer 2008: 76-81). For writers’ names I generally follow modern orthography, but in several places I adapt it to the use of the place or the ‘literary belonging’ which I consider dominant. Thus I use Simeon Polockij for the well known poet of Belarusian origin, but may use both F. Prokopovič and T. Prokopovuč for the different periods, places and spheres of his activity. This choice may be questionable, but a consensus on this issue has not yet been reached and a functional approach may be useful and the most suitable.

Ruthenian-Lithuanian cultural space, but the choice of language and the strong religious belonging makes these texts particularly significant of a Ukrainian Orthodox identity: the “узброенный рыцар з голым мечем” is the warrant of peace for the “little fatherland” (*ojchyzna*, here the Ostrih principality) and the “реч посполитая” in equal measure, with the recognition of the same ‘dignity’. No less impressive are the two poems written after the calamitous fight between the last heir of the Ostrih princes, Anna-Alojza, and the Orthodox burghers (1636): this is one of the last expressions of the illusion of a peaceful coexistence of different confessions in the Rzeczpospolita, of a system governed by the heroic and civic ideals of reciprocal respect for religion, language and nobility.

Between Cracow, Kyiv and Lublin, the highly educated Kasian Sakovyč wrote in both Polish and Middle-Ukrainian. He used the first language for polemical and theological treatises, the second for the famous funeral *Verses* for Hetman Petro Sahajdačnyj. The choice of languages may have been motivated by several factors. For Sakovyč, a pupil of Cracow University and the Zamoyski Academy, Polish was the language of schooling, certainly more elaborate and familiar to him for writing about doctrinal matters. However, it is also apparent that Sakovyč published most of his works, all of a polemical religious character, when he moved to Lublin and became a Uniate monk (1624). Among other things, he may have felt the need to justify his religious choice and new confession in the Polish milieu where he now lived. Though he certainly used Church Slavonic and *rus'ka mova* as a Uniate believer, he nonetheless presumably felt Polish as the most suitable (and best known) language for ‘philosophical’ religious writing. It is worth remembering that M. Smotryc'kyj too wrote mostly in Polish, though his first education was in Ostrih. Presumably the education received in the Polish institutions (Cracow, Vilnius) made Polish the best-known language of culture, even if all Ruthenian literati also wrote in Church Slavonic and often *prosta mova*.

On the other hand, Sakovyč's choice of *prosta mova* for the lengthy funeral poem may testify at the same time, that it was the language of personal and social adherence to the Ukrainian Orthodox community (*narod*, as Smotryc'kyj wrote on several occasions)², and probably also that he considered the Ruthenian “vulgar tongue” more adequate for a Cossack “hero” engaged in campaigns against the infidels, even if such actions were seen as defending the faith no less than both the small and the broader fatherland, i.e. the Ukrainian lands and the Polish Commonwealth. Significantly, however, Sakovyč praises the hetman not only for his warlike deeds: he “learnt good orthodox letters”, was a brilliant writer (“it would not be easy to find another similar Zamoyski, who could as

² For Smotryc'kyj and many of his contemporaries, the term certainly had a confessional and social meaning (Polish = Catholic, Ruthenian = Orthodox, both = *narod szlachecki*), as maintained by Frick 1984: 355-369. However, one should not underestimate the many cases where “rus'kyj” indicates the Ruthenian, more exactly the Ukrainian people. In most cases “rus'kyj” is not only clearly different from Polish (Catholic), but also well separated from Muscovite, in spite of the common faith.

well wield pen and sword” – he writes), he engaged his lofty intellect to intercede with “his lord-king on behalf of our true holy faith” (Myšanyč 1987: 229-231). Classical references to Greece, Troy and Rome connect Sakovyč’s work to the European *latinitas* of the day, at the same time recalling the Kyivan Medieval tradition of Ilarion’s glorification of Jaroslav. Nor does Sakovyč forget to mention Volodymyr and his baptism of Rus’. Thus, the intertextual connections put this most significant work at the center of an intense cultural crossroads (Poland, Classical heritage, Eastern Christianity, defence of European civilization against Asian barbarians), while at the same time standing as a corner stone of Ukrainian self-consciousness, a work occupying a central position in an ‘imagined’ canon of Ukrainian literature between Renaissance and Baroque.

In the first half of the 17th century, highly educated intellectuals and members of the establishment in the Commonwealth perfectly understood that praising the “good orthodox letters” was not at odds with the imperative of having access to the overarching *Respublica literarum* of Europe. Even more: Latin, and the tradition it conveyed, was the guarantee of acceptance in high society and culture. In a letter of 1635, Sylvestr Kosov asked the King to confirm the rights of the Kyivan Brotherhood school (where Smotryc’kyj and Sakovyč had presumably taught) by virtue of the tradition of teaching Latin there, as Smotryc’kyj and Sakovyč themselves had already done in the past (Frick 1995: 59-60). Needless to say, in the same years Petro Mohyla opted for Latin as the language of teaching and learning of the whole *curriculum studiorum* in his Collegium.

Both Mohyla and Kosov, however, wrote some of their most important works in Polish. This option may be explained by the general status of Polish as state language and prestigious literary language, but also gives vital information about the different functions exerted by the language. Mohyla did not only write contentious and doctrinal works in Polish. In that language he published a nuptial sermon which he had actually delivered in Jaši half in Polish, half in Moldavian for a mixed public of Poles and Moldavians (Brogi Bercoff 2010). The printed version was a public tribute to two of the most powerful families of the Rzeczpospolita and of Moldavia, the Radziwiłł and the Lupul, the Transilvanian prince who was associated with the Commonwealth. At the beginning, the first part of the oral version was in the state language, but the second part was in Moldavian when it addressed the bride and the groom, and local public. The sermon was recited during the liturgy which was in Church Slavonic (in the second part also biblical quotations are in Church Slavonic, while in the first part they are in Polish). One year later the same sermon appeared in *rus’ka mova* in Mohyla’s famous *Trebnik*, the sacramental book containing the new *ordo* which became the basis of Orthodox liturgy for centuries to come. Thus, the Orthodox sermon had an oral ‘performing function’ in two spoken languages, a literary elaboration in the language of state and culture, and a Ruthenian version in a liturgical context³.

³ A similar case is Smotryc’kyj’s *Kazanie* for Leontius Karpovyč, printed in Vilnius in Ruthenian (1620) and Polish (1621). Here too biblical quotations were in Church Slavonic, while they were in Ruthenian in the *Homiletic Gospel*; Frick explains this

S. Kosov's Polish elaboration of the Medieval Kyivan Paterik (*Paterikon abo żywoty SS. Oycow Pieczarskich*, Kyiv 1635) addressed the Polish establishment to convince it of the cultural and sacral dignity of the re-established Orthodox Church. At the same time it aimed to make the society of ecclesiastical leaders and Cossack notables aware of the ancient roots and glorious tradition of their religious and cultural code. Fostering the religious, intellectual and literary values expressed by a proto-national consciousness, Kosov's work, followed by Afanasij Kal'nofojs'kyj's *Teraturgēma* (Kyiv 1638), reflects the same kind of historical, ecclesiastical and encyclopedic erudition that was cultivated in the Catholic countries in order, on the one hand, to meet the expectations of the Roman Church of the Counter-Reformation and, on the other, to serve the local pride and missionary intent of monastic orders and venerated religious centers.⁴

The ecclesiastic character of Kosov's and Kal'nofojs'kyj's work was in keeping with the political situation of Ukraine at the time: the lack of a lay political authority representing it as a nation made the Orthodox Church fill that gap and exert centripetal functions for Cossacks and other strata of the population which, more or less consciously, were the bearers of a proto-Ukrainian identity (Sysyn 1986; Plochy 2001: 111-144). Works that had a predominantly religious character as far as their content, imagery and forms of expression were concerned, also contained important signs of articulating the special set of values recognized by the community where the works functioned, regardless of the language used.

Kosov's search for historical roots in the sacred sphere of history was functionally similar to the search for ancient (Roman, Sarmatian, Illyrian, Thracian, etc.) forefathers and glorious past deeds in the Renaissance historiography of Poland and other Western Slavic and European countries. This fashion affected the so-called Cossack historiography of the 17th and 18th centuries as well: lines of political development were drawn from late Kyivan to Galician and, later, Cossack state organizations, dynastic successions were imagined (e.g., from Rjurik to Gedimin and the Polish kings), and mythical stories were told of a Sarmatian or Khazar ethnogenesis for Cossack nobility. This was akin to Polish or Western Renaissance history writing, where the 'nation' was represented by a dynasty or a political entity, and the nobility by Sarmatian (in Ukraine also Khazar), or ancient or biblical forefathers (Plochy 2002: 10-15). Thus, the strong intellectual and cultural attachment to contemporary late-Renaissance and Baroque European and Polish standards of Kosov's and Kal'nofojs'kyj's works places them within various literary 'narratives': they belong to a European set of mental patterns, and represent the paradigmatic and pragmatic function of Polish language and culture; however, though written in Polish, they occupy a central position mainly in the Ukrainian literature of the 17th-early 18th century.

Awareness of the need to give a theoretical and pragmatic conceptualization of the complex "language question" of the Ruthenian lands has been expressed

choice with the different ability of the listening public to understand the 'higher' language of liturgy or the 'lower' *simple language* (Frick 1984: 368; 1985: 50).

⁴ For some Polish examples and their relationship to Roman prototypes, see Brogi Bercoff 1999.

in relatively clear terms by such prominent figures as Meletij Smotryc'kyj and Pamva Berynda. The former's most famous *Grammar* testifies to his interest in having a correct tool for understanding the Holy Writ and opposing the accusations of Skarga by a demonstration that Church Slavonic was a sacred language no less than Latin and Greek (Frick 1984; 1985). He forged the story that his *Evangelije učitel'noe* (1616) was a translation from Slavonic and Greek into "ruskii" to endow the text with prestige, but also declared that the translation aimed at ensuring that the homiliary text would be clearly understood by common readers and listeners: comprehensibility and prestige were the two goals that the Middle-Ruthenian language were to achieve. Whether all four languages circulating in Ruthenia enjoyed equal *dignitas* may still be a controversial issue. The function of *prosta mova* and the degree of consciousness of its separateness from Church Slavonic (or – on the contrary – of its belonging to a unique system with the latter, as Frick maintains) appears as a variable in different groups of writers (or even in single writers) and in different epochs, circumstances and situations of communication (Frick 1985; Mozer 2008: 42-54, 75-111, with the quoted bibliography). Though an 'accepted' and fully-fledged codification of the "vulgar tongue" still needed to be elaborated and 'polished' in the 16th-17th centuries⁵, its use in poetry and literary prose appears considerably sophisticated and regular: suffice it to recall such writers as Trankvilion-Stavrovec'kyj, Velyčkovs'kyj, Galjatovs'kyj or Radyvylovs'kyj. I. Velyčkovs'kyj wrote verses with equal ease in Polish and *rus'ka mova*, and translated verses by John Owen, sometimes putting the original Latin together with the translation. Latin thus acted as a model for *imitatio*, but also as a sort of 'mine' for linguistic structures and poetic modes to be introduced into the new 'vulgar tongue' to make it suitable for expressing all possible levels of meaning and style. As is well known, Latin had performed this very function for the formation of Polish literary language, and practically for all the main literary languages of Europe since the Renaissance. For the new "Ruthenian" language, both Latin and Polish served this 'modeling' purpose. Thus, the Ruthenian language was able to fulfill not only an 'apostolic' mission, to be used for preaching, for exegesis of the Holy texts for 'rustic' people (Picchio 1991: 153-169), for writing history and for polemic religious texts. It was also suitable for writing poetry, panegyrics and parts of liturgical books (such as Mohyla's *Trebnik*).

It could be argued that, even if numerous writers may have considered *rus'ka mova* as a mark of identity and a linguistic tool equally fitted for various – 'high' and 'low' – functions, the sacred character of Church Slavonic for Orthodox literati put the latter in a different 'semantic sphere' from *prosta mova*. Still, I consider that the 'vulgar tongue' had a *dignitas* similar to that of Polish⁶: the main difference between the four languages resided in the function they acquired in the various texts and contexts of use.

⁵ For a most recent discussion about the issue, cf. Stern 2013, with the quoted bibliography.

⁶ Maybe even of Latin for specific functional use as communication with the political and official representatives of power. In any case, *ruska mova* remained a used means of communication until the 18th century (Mozer 2008: 280-302).

The coexistence of four languages leads to the conclusion that the linguistic situation of the Ruthenian lands still prevented them from having a unique, national literary language. However, even from this point of view, Ruthenian literati were in line with the standards of any other people of Europe of the time: from Italy to England, from Spain to the Netherlands, Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, Latin and one or more vulgar tongues were used simultaneously in various combinations and functions⁷.

The linguistic situation of the Ruthenian lands had its own specificity and complexity. The varying political situation, the lack of a long-lasting state structure and the harshness of religious conflicts resulted in a continuous overlapping of contexts to which works and authors can be ascribed, and of belonging to the connective tissue of one literature or another. In its turn, inclusion in one or more literary codes depends on various factors, ranging from biography (mainly schooling), to confession, social belonging, literary genre, readership, situation of communication and political circumstances.

As is well known, one of the most astonishing protagonists of the literary, religious and political life of Ukraine was Lazar Baranovyč. His poetry expresses the typical features of Polish baroque literature and is inspired not only by religious themes. However, only a few of his poems have been included in two anthologies of Polish baroque poetry (Sokołowska, Żukowska 1965: 464-476; Vincenz 1986: 44-45, 118-119, 157-159, 241, 281, 424). Vincenz included a considerably larger amount of poems, and this was no coincidence, given the intellectual profile of the editor. Nonetheless, in both cases the choice reflects a 'polonocentric' point of view: this is certainly 'normal' since anthologies are generally intended to express a national canon. All this notwithstanding, Baranovyč still occupies a marginal position in what the Poles perceive as their literary canon. I consider it legitimate and necessary to put the question of the reasons for that fact. To be sure, the quality of Baranovyč's poetry is rarely excellent, but also Polish literature features numerous cases of graphomantic and mediocre writers, especially in Baroque times. The marginal position of such a Polish-oriented (in the use of language and poetic tropes) writer in the Polish literary context should be explained by other reasons. As an important representative of the Orthodox ecclesiastical establishment, he may have raised suspicion in the Polish literary and political establishment. He wrote two great books of Church Slavonic sermons dedicated to the Tsar, and tried to have them printed in Moscow. His efforts were unsuccessful there too, and the sermons were published in Kyiv. Was the hypertrophic use of baroque devices and polysemantic metaphors of the European *concettismo* somewhat extraneous to the relatively simple, less 'flowery' taste of the Russian Baroque introduced by Simeon Polockij? Were Baranovyč's dreams of resuming a possible unity of the Christian countries in view of an anti-Ottoman league too 'dangerous' from both the Russian and the Polish points of view? Was his personal passionate, but greedy and unreliable character partly

⁷ Let me recall just one example: Just Lipsius, who wrote letters in mixed Latin, Flemish and French!

to blame for his failures? What we may consider as certain is that the manifold literary ‘output’ of the bishop of Černyhiv is one of the most typical expressions of the plurality of impulses, languages and inspirations of the Ruthenian culture of the 17th c., and that he occupies a central place in the Ukrainian literary canon of the time. His *Żywoty świętych* offer the opportunity to assess his ‘marginal’ position with respect to both the Polish and the Russian literary system, at the same time putting him in a ‘central’ position in the Ruthenian, or more precisely Ukrainian cultural system. His *Lives of Saints* represents a sort of ‘canon’ of the Kyivan church and a most interesting blend of Slavo-Byzantine tradition and the European sacred poetry of the Counter-Reformation⁸: the Polish versification and the rhetorical ‘baggage’ of the *Lives* put them close to Western products of the same genre, but the choice of the saints, the imagery and the narrative patterns may have direct links with the Church Slavonic tradition of the *Prolog*, which had its roots in Medieval Kyivan writing. As Simeon Polockij’s Polish translation of the *Akathistos* (written when he was still in Belarus), the *Żywoty* had the function of ‘pure Orthodox’ edification reading for Polish language Orthodox believers. No less remarkable for Baranovyč is the continuity of the utopia of bringing together the “Lach” and the “Rusyn”, the Polish and the Ruthenian Christians for an alliance between Cossacks and Eastern and Western powers, including Russia and Poland, against the infidels.

Though assuming different forms, the idea of unity ‘between East and West’ nurtured Ruthenian literature from Meletij Smotryc’kyj to the end of the 17th c., at least until Kyiv remained under Constantinopolitan jurisdiction. Smotryc’kyj aimed at a union of the Ruthenian *naród*, where religious differences between Uniates and Orthodox might be no more important than such identification markers as the Slavonic and the Ruthenian language, the shared memory of belonging to a common people (in certain circumstances Smotryc’kyj writes about ‘blood ties’), the hope for the ‘good of the Russian nation (*naród*)’⁹. He draws a clear line between the Lithuanian, Polish and Russian *naród*, a line which certainly marked first the separation of Catholics and Orthodox, but also included more historical, social and linguistic elements when he wrote that a Ruthenian abandoning his confession does not become an Italian or a Spaniard (Frick 1984: 355-361). Smotryc’kyj’s idea of the *naród ruski* as a ‘third’ part of the Commonwealth preceded by half a century the idea that gave rise to the Hadjač pact. The historical and geopolitical situation brought this utopian plan to nought, but its long life indicates the will to distinguish itself from other well-identified peoples. In the time of Baranovyč, especially the last decades of his long life, the radicalization of religious conflict and the actual dependence on

⁸ For further information and considerations about Baranovyč and other Ukrainian writers of the time cf. Brogi Bercoff 2012, with the quoted bibliography.

⁹ The word ‘nation’ had several meanings in pre-modern times, and certainly is not to be identified with 19th-20th century ideas (Frick 1984). Still, Smotryc’kyj’s works indicate that his idea of “*naród ruški*” (or *gens rossiacae*) was rather explicit and was not characterized only by religious allegiance.

the Russian Tsar made the situation very different. Still, the cultural and literary specificity of the Ruthenian intellectuals and the Cossack elites is expressed in the deepening of historical memory, in the codification of Orthodox doctrine through new forms of philosophic thought of Western origin, in the diffusion and growing expressivity of the *rus'ka mova*, in the exponential growth of artistic skills in architecture, printing and engraving, in ethical, juridical and political thought, and even in material culture. Ivan Mazepa's creation of a princely court fostered all aspects of social and cultural life, despite the opposition of nobiliary clans, rebels or Sič Cossacks.

During the 17th century, political and social changes did not basically challenge the continuity of linguistic pluralism or the evolution of literary genres until the end of Mazepa's time. The distribution of languages and their function underwent certain changes, but the situation of fundamental plurilinguism remained unchanged, and both individual writers and their works continued to belong to more than one literary 'canon'.

In the second half of the 17th century the continuity of a supranational Church Slavonic language was ensured by an important complex of works which had a dominant religious character and were addressed to both the Orthodox believers of the Ruthenian lands and to Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian and Rumanian Orthodox readers as well. The *long durée* of the Baroque culture in Serbian theatre and poetry, and in Bulgarian historiography are well known, and lasted well into the 18th century. For the Ruthenian lands it is interesting to note how the genre describing the history and 'virtues' of venerated religious centers or miracle-working items or places evolved. The Polish language works written by Kosov and Kal'nofojs'kyj had important followers such as Galjatovs'kyj and Dmytro Tuptalo: their *Nebo novoe* (L'viv 1665) and *Skarbnycja potrebnaja* (Novhorod-Sivers'kyj 1676), and *Runo orošennoe* (Černihiv 1683¹⁰) have recently attracted scholarly attention. These works were devoted to sacred places and miracle-working icons, but the cultural situation was different from Kosov's time. Orthodoxy was no longer threatened in the Hetmanate, hence the first goal of such works was probably not polemic, but paraenethic. The progressive adaptation to Russian Church Slavonic of the new copies of Tuptalo's *Runo* indicates that its readers became increasingly connected to the Imperial context and to general *Slavia orthodoxa*. However, a regional function was certainly inherent in the very first conception of these works. Galjatovs'kyj's somewhat contentious attitude to the Kyivan Collegium and his L'viv connections do not challenge his basic will to praise the Ukrainian (more exactly, Ruthenian) icons as most precious sacred objects and places in the general context of Orthodox Christianity, and even of the whole of Christianity. Tuptalo's work was inspired by his very ambitious patron, the archbishop of Černihiv. In the latter's intention, the work was certainly aimed at extolling his own eparchy and strengthening his power. On his side, far from worldly ambitions, the Cossack son Tuptalo easily recon-

¹⁰ A first, shorter edition may have existed already in 1677 (cf. Zapasko, Isaevyč 1981: 93).

ciled his Ukrainian roots with the devotion to the Orthodox faith of the whole *Slavia orthodoxa* when he lived in Ukraine: the situation was to change only after his forced departure for Russia. Similarly, Tuptalo's *Lives of the saints* was printed in Kyiv, but was intended for the whole Orthodox *ecclesia*, despite Patriarch Adrian's initial suspicions. A large part of the works of Ukrainian and Belarusian writers naturally belongs to this religious and liturgical literature, where a regional and a supranational function can be detected, but not separated. This supranational character also determined the fortune of these works, which partially belong to the readings of large strata of Orthodox populations up to our own day in modern translations. To be sure, such a long lasting success is due to the narrative values and literary sensibility of the authors, but their originally devotional and supranational intent should not be overlooked.

Homiletic literature accounts for a significant part of the printed books of the 1660s-1680s. Its importance as testimony of *prosta mova* should not be underestimated as it has been even in recent times (Mozer 2008: 102-111). The genre played an important role as a sort of interface between church literature and worldly society. Sermons were written and pronounced in the 'vulgar tongue' with special attention to rhetorical devices, extensive use of *exempla* from any Western or Eastern source, adaptation to the liturgical calendar but also to political and social life, to the importance of the church or monastery where the preacher worked. Such an outstanding preacher as Tuptalo was not happy in Mazepa's capital Baturyn, but had been expressly appointed there for 'reasons of state': with Metropolitan Jasyn's'kyj's cooperation, Mazepa's policy was to place talented preachers in the churches of the most important 'regiments' of the Cossack army and Hetmanate. By all evidence, the language was to be clear, but cultivated and refined enough to deal with doctrinal and ethical issues and to satisfy the upper echelons of the Hetmanate's Cossack society. In Smotryc'kyj's time *rus'ka mova* may have had less *dignitas* than Church Slavonic or Polish (Frick 1985: 42-50). In the mid 17th century, however, it was well on the way to becoming a multi-purpose language with the same *dignitas* as the languages of the neighbours, beginning with Polish. It was used for doctrinal books (P. Mohyla, I. Gizel – I am thinking of *Mir s Bogom čeloveke*, 1666 –, Galjatovs'kyj, just to mention a few), for history writing, for funeral panegyrics, for sermons, poetry of various levels, theatre, letters. It lacked a universally accepted normalization, but waverings in orthography and morphology were common to other languages of prestige, including Polish, German and French (it was not until the 17th c., for example, that the French Academy was founded and specifically charged with codifying the language). Sermons were certainly among the most typical expressions of the Ruthenian literary tradition. The genre was 'exported' to Moscow by Simeon Polockij, but only became really rooted there when Peter I had Stefan Javors'kyj and Dmytro Tuptalo appointed as metropolitans in Russia. During the 18th century homiletic literature prepared by Belarusian and Ukrainian preachers lost most of its particular Ruthenian specificity: the Russian Church Slavonic language and the kind of tropes and *exempla* used, turned the preachers into members of the imperial literary and cultural system rather than churchmen,

despite their skills and mental patterns having originated in the Kyivo-Mohylian tradition (Brogi Bercoff 2012b). The potential to become a fully-fledged literary language was hampered by political and social events in the last three decades of the 17th century. First *ruïna*, then the pressure of the Russian church and military presence slowed down the natural development of *prosta mova*. In spite of all this, until Mazepa's end, *prosta mova* was still widely used.

A brief analysis of the use and function of language in the period of Mazepa's hetmancy is called for. S. Javor'skyj is a most interesting literary case. On his return to Kyiv from Polish Jesuit colleges, he wrote four well-known, very long and complex panegyric poems: one for the Hetman, three for the archimandrite, then metropolitan Jasyn'skyj. The language he chose was Polish, with parts in Latin or mixed Polish-Latin. Polish versification and the rhetoric system and imagery could easily be recognized by any Polish reader as belonging to his own literary heritage. To date, only a few Polish specialists have taken these poems into consideration, and when they have done so, they have tended to stress their role in transmitting Baroque poetry and Polish influence to Russia¹¹. Without denying the importance of this aspect of the question, it is time to put Javor'skyj's poems in the precise context of a Ukrainian literary system. They were written in Kyiv, for the representatives of institutions governing both the worldly and ecclesiastical spheres, the Hetman and the Metropolitan, who were the direct 'regional' parallels of the Tsar and the Patriarch. In all likelihood, a copy of the printed panegyrics would have been presented to Tsars Ivan and Peter, to whom a dedication was written in the frontispiece. The intention to extoll Mazepa's prestige at the Russian court would also have been implicit in these works. The intended readership, however, would mainly have been the Hetmanate, and its institutions and people. The whole system of values refers to the Ruthenian baroque world, to the traditional *virtutes* of the 'knight' defending the fatherland and the true faith from the infidels and heretics; or to the virtues of humility, piety and wisdom which illuminate the head of the church. Mazepa's generosity towards the church and the metropolitan's cooperation with the hetman form an ideal system of traditional 'symphonia' between church and state power, which became increasingly outdated in Moscow. Similar considerations may be made for Javor'skyj's sermon *Vinograd Kristov* (1698), written for the marriage of Mazepa's nephew: among the main ideas expressed in the nuptial sermon and the engraving of the frontispiece is the need for the noble pair to have children who will glorify God, but also ensure the future of the Hetmanate. Indeed, as is well known, Mazepa hoped to see his nephew as the heir of his 'principality'. The very same ideas inspire Pylyp Orlyk's panegyric written for the same occasion. Besides being an obligatory topos for nuptial liturgy and ceremonies, the issue at stake was quite earthly and strictly related to the needs of Ukrainian society and the political situation. Several other poets wrote

¹¹ Let us recall the seminal works by Ryszard Łuźny (esp. Łuźny 1966). A new 'Ukrainian' perspective was introduced in the topic only later, beginning with Radyszewskyj 1996-1998.

panegyrics for Mazepa and for the followers of Jasyns'kyj. These panegyrics form a new "laic" literature fostered by the existence of a princely court. Had the Hetmanate and its court been allowed to survive, such a new worldly literature might have marked the beginning of the laicization of Ukrainian culture, with substantial consequences for the further development of Ukrainian identity (and possibly of a faster formation of nation and statehood). Oddly enough, the panegyrics were written in Polish or/and Latin. This may indicate that the two languages were considered the most prestigious and suitable for the beginning of political centralization. Was the *rus'ka mova* insufficiently developed to cope with the complicated verses, poetic figures and rhetoric devices the poets used for the glorification of their hetman or their metropolitans? If you think about the sophisticated panegyrics written in Ruthenian verses already by K. Sakovyč for Petro Sahajdačnyj, or by M. Smotryc'kyj for Leontius Karpovyč, it is hard to imagine that the ability to compose such panegyrics in *rus'ka mova* in the late 1690s had been completely lost. To be sure, other reasons for the choice of Polish and Latin may be found. The choice of Polish may have been influenced by the schooling in the Commonwealth's colleges, which made it easier for these poets to write verses in Polish and Latin than in the Ruthenian language. Mazepa's long years at the service of the Polish king and his cosmopolitan culture may also have influenced the choice of language. It is interesting to note that Polish and Latin were used by both laymen and churchmen, and for both lay and ecclesiastic readers. Nor does the use of ancient or biblical comparisons or symbolic references appear to be linked to the use of one language or the other, or even to the readership: in his nuptial panegyric Orlyk makes use exclusively of Antique or Renaissance and Baroque imagery and symbols, but Javors'kyj turns to both spheres of topoi and symbols for the panegyrics dedicated to both Mazepa and Jasyns'kyj. The panegyrics for metropolitan Joasaf Krokovs'kyj, written a decade later, are in Latin, and intermingle biblical and classic references and symbols (Siedina 2012: 97-157), as had been taught by Sarbiewski in the Academies of Vilnius and Polock, the most influential for Eastern Slavic poets. Some years later one of these poets, J. Turobojs'kyj, became a famous panegyrist of Peter I and helped consolidate the use of Latin in Petrine Russia, but until 1701 he was a Latin panegyrist of Jasyns'kyj's successor. There may have been a link between Turobojskij's and Prokopovič's use of Latin and Church Slavonic only (*not* Polish) and their evident pro-Petrine attitude, while – on the contrary – Javors'kyj and Tuptalo¹² followed the Tsar's policy only because they were forced to. Thus, Latin and Polish seem to have played a dominant role in the life of the court around Mazepa, including the upper echelons of the church. It could be that Peter's indications about the use of a 'lay' language and alphabet for worldly literary forms, and the limitation of Church Slavonic to ecclesiastic spheres of activity may have influenced the progressive decline of *rus'ka*

¹² Tuptalo knew Polish perfectly, but used it only sporadically: he had no schooling experience outside Ukraine. However, significantly enough, he wrote his *Diariusz* mainly in Polish. His opposition to Peter's policy was basically religious.

mova. After 1686, the last two patriarchs clearly increased pressure to bring Ruthenian religious literature into line with Russian Church Slavonic. Since Ukrainian identity was not yet connected to a (still non-existent) multifunctional and universally recognized national language, this pressure contributed to the decline in the prestige of the Ruthenian language. This may have contributed to the more widespread use of Polish and Latin in high, laudatory genres at the court of Mazepa and high ecclesiastic hierarchs.

However, in my opinion, a direct influence of Peter's linguistic policy on the Hetmanate seems improbable. Polish and Latin panegyrics were written years before the Tsar's reforms, and Ukrainian intellectuals are unlikely to have promptly applied Peter's rules to their literary system, mainly to panegyrics which were addressed to local princely and ecclesiastic authorities. Ukrainian literati had a high opinion of themselves and the culture they represented, and frequently expressed the conviction that their own culture was older and more prestigious than that of Russia.

In conclusion, several factors can reasonably be assumed to have influenced the linguistic choices made in Mazepa's time. One fundamental reason may have been the higher *dignitas* and prestige of Latin and Polish, which made them suitable as the languages of the court and the highest sphere of culture not directly connected with liturgical or devotional ends. This may also indicate a nascent orientation towards a separation of religious and lay culture: this was basically in harmony with Peter's policy, but expressed itself in Ukraine in different language choices from the Russian, since it fostered the use of Polish and Latin. Thus Russian pressure against *prosta mova* may indirectly have contributed to fostering Polish and Latin. However, another reason may be linked to psychological socio-linguistic processes. Indeed, a curious situation appears if you consider the whole evolution of the literary process of Ukraine in the 17th century in its plurilingual reality: being under Polish rule in the first half of the 17th century, *rus'ka mova* or heavily Ruthenised Church Slavonic became an 'identification marker' of the Ruthenian (more expressly Ukrainian) community, as an assertion of religious allegiance and of identity, of belonging to the Ruthenian 'people' – despite the term 'people' in itself having had a broad spectrum of meanings and nuances (as in the case mentioned above of M. Smotryc'kyj's *narod*). On the contrary, under Russian rule, especially in the time of Mazepa, the two main languages of the Polish Commonwealth became the languages of the hetman's court and of the metropolitans' circles¹³. It is hard to gauge the extent to which such a mechanism of linguistic usage as a reaction to political dominance and an assertion of cultural identity may have been conscious. Other factors may have influenced linguistic preferences, as already mentioned, but the issue deserves closer attention. The linguistic dominance of Polish and Latin in a context that was not strictly religious should in no way be

¹³ Let us remember that Jasyns'kyj was a *doctor* at Cracow University, though he wrote in *rus'ka mova* as a preacher and in Ruthenian Church Slavonic for poems dedicated to the Tsars.

interpreted as Mazepa's or his circle's political or religious attitude to Poland, as numerous scholars suggested in the past in order to denigrate the 'traitor'. What is certain, however, is that the social and political model of the Polish Commonwealth was still very active in Mazepa's time and its society. Polish and Latin were used in various situations of communication and genres, but still had great prestige (*dignitas*) as international languages, as languages of the higher and educated ranks of society, as languages of academic teaching or learned discussion, laudatory works and lofty genres.

The situation changed dramatically for the intellectual leaders of Mazepa's time who were obliged to leave their country and become the highest representatives of the Orthodox Church in Russia. S. Javors'kyj and his friend Tuptalo made other linguistic, poetic and existential choices when they became metropolitans of Rjazan' and Rostov. They took their ecclesiastic vocation and function very seriously, whether for intellectual reasons and convenience (in Javors'kyj's case), or due to their great faith, missionary vocation and reliance on Holy Providence (in Tuptalo's case). The former never wrote panegyrics again after moving to Moscow: his duty was to write sermons to be delivered in the church for Peter's military victories and for the feasts of the imperial family, but they remained within the frame of the ecclesiastic homiliary genre and never became panegyrics. Significantly enough, Javors'kyj never wrote a nuptial sermon in Russia, where works composed for nuptial occasions remained outside the domain of the church. Though no comparative linguistic analysis of the printed version of the sermons and their autograph manuscript has ever been made, it is generally assumed that the language he used was adapted to the Russian redaction of the hybrid Church Slavonic of the time. Even a cursory glance, however, shows that in the manuscript the preacher wrote Polish and Latin words and phrases, titles and *thema* (the Holy Script quotation referring to the liturgical day of the sermon), even a few entire sermons. In the manuscript they expressed his "personal" sphere of action and reflected his *forma mentis* and real linguistic habits, as they manifested themselves in non-public life¹⁴. Significantly enough, for his Ukrainian sermons Tuptalo used a very elegant and well organized *prosta mova*, but was obliged to use the Russian hybrid Church Slavonic when in Rostov and Moscow.

On the question of whether the homiletic works of the two Metropolitans belonged to the Russian or to the Ukrainian literary system, several points of view are possible. On the one hand, the sermons and the other doctrinal or polemical works that Javors'kyj wrote in Moscow are strongly linked to the imperial court and the official life of Church and State under Peter's rule. At the same time, they reflect the remarkable blossoming of the Hetmanate's Baroque culture in Mazepa's time and the direct influence of Counter-Reformation tendencies, through Poland, from Western Europe. Javors'kyj's ideas were also

¹⁴ The manuscript was intended for the preparation of a printed edition of Javor'skyj's sermons in Kyiv. Such an edition, however, was never actually produced and the manuscript is still a working copy of the unrealised edition.

linked more to the Ruthenian Baroque tradition than to Peter's innovative plans and acts of state and church organization. Thus, the sermons of the Exarque of the Russian Church – as Javors'kyj called himself – belong to Russian literature because they were written in Russia and addressed to the Russian public, while at the same time perfectly reflecting the Ruthenian culture from which they stemmed. The same may be said for the metropolitan of Rostov. The works of other Ruthenian literati who emigrated to Russia in the same years as Javors'kyj have been examined exclusively from a Russian point of view. A typical example is J. Turobojs'kyj, who deserves closer attention: he certainly soon became a 'convinced' supporter of Peter, but his Ukrainian period and the functional use of languages would be worth investigating more thoroughly.

The only poems in verse that Javors'kyj wrote in Russia before 1721 were two epigraphs for Metropolitan Jasyns'kyj, who died in 1707. Named *Symbola et emblemmata*, they were written in the Russian-Slavonic language of the time, but were never printed until 1961 and were probably only ever read by a limited number of close friends. They reflect the poetic mode and imagery of the author before his departure for Russia and were probably addressed rather to Ukrainian than to Russian readers. Thus, we may consider them rather as a fruit and a component of Ruthenian, than of Russian literary culture. Or, probably, we may see them as belonging to an overarching 'common' Church Slavonic Baroque literature.

More complex is the fate of the last of Javors'kyj's works, known as the *Elegy to his books*. Written in Latin in 1721, it was addressed to the monks of the Nižyn monastery whom the poet intended as the heirs to his remarkable library. The metropolitan of Rjazan' had devoted all his care and efforts, not to mention all the money he received from Peter for his preaching, to creating this monastery. Moreover, his plan was for it to become a haven for the intellectual and religious culture he himself represented, evidently well aware that the latest trends dominating the Russian Empire were about to annihilate it. Thus, from the point of view of the intellectual terrain that gave birth to the poem, of the author's intention and of his readership, the *Elegy* occupies a central position in the 'national' framework of Ukrainian literature. The poem, however, also matched the new 'Latin fashion' gaining momentum in St. Petersburg in the 1710s, mainly after Prokopovyč's arrival in Russia. Thus, the *Elegy*, was copied and translated numerous times and became a sort of bestseller in the Empire, occupying a no less central position in Russia's literary culture.

Even more complex is the position of Javors'kyj's most famous work, the theological treatise *Kamen' very*. Its Russian Slavonic language was widely accessible to any cultivated reader of the whole *Slavia orthodoxa*. This enormous work too was the fruit of the century-old Ruthenian culture, plus multiple influences from the Classical heritage, Patristic literature, late Medieval Western religious narrative genres, Renaissance and Baroque *exempla*, Aristotelian logic blended with echoes of neo-Platonic theology – in a word, all the ingredients of Baroque culture adapted to Ruthenian needs and main trends. As is well known, Peter's dominant culture of Russia was not really interested in this

kind of work: Baroque imagery and style were only considered useful if they served state interests. Immediately after the Tsar's death, however, the book was printed posthumously in Kyiv (1728) and found the most favorable climate for new editions, made in Russia in subsequent years. It thus became the first Russian theological treatise, was well known in all Orthodox Slavic countries, and is considered the point of departure of "real theology" in Russia for centuries to come. Its Ruthenian background, without which the work would never have appeared, was (and still is) practically forgotten. Though it was ignored, or even suspiciously despised by the dominant culture at the time of its creation (1714-1721), *Kamen' very* certainly occupies a central position in Russian literary culture because of the great importance it acquired a few years later; at the same time it belongs to a supranational corpus of works which may be considered as part of any 'national' literature of the area we are analyzing, though its multinational character should never be ignored.

As far as the language used in the Ruthenian lands is concerned, despite the reciprocal hatred between Poles and Ukrainians, Polish remained an important means of expression in the 18th century not only for Poles living in the former Hetmanate and for Greek-Catholic Ukrainians in Galicia, but also for upper class Ruthenians and intellectuals. It was used in *intermedia* in popular theatre, it gave access to Polish history writing and literature and was relevant for historians such as Hrabjanka and Velyčko. Such an important and highly educated hierarch of the Russian Church and the imperial establishment as H. Konys'kyj wrote his book on *Rights and Liberties* in Polish and published it in Warsaw (1767), just to mention one example. To be sure, Russian Church Slavonic dominated ecclesiastic literature in 'Little Russia', while *rus'ka mova* declined and gave way to various sorts of mixed language which turned out not to be viable for the development of a modern Ukrainian language and literature. However, the enduring influence of Polish in the first decades of the 19th century should not be underestimated, even when Ševčenko visited Ukraine and made the acquaintance of some of his best friends of Polish origin¹⁵. Romantic 'ukrainofilia' was no less important in the conscience and narrative of Polish literature than it was in Russian culture, though the two ways of elaborating Ruthenian themes and myths were very different and often contrasting.

It is not possible to examine here the multifaceted and complex interweaving of Polish-Ruthenian writers and their works in the long history of the cultural and literary evolution of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Nor is this the place to discuss the numerous Polish language poets of Ruthenian origin (such as Sebastian Klonowic or the brothers Sz. and J.B. Zimorowicz), who are a constituent part of the Polish literary canon, being at the same time connected with Ruthenian themes, myths and imagery. Why are they generally thought of exclu-

¹⁵ As is well known, significantly enough, a manuscript collection of poems by Ševčenko was prepared in Latin alphabet in 1843 by the best Polish friend of the poet.

sively as Polish poets, while their ‘Ruthenian nature’ is rarely taken into account? Are there sufficient ‘markers’ to ascribe them to a Ruthenian literary narrative as well? Why is it easier to consider Paweł Rusin z Krosna or Solomon Rysinskij (Pantherus Leucorussus) as Ruthenian writers, than the former two? The triple-identity of St. Orzechowski/Orixovs’kyj/Ažaxoŭski is by now a generally accepted fact, though as Stanilaus Orichovius he might more importantly be said to belong to the international *Respublica literarum*. On the other hand, the Polish and Latin language works of the Ukrainian poets mentioned above (Baranovyč, Javors’kyj), or of characters such as Jurij Nemyryč (*Discursus de bello Moschovitico*) are seldom considered as part of Polish literature. A peculiar case is that of Simeon Polockij: in a famous letter to Baranovyč he expressed nostalgic feelings for his Belarusian home, but consciously made a clear religious and existential Russian choice as pedagogue and court poet of the Tsar, the ‘defender’ of ‘true orthodoxy’. This does not mean that his Polish and Latin works and his Belarusian origin should be overlooked, but that his Orthodox and Muscovite ties should probably be considered dominant, even if you can only understand everything he did in Moscow in the light of the fact that he was a brilliant bearer of the Jesuit-modeled Baroque culture he received in the educational institutions of Kyiv (the Mohylian College) and Vilnius (the Jesuit College)¹⁶.

I will not attempt to outline a possible history of Baroque literature of either Ukraine or Belarus, of the Ruthenian lands or Muscovy, or of the complex of Eastern *Slavia orthodoxa* and the Polish Commonwealth. Recent literary theories based on several “post”-inspired trends have challenged traditional nation-centered methodologies of writing histories of literature and, thus, establishing possible literary canons corresponding to the expectations of specific linguistic, social and cultural ‘communities’, or nations. Inescapable antinomies arise in periods of transition (e.g. between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, or between Baroque and Sentimentalism) or in particular situations (e.g. the existence of the same literature in the homeland and in emigration). Antinomies emerge especially when the object of investigation is represented by a literature expressed in two or more languages. Bilingualism was the norm in Europe until the 18th century and even in the 19th century, though it is less considered because of the national paradigm dominating ideology and written literature in the latter. In the European empires, however, plurilinguism was customary until the end of WW1: Russian, Ukrainian (despite official imperial *ukazes!*), Church Slavonic, later also German and French were used in several functions in the Empire of the Tsars; on their part, national writers of the Hapsburg Empire wrote each in their language, but often used German for various purposes: among the best examples is Prešeren’s *Diary*, but in the Russian Empire the same happened with Ševčenko, who wrote novels and his *Diary* in Russian. Similar cases of writing

¹⁶ For a synthetic formulation of these open questions from a Polish ‘post-colonial’ point of view cf. A. Romanowski, *Ruskie płuco literatury polskiej* (Fazan, Zajac 2012: 146-161, esp. 153-158).

prose and poems both in Polish and Ukrainian or Belarusian are quoted by Romanowski in the aforementioned article (Fazan, Zajas 2012: 155-158).

Even taking the permanent existence of plurilinguism in past and present into due consideration, the literary system(s) that flourished in Central-Eastern Europe are particularly intriguing and difficult to define in their multiple 'identities'. This is especially true for the Ruthenian – both Ukrainian and Belarusian – literature of the period including late Renaissance, Baroque and the 'hybrid' forms between the Baroque and rationalism (Enlightenment) of the 18th century.

The possibility of observing the literary facts of the aforementioned areas and periods from various points of view, of 'reading' them on different heuristic levels and in various semantic contexts, has been successfully investigated by theoreticians of literature and applied by critics in several countries (cf. Nycz 2012, with the rich bibliography). For the area and time we are considering the idea of "frontier culture" (*pogranicze*) is very useful: borders may be determined by political, religious, mental, linguistic circumstances and each of these levels offers clues for interpreting singular facts of literary development or of literature as a complex and coherent system. Borders may be considered as a chance to penetrate important constituent elements from one community (or one literary system) to another, whereas such constituent elements may receive varying functions when entering a new context: such an approach could be useful for a better understanding of the Ukrainian-Cossack interpretation of the *lycar* which is strictly related to the Polish *rycerz*, but had a new function in Ukrainian literature and its development from the 16th to the early 18th century¹⁷. If considering again the case of Baranovyč's Polish poetry, the inexistent language border confronts a mental and religious border which separates most of the poet's verses – especially the ones inspired by religious themes –, though he dreamed of the unity of Christians for the political goal of the anti-Ottoman war. Borders also imply the possibility of an 'internal comparative' approach: regional specificities have been analyzed for Polish pre-modern literature beginning with the 1930s, but only in recent research has the possibility of an 'internal comparison' and of inclusion in a Polish literary narrative Polish-language Ruthenian literature been seriously taken into consideration. This methodological approach may be very useful for a better understanding of Ukrainian and Belarusian literature in relationship with both Polish and Russian literature.

In the aforementioned article R. Nycz warns against identifying the concept of *pogranicze* with the 'center-periphery' relationship, which has been used in more than one significance, not last a negative one when the latter refers to phenomena considered as marginal, hence opposed to a central core of a national literature 'traditionally' interpreted as exclusive, as based on a set of values recognised as proper only by a limited and closed, linguistic community. In my attempt to present some important works of the Ruthenian tradition in this paper, I have considered the concepts of center and periphery as useful tools for

¹⁷ Even up to the 19th c. as shown by the curious nature and function of the *Istoriya Rusov* (Plokhly 2012).

distinguishing the cases when a given work or author may be considered as part of *only* (or *predominantly*) one literary system, and when, on the contrary, they acquire their full significance precisely when considered from various points of view and related to more than one literary system. Thus, a narrative of Ukrainian literature may, and should be seen from different points of view, each one related to a 'national discourse'. Besides origin, language and place of birth and activity, the 'actors' of the Ukrainian literary discourse may be examined and interpreted as belonging to a core discourse, a 'center' of Ukrainian literature, at the same time being a (more or less peripheral) part of a 'national discourse' including Polish, Belorussian, Lithuanian or Russian literature.

Plurilinguism and plural belonging create polycentric areas. In the Baroque era, Ukrainian literature was a polycentric system also because the centers of 'irradiance' and 'guidance' were various in space, character and chronology: they were internal – suffice it to mention Ostrih, L'viv, Kyiv, Černihiv from the late 16th to the early 18th century, and external – such as Cracow and Vilnius, but also Königsberg, Leiden, Wittemberg, Paris, Padua or Rome, not to be forgotten are Moldavia, Mount Athos, Constantinople, Moscow. It was a polycentric system because it was modeled by formal, mental and ideological patterns from various centers lying beyond its ethnic, religious, social and cultural 'core' and developed the inputs coming from other 'centers' in its own peculiar way. Polish, Slavo-Byzantine, Protestant-Germanic and Catholic-Romanic, Russian and Steppe-Cossack cultural inputs are all fundamental, even if the dominance of one element or the other may vary in time and space, and according to cultural, social or political events.

As I hope emerges from my observations above, the 'center-periphery' relationship is useful for outlining the functional use of the four (even five if one includes Greek) languages which created the corpus of the works which may be ascribed to Ukrainian literature in the late Renaissance and Baroque periods. Indeed, this relationship affords us a better understanding of the possibility of double or triple belonging of works and authors in a region and a time when the Herderian-romantic principle of identification of territory, language and people is not applicable. Such a complex analysis, which takes into account the specificity of border cultural systems, the variability of the ideas of centrality and peripherality allows us – as R. Nycz puts it – to focus on the one hand on the 'concentrated hybridity' which is only apparently 'pure' and 'unique', while on the other offers the possibility to create "a new model of individual and collective identity, as an effect (a knot, a blend) of complex impacts" of heterogenic, and internally differentiated origin. A "cultural history of literature" is not only possible, but necessary (Fazan, Zajas 2012: 32, 29). This is specifically true for such literatures which until recent times were never – or very rarely – considered as a coherent system of ideas, forms, mental patterns, cultural values that may have been expressed in various languages, but belong to a structure connected to a history of chronological evolution and to a set of pluridimensional connections, which make of that structure the literary history of the nation of today and a part of other, broader literary systems of the past and present.

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Abstract

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Constructing Canons: Ruthenian Literatures of the 17th-18th Centuries in Plurilingual Context

The existence of plurilinguism in the pre-modern literature(s) of the Ruthenian lands is by now a universally recognized fact. In this sense the literatures of Belarus and Ukraine do not substantially distinguish themselves from contemporary European literatures, though the phenomenon acquired in the Ruthenian lands an especially complex and intriguing character.

The aim of this paper is to put questions and shed some light on the interrelation between the choice made by the authors of one of the four (or five – if one considers Greek) languages which were currently in use among intellectuals and cultural elites of the 16th-18th centuries, and the general cultural and historical background. To shed some light on the choice of language(s) made by some of the most important writers, the A. takes into consideration aspects concerning their social belonging and education, their religious confession, their status in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or in the Russian Tsardom, the period and circumstances of their activity, psychological factors, the situation of communication. More specific literary issues are also examined to investigate the formation, development and function of literary genres, languages and linguistic register. The Ukrainian literature is viewed as a structure which has its own intellectual and formal specificities. At the same time several works are investigated in the overlapping of two or more literary systems, in the belonging of single works or writers to two or more literatures which coexisted in the pre-modern Ruthenian lands. Single works or the whole output of authors may thus be considered as belonging to several literatures, such as the Belorussian, Church Slavonic, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian or Ukrainian literatures. Works coming from different periods of activity of a writer may belong to only one or to more than one literature. On the contrary, works coming from a unique period may belong to more than one literature. At the same time works and writers may occupy various positions in the structure of each literary system of the area. The 'central' or 'peripheric' position of a work or a writer in one of the several literatures pertaining to the Polish Commonwealth and to the Russian empire is not necessarily dependent on the place of birth or the 'national' origin, but is the result of various social, cultural, literary, religious, chronological and functional factors. These factors are often determinant for the choice of the language as well.