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## The Problem of the Aristocratic Origin of Russian *Byliny*

Among the theories about the origin of the Russian heroic epic songs (*byliny*), the theory of their aristocratic origin has aroused the greatest controversy. This theory was advanced by the main representative of the so-called historical school, Vsevolod Miller, at the turn of this century. In the introduction to his *Ekskursy* he compared the *byliny* to grandiose ruins, in whose upper chambers and towers princes once lived, but in whose sheds that were still habitable some unpretentious Olonets peasants had finally settled.<sup>1</sup> Miller dealt with this problem in greater detail in his *Ocherki*, stressing first that the *byliny* sang of princes and retainers and their military feats.<sup>2</sup> He argued that "they were created and disseminated among the population that was, in its development and social standing, close to the princely court and retinue, belonging, according to contemporary notions, to the 'intelligentsia.'" The *byliny* were, according to Miller, composed among the cream of the society, where the pulse of life throbbed more strongly, where there was affluence and leisure, and where there was a demand for songs. This could have occurred only in rich cities, primarily in Kiev and Novgorod and—before their destruction by the Polovtsy—probably also in Chernigov and Pereiaslav: "Glorifying the princes and the retainers, this poetry had an aristocratic character, was so to say the elegant literature of the higher, more enlightened class, imbued more than any other class of the society with national self-consciousness, with the feeling of the unity of Russia, and, in general, with political interests."

The high artistic level of *byliny* caused Miller to assume the participation of professional singers in the preservation and subsequent cultivation of *byliny*.<sup>3</sup> Such singers were the *skomorokhi*, the Russian troubadours, in whose hands the *byliny* received their final form—special stylistic peculiarities, formulas, and other embellishments. When the persecution of the *skomorokhi* as purveyors of heathen art and godless, devilish songs began in Russia in the second half of the seventeenth century, the *skomorokhi* left the cities and the

1. Vsevolod Miller, *Ekskursy v oblast' russkogo narodnogo eposa*, vols. 1–8 (Moscow, 1892), p. vi.

2. V. F. Miller, *Ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti*, vol. 3 (Moscow and Leningrad, [1924]), p. 28; cf. A. M. Astakhova, *Byliny: Itogi i problemy izucheniia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1966), pp. 52–56.

3. Miller, *Ocherki*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1897), pp. 52 ff.

central parts of Russia for peripheral areas and settled down among the local population. Thus the peasantry finally had a chance to learn byliny from the skomorokhi. This theory was thought to account for the strong bylina tradition in the areas of the far north and the weak tradition in the central regions.

These ideas of the origin and spread of byliny were accepted not only by Miller's contemporaries but also by Soviet folklorists.<sup>4</sup> They were elaborated especially in the works of Boris Sokolov, the central figure among the Soviet folklorists in the 1920s.<sup>5</sup> Sokolov emphasized the significance of social classes in the creation and transmission of byliny. According to him, "every class in each period had professional poets and singers who served their social interests and artistic demands." Thus the princely retinue circle was served, during the first centuries of the history of Russia, by poets who for the most part belonged to this class itself. The social demands of the commercial bourgeois class in big cities as well as the princely class and even the tsar were fulfilled, to a considerable degree, by famous poets and singers of medieval Russia—the skomorokhi. The ecclesiastic-religious interests of primarily the higher classes were served by the pilgrims, who later degenerated into wandering beggars (*kaliki perekhozhie*). Boris Sokolov fully accepts Miller's theory of the gradual transmission of byliny, with due modifications and changes, from the highest to the lowest strata of the population.

The theory of the aristocratic origin of byliny gained a firm foothold in Soviet folkloristics in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It found its way into textbooks, chrestomathies, and works intended for the general public.

Then lightning struck suddenly in 1936. The Soviet poet laureate Demian Bedny had written a popular comic opera, *Bogatyri* (*The Epic Heroes*), which had been presented in the Chamber Theater in Moscow. In this opera Bedny depicted bylina heroes as representatives of the nobility in a derogatory manner. They were shown as villains, and the adversaries whom they fought, as heroes. In the middle of November a concentrated attack was undertaken against this opera and against folklorists in general. The opera was, on an order from a government committee, removed from the repertoire of the theater for misinterpreting Russian history and epic heroes. A series of articles began to appear in *Pravda*, and in other leading newspapers, which accused the theater and especially the folklorists of falsifying the Russian historical past.<sup>6</sup> These

4. For a detailed, though vehemently partial, survey of the development of the theory of the aristocratic origin of byliny, see I. Dmitrakov, "Teoriia aristokraticheskogo proiskhozhdeniia fol'klora i ee reakcionnaia sushchnost'," *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, 1950, no. 1, pp. 155–69.

5. B. M. Sokolov, *Russkii fol'klor*, part 1 (Moscow, 1929), pp. 9–13, 63–66; B. Sokolov, "Byliny," in *Literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, 2 (1929): 15–34.

6. *Pravda*, Nov. 14, 15, 20, 21, Dec. 3, 1936; cf. Iu. M. Sokolov, *Russkii fol'klor* (Moscow, 1941), p. 117.

were written by nonfolklorists, such as I. Lezhnev and L. Timofeev (historians of literature), G. Efimov (historian), P. Kerzhentsev (theoretician of Marxism-Leninism), and others. Folklorists were condemned for their tendency to deprive the working people of creative abilities. Interviews with school children were published which showed that the children had hardly heard of their epic heroes and had vague and distorted notions about them.

Folklorists, taken aback by these accusations, were silent for some time. When they responded, it turned out that they had changed their views about the origin of byliny. A long answer written by the leading Russian folklorist, Iurii Sokolov, in 1937 represents the new views of the folklorists most adequately.<sup>7</sup> After Sokolov rejects some accusations made by the critics (that he had advocated the aristocratic origin of *all* folklore, and that his and his colleagues' theories went back to the German nationalistic scholar Hans Naumann), he comes to the essence of the question. He modifies the former theory by allotting the working people an essential part in the creation of the byliny. In doing so, he gives a couple of quotations from Maxim Gorky's famous speech delivered at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 and shows that it is in harmony with Lenin's views on folklore. In this speech Gorky, among other things, had said that "the deepest, most vivid, and artistically perfect types of heroes had been created by folklore, the oral creative work of the working people." Iurii Sokolov's own summary statement comes close to Gorky's: "The original composers of the folk epic—whether we call them singers-retainers or otherwise—were, in the essence of their ideology and by the character of their art, folk singers in the real sense; furthermore, regarding their social standing, the majority of them came from the working people's masses."<sup>8</sup>

The significant role of the peasants as the original composers of byliny was stressed also by other leading folklorists. Thus A. M. Astakhova stated that since the most ancient times the byliny had been composed not only by the professional masters but also by the nonprofessional singers from the working masses.<sup>9</sup> The change of views has been brought out by V. I. Chicherov: "Thus, the second half of the 1930s appears in the history of Soviet folkloristics as an important landmark in the road of adopting the Marxist methodology."<sup>10</sup> The theory of the nonaristocratic origin of byliny has been generally accepted also by scholars in other fields in the Soviet Union. Typical, for instance, is the

7. Iu. Sokolov, "Russkii bylinnyi epos (Problema sotsial'nogo genezisa)," *Literaturnyi kritik*, 9 (1937): 171–96.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

9. Astakhova, *Byliny*, p. 60.

10. V. I. Chicherov, "Itogi rabot i zadachi izucheniia russkikh bylin i istoricheskikh pesen," in V. V. Vinogradov et al., eds., *Osnovnye problemy eposa vostochnykh slavian* (Moscow, 1958), p. 18.

statement by N. K. Gudzy, according to which "byliny reflecting the aspirations and hopes of the working people arose in the popular milieu, and not in the highest aristocratic strata."<sup>11</sup>

Because the new theory that the byliny originated primarily among the peasants came not from folklorists but from the outside (from the party and the government), some questions arise about its validity. Therefore we are going to subject it to a review.

The study of the structure of byliny reveals that they contain two basic themes—hunting and fighting. Discussing the bylina "Sukhman," the noted Russian literary historian V. I. Malyshev makes an important statement: "This plot [of the hero going hunting] is based on the usual tradition of byliny, according to which the heroes go hunting before a combat."<sup>12</sup> Malyshev is right—there are a considerable number of byliny in which combat is preceded by a hunting trip undertaken by the hero. In addition to the bylina of Sukhman, this is true also in the byliny of Volkh Vseslav'evich, Mikhail Kazarin, Diuk Stepanovich, Il'ia's combat with his son, and others. In the following discussion I am going to give, mainly from a recent bylina collection, a number of examples of byliny that center on these two themes.<sup>13</sup>

In "Sukhman," the hero promises to bring a live white swan to Prince Vladimir. He goes to the "quiet backwaters" to hunt. He goes to three of them, but without any result—he fails to get the bird. Instead, he comes upon a Tatar army. Using an oak tree that he pulls out by its roots as a weapon, Sukhman kills all the Tatars. However, he is wounded. After complicated events involving Prince Vladimir's disbelief in his feat, Sukhman finally commits suicide (1:397–402). It could be mentioned that in the only Siberian variant recorded, Sukhman goes to hunt not birds but beasts in the forest.<sup>14</sup>

The major event in the bylina of Volkh Vseslav'evich is his hunting expedition. It tells how the wizard Volkh, in the shape of a gray wolf, caught antlered beasts, sables, and foxes, and how, in the shape of a bright falcon, he caught geese, swans, and ducks. After that the bylina reports on Volkh's reconnaissance trip to the Indian realm. When he hears of the hostile intentions of the Indian tsar, he, as an ermine, destroys the tsar's weapons and, together with his retinue, smashes the foe (1:8–13).

11. N. K. Gudzy, *Istoriia drevnerusskoi literatury*, 7th ed. (Moscow, 1966), p. 20. On the fervent attempts made to transplant the Soviet theory into Yugoslavia, see F. J. Oinas, "The Study of Folklore in Yugoslavia," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* (The Hague), 3 (1966): 406–7.

12. V. I. Malyshev, *Povest' o Sukhane* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1956), p. 16.

13. V. Ia. Propp and B. N. Putilov, eds., *Byliny*, vols. 1 and 2 (Moscow, 1958). Subsequent references in the text are to volume and page numbers of this work.

14. Malyshev, *Povest' o Sukhane*, p. 16.

In the *bylina* of Mikhaila Kazarenin (Kazarin), Mikhaila is asked by the prince to shoot geese, swans, and ducks for his meal. The hunting trip is unsuccessful. Instead, advised by a raven that he had not killed, Mikhaila comes upon three Tatars who are holding his sister captive and he kills them (1:442–48). In another version Mikhaila Kazarenin's place is taken by Alesha Popovich (1:267–69).

The *bylina* "The Princes from Kriakov" also has hunting and combat as its themes. One of the princes, Petroi Petrovich, goes hunting. Following the advice of different birds that he does not kill, he finally meets a hero in the field. The hero is shouting there in order to attract an adversary for single combat. Petroi Petrovich and the foreigner begin fighting. After a long combat they discover that they are brothers who have been separated for a long time (1:420–27).

In the *bylina* entitled "Alesha Popovich Kills a Tatar," three heroes, including Il'ia, ride out of Kiev. They go to a large field to hunt, but do not get anything. Night comes and the heroes lie down to sleep. Il'ia wakes up and hears a Tatar coming on horseback, bragging how bold he is and how he does not fear anybody except Il'ia. Il'ia awakens Alesha and asks him to go to meet the braggart. Alesha does so, and kills the Tatar (1:264–66).

The *bylina* "Alesha and Il'ia Muromets" tells about a priest in Rostov who has a son called Aleshen'ka. Alesha obtains a horse and a sword. He asks his father for his blessing, and goes hunting. Having received a retinue from his father, he feels a craving to fight. At that time Kiev is besieged by Vasilii the Fair (Vasilii Prekrasnyi), who threatens to destroy the city. Alesha, together with his retinue, smashes the foe. The *bylina* goes on to tell that after Alesha had rendered such a service to the city, Prince Vladimir did not receive him. Only upon Il'ia's insistence does the prince arrange a lavish celebration for the young hero (1:256–63).

In the *bylina* "Dobrynia's Combat with Il'ia Muromets," Il'ia hears of Dobrynia's fame as a hero and sets out to find him. Dobrynia's mother tells Il'ia that her son has gone hunting in the field and asks Il'ia to show mercy on him. Il'ia and Dobrynia meet and begin fighting. When they find out who they are, they become reconciled and as sworn brothers go to Kiev to Prince Vladimir (1:60–63).

The themes of hunting and fighting are used for the purpose of doing away with the hero in the *bylina* "Danila Lovchanin." In order to get rid of Danila and marry his wife, Prince Vladimir sends Danila on a dangerous hunting trip—to find a white turtledove and a ferocious lion for his dinner. Danila goes hunting and is joined by his wife Vasilisa. The prince sends an army against Danila, and Danila destroys it. When Danila sees that more troops are coming from Kiev and his brother and sworn brother are among their ranks,

he kills himself rather than fight them. Also his wife commits suicide just before she is to marry the prince (1:464–69).

In some byliny, hunting before a combat becomes just a commonplace, a cliché. Typical of this is the bylina about Il'ia's combat with his own son.<sup>15</sup> Il'ia, together with other Russian heroes, is guarding the border regions against the enemy, when suddenly a young frightful foe, Falconer (Sokol'nichek-okhotnichek), appears. Il'ia sends Dobrynia out against Falconer. Instead of going directly to meet his enemy, Dobrynia first rides to the blue sea: "He rides along the quiet backwaters, / He shoots geese, swans, and feathered ducks." Only afterward does he contact Falconer and they begin fighting. When Dobrynia loses the fight and, half dead, gets back to Il'ia, he gives a report to him that literally recounts both his hunting and his fighting experiences. Now Il'ia decides to go against the young challenger himself. But curiously enough he first rides to the sea and hunts geese, swans, and feathered ducks, and only then does he pick up the fight with his adversary. The long fight, interrupted by Falconer's visit to his mother, ends with the death of the young hero, who turns out to have been Il'ia's own son.

In this bylina the hunting trip undertaken by both Dobrynia and Il'ia appears to be completely out of place—a hero going to fight his enemy would hardly choose to ride first to quiet backwaters to hunt. It is evident that the theme of hunting and fighting here harmonizes with the general bylina structure. These two themes have become so intimately connected that the bylina singer cannot think of a combat without a preceding hunt. This observation would confirm Malyshev's contention about the close connection between hunting and fighting in byliny.

Roman Jakobson and Marc Szeftel have given an interesting interpretation of hunting in the bylina "Volkh Vseslav'evich."<sup>16</sup> They contend that the prince of Polotsk, Vseslav, was the prototype of the bylina hero, the wizard Volkh Vseslav'evich. Because of Prince Vseslav's unusual, fantastic life, the werewolf motif current among the Slavs was attributed to him. Prince Vseslav made two successful raids—one against Novgorod and the other against Grand Prince Iziaslav in Kiev. As the result of the second raid he became grand prince of Kiev, though only for a few months. The view held by Jakobson and Szeftel is that "since there is no place in the plot of byliny for more than one victory, then Vseslav's Novgorod raid, preceding his Kievan fortune, is depicted in terms of a hunt."<sup>17</sup>

15. [P. N. Rybnikov], *Pesni sobrannye P. N. Rybnikovym*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1861), pp. 75–80.

16. Roman Jakobson and Marc Szeftel, "The Vseslav Epos," in Roman Jakobson and Ernest J. Simmons, eds., *Russian Epic Studies*, *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, vol. 42 (Philadelphia, 1949), pp. 53 ff.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

There are a number of details that seem to support Jakobson's and Szeftel's contention that Prince Vseslav is identical with the bylina hero Volkh Vseslav'evich. However, I would formulate the final conclusion about their relationship somewhat differently. Since there was a structural type of byliny involving the sequence of hunting and fighting, it was natural to cast Prince Vseslav's fate as the bylina hero Volkh in this traditional mold.<sup>18</sup>

The byliny discussed have a common structural pattern, though their content is diverse. The theme (or motif) of hunting shows little variation; the bylina heroes hunt mainly birds (geese, swans, and ducks) and occasionally also bigger animals ("beasts in the forest," lions, and the like). The theme of hunting has been elaborated in the bylina of Volkh Vseslav'evich, in which numerous furbearing and other animals and various birds fall victim to Volkh's hunting passion. The description of hunting usually serves as the introduction to byliny. The theme of fighting shows a greater variation. The bylina heroes usually fight the outer enemies of Russia, such as Tatars, the "Indian" tsar, and Vasilii the Fair. Sometimes they engage in single combat with their fellow bogatyrs, or their own brothers and sons, or they are even compelled to take up arms against the Russian army. Despite these differences in content, the basic structural frame of these byliny is the same.

We now ask, Which stratum of the Russian population engaged primarily in hunting and fighting? Old Russian chronicles and other documents show that this was the princely circle. The princes had two areas in which they could prove themselves and exhibit their skill, adroitness, and courage—notably, hunting and fighting. One of the most valuable early documents about the Old Russian princely life is Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh's celebrated *Testament to My Sons*, written shortly before his death in 1125. This testament places emphasis on both of these aspects of his laborious life. Vladimīr Monomakh himself says: "I now narrate to you, my sons, the fatigue I have endured on journeys and hunts for fifty-three years." And further: "In war and at the hunt, by night and by day, in heat and in cold, I did whatever my servant had to do, and gave myself no rest." Vladimir Monomakh gives an account of his most successful combats against the Polovtsy and neighboring Russian princes. And he advises his sons, when they set out to war, not to be inactive, or depend upon their captains, or waste their time in drinking, eating, or sleeping.<sup>19</sup>

18. There are a number of byliny in which only one of these themes (i.e., hunting or fighting) occurs, combined with other themes. Hunting appears in the byliny about Mikhaila Potyk, Churila Plenkovich, and others (*Byliny*, 2:38–49, 240–46).

19. *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, trans. and ed. Samuel H. Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), pp. 211, 215, 210.

Vladimir Monomakh's accounts about his hunting are especially fascinating: "I devoted much energy to hunting as long as I reigned in Chernigov. Since I left Chernigov, even up to the present time, I have made a practice of hunting a hundred times a year with all my strength, and without harm, apart from a certain hunt after bison, since I had been accustomed to chase every sort of game in my father's company. At Chernigov, I even bound wild horses with my bare hands or captured ten or twenty live horses with the lasso, and besides that, while riding along the Ros', I caught these same wild horses barehanded. Two bisons tossed me and my horse on their horns, a stag once gored me, one elk stamped upon me, while another gored me, a boar once tore my sword from my thigh, a bear on one occasion bit my kneecap, and another wild beast jumped on my flank and threw my horse with me. But God preserved me unharmed."<sup>20</sup>

D. S. Likhachev, discussing the virtues and ideals of Old Russian princes, summarizes his comments on Vladimir Monomakh's testament as follows: "It turns out that one [the prince] must not spare one's life not only in war, in combat with the adversary, defending one's honor and the honor of the homeland, but also during hunting. Such is *the moral of the feudal lords*."<sup>21</sup> Likhachev points out that there were princes and military leaders whose bravery at hunting was praised by the chronicler. The Volhynian Prince Vladimir Vasil'kovich, like Vladimir Monomakh, had no regard for life and limb during hunting and did everything himself: "For he himself was a good, brave hunter, he never waited for his servants to help him with a wild boar or bear, but he immediately killed every animal; therefore, he was famous all over the country, since God had given him courage not only in hunting but in everything, for his goodness and truthfulness." Of the *voevoda* Tit of Brest it was said that he was "everywhere famous for his bravery in fighting and hunting." Thus, according to Likhachev, "Courage at hunting, as well as courage at war, surrounded a feudal lord with the aura of fame. . . . The 'goodness' and 'truthfulness' of a feudal lord [were manifested] in his feats and in his fame, which accompanied these feats."

It should be noted that hunting, besides its value in developing courage and character, served in Old Russia also for amusement and for social purposes. Not only were large and dangerous animals hunted, but also small animals (such as hares) and birds. Princes went on hunting trips for long periods, taking with them the womenfolk and retainers. They also hunted in boats going from Kiev down the Dnieper as far as the mouth of Tiasmin.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 214–15.

21. D. S. Likhachev, *Chelovek v literature drevnei Rusi* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1958), p. 53 (my italics).



Igor Sviatoslavich, during his imprisonment by the Polovtsy, amused himself by hunting with hawks. Sometimes two or more princes arranged a joint hunt; such companionship in sport might have served to pave the way toward establishing a family agreement or political rapprochement.<sup>22</sup>

Comparing the princely and, in general, the feudal morals and ideals as outlined above with the morals as manifested in byliny, we cannot fail to notice a striking agreement between them. The bravery of the princes was exhibited to the highest degree in hunting and fighting; the bylina heroes demonstrated their skill and manliness in the very same pursuits. Both the princes and the bylina heroes undertook daring hunting and military expeditions, with all their risks and rewards.

Although there is no unanimity among the folklore scholars concerning the time of origin of the bylina epic, the majority (e.g., Iu. M. Sokolov, P. D. Ukhov, V. I. Chicherov, Carl Stief, and T. M. Akimova) share the opinion that byliny go back to the Kievan period—to about the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>23</sup> Some scholars (e.g., V. Ia. Propp and B. N. Putilov) are inclined to shift their origin to a considerably earlier time.<sup>24</sup> There is no doubt that numerous individual motifs and themes in byliny are older than the genre itself, some of them reaching back as far as primitive Slavic.<sup>25</sup> The themes of hunting and fighting are, in all probability, very ancient. When the byliny were created or creatively reworked during the Kievan period, these two themes constituted the basic elements of their structure. And no wonder—they provided the best possible framework for expressing the princely pursuits and ideals.

The observations above corroborate the theory of Vsevolod Miller, Boris Sokolov, and others concerning the origin of byliny in princely circles. Byliny were most probably created by some talented singers among the princes' retinue, just as the West European heroic epic was created and nurtured in the court and aristocratic circles. Russian princes had their troubadours, whose task was to glorify the deeds of their masters. The best known among

22. S. M. Soloviev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1960), p. 14; George Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* (New Haven, 1959), p. 314.

23. Iu. M. Sokolov, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 252; P. D. Ukhov, "Byliny," in P. G. Bogatyrev, ed., *Russkoe narodnoe poeticheskoe tvorchestvo*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1956), pp. 329–30; Chicherov, "Itogi rabot," p. 34; Karl Stif (Carl Stief), "Vzaimootnosheniia mezhdru russkim letopisaniem i russkim narodnym eposom," *Scando-Slavica* (Copenhagen), 4 (1958): 59; T. M. Akimova, "Byliny," in A. M. Novikova and A. V. Kokorev, eds., *Russkoe narodnoe poeticheskoe tvorchestvo* (Moscow, 1969), p. 206.

24. *Byliny*, 1: xxix.

25. See, for example, Roman Jakobson, "The Serbian Zmaj Ognjeni Vuk and the Russian Vseslav Epos," in his *Selected Writings*, vol. 4: *Slavic Epic Studies* (The Hague and Paris, 1966), p. 378.

them was Boian "the Seer," who—according to *The Igor Tale*—sang praises to old Yaroslav, brave Mstislav, and handsome Roman Sviatoslavich. Glorifying songs in honor of princes are mentioned also in chronicles. Thus the Galician princes Daniil and Vasil'ko were greeted, upon their return from a successful campaign against the Yatvingians in 1221, with a song of praise.<sup>26</sup>

The make-up of princely retinues has not been completely clarified. It is probable that the military retinues consisted not only of the "princely men-in-arms"—princes and boyars—but also of the boyars' servants and the peasants.<sup>27</sup> If so, then the creators of byliny also came from different social strata. Whatever social background they had, they must have been intimately acquainted with the princely ideals. There are no data to support the post-1936 Soviet contention that the bylina genre was created primarily by the masses of working people.

When the byliny, some time later, completed their round, they obviously possessed some qualities that made them appealing to the peasants and workers. The byliny were, with due modifications, taken over by them, and new byliny were created on the existing models. Thus the byliny became, in the course of time, the property of all the Russian people.

26. Astakhova, *Byliny*, p. 52.

27. Iu. Sokolov, "Russkii bylinnyi epos," p. 193. On the princes' and boyars' retinues see B. D. Grekov, *Kievskaiia Rus'* (n.p., 1953), pp. 338–46.