

## PARODY IN RUSSIAN EPOS

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Bylinas are dominated by stern heroics, but "it takes one step from the heroic to the ridiculous". There is a principle in bylinas: to present somebody as ridiculous is to humiliate him, at the same time elevating the hero. Laughter is sometimes a means of clearing up relations, a demonstration of superiority on the social scale, a starting point of a conflict. A special place in Russian epos is held by parody laughter, which is ambivalent: it is directed to the reality, and also to the plot and aesthetic of the bylina source. Whereas parody songs, treating "low" reality of peasant everyday life, are works of comparatively late creation, the very principle of parodying as a form of plot transformation has probably been known to bylina epos long since.

### 1.

It couldn't be possibly said, that laughter was often heard in bylinas. They are dominated by stern heroics, dramatic character of situations, acuteness of collisions. But still, paraphrasing a well-known proverb, one can say, that "it takes one step from the heroic to the ridiculous". Laughter bursts out sporadically in bylinas, appearing as a peculiar component of their heroic-dramatic pathos. Sometimes it, so to say, crowns a narration about exploits of bogatyr's, of their victory and enemies' defeat. A Tartar tsar flies from the Russian land:

Batyga stammers, utters a curse:

"God don't allow, God don't allow my children,  
Don't allow my children and my grandchildren  
To visit Kiev or to see Kiev". (Gill., Vol. 1, p. 554)<sup>1</sup>

Laughter bursts into the very midst of bogatyr' combat: Ilya Muromets, having none regular arms about, seizes a Tartar by his feet and uses him like a war cudgel, while uttering thus:

"Greetings to you Tartar!  
You're strong and supple - won't tear,  
Won't tear and won't be broken..." (Kir., Vol. 3, p. 41)

There is a principle in bylinas, held out quite consistently: to present somebody as ridiculous is to humiliate him, at the same time elevating the hero. With the rarest exceptions, bogatyr's don't find themselves in funny situations, whereas it is often the case with their social antagonists - boyars and the prince himself together with the princess.

If there is no physical defeat, then there is a moral one, and that can assume ridiculous forms. Prince Vladimir, with support of boyars, bets with Ivan the Merchant's son on whose steeds are stronger. An outwardly uncomely bogatyr's' steed frightens away powerful prince's stallions:

"And the princes and boyars were frightened...  
On all fours they crawled around the yard,  
And Prince Vladimir and his princes were saddened,  
They crawled all around the cellar..." (K. D., p. 42)

A similar scene can be seen in the bylina about Nightingale the Brigand, when the latter demonstrates his whistle on the prince's yard.

And that's how Dobrynya Nikitich makes short work of Alyosha Popovich, who has encroached on his wife:

"He grabbed Alyoshka by his yellow hair,  
He jerked Alyoshka out across the oak table,  
He began working him over with a club,  
One couldn't tell the difference between hitting and groaning.  
  
Everyone, brothers, marries in his life time,  
But one wouldn't wish such a wedding as Alyosha's:  
That's how Alyoshka was married,  
Was married and slept with his wife." (Rybn. , Vol. 1, pp. 138-139)

These are instances of laughter which may be called epic. Feeling of the ridiculous becomes stronger because of being rendered in the same serenely sublime, "objective" manner, typical of bylinas.

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<sup>1</sup> All the verses for the paper are translated by prof. James O. Bayley, and I take an opportunity to thank him sincerely.

There is another type of laughter, which I would denote by a term "concerning matters of estate".

Bylina characters are extremely fearful of mockery: for them it is akin to an insult by word or action. When a bogatyr' returns from a prince's feast "hanging his ungovernable head", his mother encounters him with a question:

"Or did a fool mock you?  
Or did a drunk there insult you?  
Or did they pass you by there with the chalice?" (Gilf., Vol. 1, p. 134)

Laughter proves a means of settling scores, of clearing up relations, of demonstration of superiority on the social scale. It is this kind of laughter which becomes a starting point of a conflict (not at all jesting) in the bylina about Khoten Bludovich. On a prince's feast the Blud's widow dared to speak to the Chas' widow of marrying their children. The high-born boyarynya felt insulted, hearing such a proposal from the lower-born woman.

"She took the chalice of green wine from her,  
She spilled it on her white breasts,  
And poured it on her dress worth five-hundred rubles."

The insulting swearing accompanying this action is a specimen of estate arrogance.

"And your husband was Bludishche, (i.e. Screwer)  
And your son was born an ugly one,  
He was an ugly one, a near-sighted chicken:  
On a day when it would leap up, it would find grain,-  
And on that day the chicken would be full;  
On a day when it wouldn't leap up, it wouldn't find any grain,-  
And on that day the chicken would be hungry". (Grig., Vol. 3, p. 406)

## 2.

A special place in Russian epos is held by parody laughter. Skhazitels (i.e. Singers of bylinas) in the 18-20 centuries carried down to us but several specimens of bylina parody, but it is certain, that each of them is distinguished with high poetical art and laughter craft. In the basis of bylina parodies there lies a method of imagery, structural, semantic overturning (turning "inside out") of separate (serious) elements of epic text (plot), image or epic poetics. Newly appearing texts, characters, structures are more or less distinctly projected into some traditional epic source, and in comparison with it acquire their sense and reveal their latent laughter ele-

ment. Parody is conceived as funny only on the background of the parodied tradition, some reflection of mockery being thrown onto the tradition itself. In another word, parody laughter is ambivalent: it is directed to the reality, which is the object of parody, but also to the plot and aesthetics of the bylina source. Here is one of the most expressive examples.

In the texts of the bylina about Solovey Budimirovich and of bylina about Surovets of Suzdal' from the Kirsha Danilov Collection there is an initial stanza, which creates a poetically sublime image of the Russian land, its boundless areas and peculiar combination of contrasting landscapes:

"High are the heights under the heavens,  
Deep is the depth of the Ocean-Sea,  
Wide are the open spaces through the whole world,  
Deep are the pools of the Dnepr." (K.D., p. 201)

We may add, that in this representation one can discern a distinct trait of mythological triplex world division: heaven - earth - submarine depth.

But that's what is made of this representation in a parody:

"High is the height of the ceiling,  
Deep is the depth of the cellar,  
And the open space is the place before the stove,  
The open field is the place under the benches,  
And the blue Sea is the water in the tub." (K. D., p. 141)

Cosmic space turns into an entirely domestic one and is closed within the limits of peasant izba: instead of heaven there is ceiling, instead of Ocean-Sea - cellar, instead of whole earth - a narrow place under lavkas (benches, encircling an within izba), instead of Sea - a tub with water.

The effect arising is somewhat double: on one hand, a commonplace interior of a peasant's house acquires unexpected poetical colours through assimilation and, at the same time, contrast to bylina space; on the other hand, the "sublime" bylina reality itself is brought down, profaned through parody.

Here is another example of turning epic stereotypes inside out, on which in this way a tint of mockery is applied. The hero of the parody, a cockroach named Gulejko ( i.e. strolling, wandering) is made similar to a wandering bogatyr', and each his step is in correspondence hyperbolically sublimated.

"Then Gulejko for forty years walked behind the stove,  
Gulejko walked out to the stove post;  
'Then Gulejko saw the water in the tub:  
'Brothers, isn't that the blue sea?'  
Then Gulejko looked - they were eating cabbage soup out of a cup with a spoon:  
'Brothers, aren't those ships coming,  
Ships coming and all the rowers rowing?'" (Grig., Vol. 1, p. 383)

The first verse reminds of Svyatogor, wandering on earth without any apparent purpose.

Parody initial stanzas have their continuance in parody episodes, battle scenes, prompted by epic tradition. Their heroic, warrior pathos naturally acquires debased character: conflicts are transferred into everyday life and whole picture is vulgarized.

"And the mother-in-law fought and scrapped with the daughter-in-law...  
Over that pie, over that barley pie...  
They killed that useless chicken." (K. D., p. 141)

The battle itself, the theatre of war, its participants and arms - all acquire a frankly mocking interpretation:

"And still the young brides fought with their sisters-in-law,  
They fought with battle sticks - with shovels,  
And with fierce bows- with yokes  
And with tempered arrows - with spindles." (Ib.)

There are also mentioned "cannons - muskets of pots", "firing by korchežkas (pots)", "heavy cudgels - shemshuras (female head-gears)", "banners of brooms"; The firing is directed to the Stove, where "a round pie sat besieged". The final of kitchen massacre is a killed hen, taking the pie prisoner, flight of hot pancakes and sour *shchi*; triumph of the victors is eating of porridge and pea.

Side by side with burlesque characters - female participants of a domestic brawl, assimilated to a bylina battle, there appear parody bogatyr's - well matched to "sisters-in-law" and "daughter-in-law".

"To this same fight-great battle  
Came running then three might bogatyr's.  
The first mighty bogatyr'  
Had his head broken with pancakes,  
And the second might bogatyr'  
Had his legs broken with straw,  
The third might bogatyr'  
Had his belly cut with gut." (Ib.)

Prototypes of these heroes are to be found in the bylina about Churila Plenkovich: there prince Vladimir is presented with the sight of his luckless servants - "braves", beaten and disabled by Churila's *družina*: they have "their reckless heads broken through with cudgels, bandaged with waistbelts". It should be noted in justice, that the parody here not only joins in a motif "with cudgels - with pancakes", but develops the theme with *gusto*. Parody, like any other art, demands phantasy and creative feeling. In the same time bylina another "strong mighty bogatyr's" appears. This customary formula is immediately comically exposed - it is Agafonushka's garment, that is subjected to parody. Bylina bogatyr's - Ilya Muromets and

Dyuk Stepanovich are sometimes clothed in luxurious sable coats, one flap of a coat costing five hundred roubles, the other a thousand. Peculiar ornaments of a bogatyr's fur-coat are silk buttonholes and gilded buttons:

"In each of the buttonholes was woven a pretty girl,  
And in each of the buttons was poured a fine lad."

When a fur-coat is buttoned, braves and maidens embrace, when it is unbuttoned, they kiss.

But it can be otherwise and more in accordance with heroic spirit of bylinas:

"In the buttons were cast fierce animals,  
And in the button holes were sewn fierce snakes."

In a moment, critical for the bogatyr', beasts and snakes come to life and help him to win a victory.

On the background of these bylina miracles the parody character of Agafonushka's coat becomes manifest:

"And his fur coat was made of pig tails,  
It was adorned with sickness, it was lined with fever,  
The buttons are pus spots and sores,  
The button holes are pus scabs." (K. D., p. 141)

The given examples (which could be multiplied) fall under the type of parody laughter, that I would call burlesque.

### 3.

We'll turn now to the text, the parody character of which is not so manifest and maybe therefore wasn't appreciated by researchers. It is the "Catching of an eagle-owl", written down from singers of Pinega (and, very likely, composed there), called by themselves "*shutovaia starina*" (jesting old song). Its contents is a markedly absurd story about mužiks, who were catching an eagle-owl which had flown into their village. Comicality here is double: on one hand, the hunters approach the business as an extra-difficult and extra serious one, and in this they are assimilated to epic heroes. Many expressions of the song are certainly transformed bylina and historical song *formulae*, constantly used for descriptions of preparations of bogatyr's for campaign, gatherings of Cossacks atamans before important events, divisions of plunder, taken in battles... The context (a catching of a useless bird by a group of mužiks) lays a stamp of irony on these expressions. On the other hand, comicality becomes stronger, as it becomes clear, that the idlest plan, raised into the height of an epic deed, can't be

accomplished by the mužiks, because they are clumsy men and don't know how to approach a simple business. Parody here is superimposed on a typical folklore plot about fools, for whom a trifle grows into a great problem. So, the epic tradition, glimmering in a way behind the plot of catching an eagle-owl, strengthens the comic effects of the whole story (Grig., Vol. 1, N 190, 194, 197; Ast., Vol. 2, N 200, 218).

From the "Catching of an eagle-owl" it's easy to turn to so called *nebylitsas* (cock-and-bull song stories) performed by singers after a manner of bylinas. They were composed out of verses with absolutely absurd contents, connected between themselves with only some refrain like:

"A tall tale in characters, a fantastic story,  
A fantastic tale, and something unheard of..."

Every verse depicts something improbable, impossible in real life:

"A bear is flying through the skies,  
He is carrying a cow in his claws...  
A pig wove a nest on an oak tree,  
Wove a nest and bore children..." (Jak., p. 629)

The probability of conceiving *nebylitsas* in terms of authenticity is wholly excluded; absurdities, following one another, cause comic effect. Thus *nebylitsas* are in a manner opposed to epos, where, on the contrary, every improbability is acknowledged as reality. In this sense *nebylitsas* can be said to parody epos. There is also a case of direct parody:

"There in an open field a ship is coming,  
Through the open field a ship is coming,  
Here a ship, it's coming with sour dough,  
It's coming with sour dough and with baked goods,  
It's coming with guys and with gals." (Sok.-Chich., p. 288)

Probably, it's not by chance, that *nebylitsa* verses are preceded by initials of the following kind:

"If you like, brothers, I'll tell an old story,  
I'll tell you a fantastic story."

And here and then singers give one to understand, that this *starina* does not coincide with a classical bylina:

"I'll tell an old fantastic story,  
Fantastic and unheard of." (Sob., Vol. 7, p. 291)

And even so:

"I'll tell an old story and tie an old man to an old woman."  
(Grig., Vol. 1, p. 433)

Here one can directly perceive an ironic, skeptical relation towards the epic genre with its peculiar reality and its aesthetics. Laughter in the "Catching of an eagle-owl" and *nebylitsas* can be called buffoon, and one can't exclude, that in its sources it goes back to the laugh culture of *skomorokhs*.

Types and specimens of parodies, treated above, most probably belong to the later stage of epic creative art. They bear a distinct stamp of peasant everyday life, peasant artistic interest. Besides, most of the parodies in that way or other have a *colour locale*: toponyms of the Russian North, set of domestic objects, usual for northern peasants, thick layer of North Russian lexics. In parodies, singers, who were preserving classical epos, realized their craving for their own creative art and did it with the feeling of deep tact: it seems, as if the singers understood, that direct transference of bylina aesthetics on the ground of later real history and later social relations would be fruitless (as was proved by some experiments of singers in the thirties on creation of bylinas about Chapaiev or Voroshilov). Epic times are gone along with epic heroics and epic phantastics, and renovations of bylina forms are possible only on the ways of their semantic, structural, imagery overturning. So, appearance of parodies is hardly connected with crisis of classical epos and is hardly consciously directed against it. Even if there is a polemic charge in parodies, it aims rather at the present, which has entirely broken off the living ties with great traditions of bylina epos so, that epos can touch it only in mocking-turned inside out way. (On parodies in bylina epos see: Ivl., Lev., Put.).

#### 4.

Whereas parody songs, treating "low" reality of peasant everyday life, are works of comparatively late creation, the very principle of parodying as a form of plot transformation has probably been known to bylina epos long since. As for transformation, we'll just note here, that it is a sort of varying, i.e. the basic, determining principle of the complex of changes, reorganizations, recodings, that determines the process of epic creation. It is by way of transformation that new bylina plots, characters, concepts were appearing. Transformations, introduced to the tradition substantially new colours, motivations, interpretations, while often preserving much of the tradition itself. We'll deal with those instances, where transformation acquired a parody character - with all (or, at any rate, the most manifest) the following consequences.

A peculiarity of parody transformations is that they are not directed more or less definitely on a source. For works of this kind one can use an observation of Yu. N. Tynianov about existence of "undetectable



parodies", i.e. about such parodies, "the second plan" (in our terms - the source) of which "exists, but didn't go down a literary consciousness, is unnoticed, forgotten" (Tyn. p. 433). One can say about *bylina* parodies of this type, that they aren't perceived as such neither by epic environment nor by science. This paradox can be explained also by the fact, that the works, dealt with below, aren't penetrated by parody element wholly, but the latter appears from time to time in different parts of narration, determining its course to a great extent.

One of these "undetected parodies" is, for me, a *bylina* "Vasili Ignatievich and Kudrevanko the tsar" (or otherwise called "Vas'ka the Drunkard and Batyga"). This *bylina* makes an organic part of the narrative cycle about struggle of Russian bogatyr's with Tartar invasion and in a number of plot motifs repeats (with variations) the main collisions and situations, typical for the cycle. But some of these repetitions acquire a parody character. In our *bylina* the parodying hero is Vas'ka the Drunkard, and the parodied one is Ilya Muromets. Vas'ka repeats some moments of Ilya's biography, but does it in "turned inside out" and sometimes in mocking sneering forms. Here's a number of reflectedly distorted parallels in the *bylinas* about Ilya Muromets and Vas'ka the Drunkard.

1. At the moment the Tartars appear under Kiev's walls none of the bogatyr's happens to be in the city, and the most reliable of all - Ilya Muromets is in prison: The Prince caused him to be imprisoned for disagreement with him and for the direct challenge. Accordingly, the only bogatyr', remaining in Kiev is an unknown Vas'ka: he has squandered in drink and food all to the skin, he has neither a cross, nor a shirt on him and is "imprisoned" in a pot-house.

2. The Princess reminds the Prince about Ilya, and the former hurries to the cellar, implores Ilya to forget the offence and come out against the Tartars. Ilya is ready to do his duty and is provided with a horse and arms immediately. The same Princess informs the Prince about Vas'ka's existence. The haste, with which Vladimir prepares for the pot-house, is described with some humour: he throws his fur-coat on one shoulder and shoes himself barefooted. He has not only to plead with Vasili, but thrice to treat him to a bucket of wine: Vas'ka has a morning-after headache and can't come to himself. Besides, another difficulty arises: the Prince has to buy out Vas'ka's clothes from the host of the pot-house.

3. According to some variants of *bylina* about Vasili Ignatievich, the episode of drinking three buckets of wine is oriented on another "second plan", i.e. on the episode of *bylina*'s curing of Ilya Muromets by pilgrims, who made him drink a miraculous draught: as Ilya who has been sitting on a stove for thirty years, acquires strength from pilgrims' draught, so Vas'ka becomes free from sitting on a stove after three buckets of wine.

4. Like Ilya Muromets, who, having got into the princely palace, treats boyars highly uncourteously, Vas'ka in analogous situation:

"He grabbed the boyar by the right hand,  
And took off his sable coat,  
He put this coat on his own shoulders." (Grig., Vol. 2, p. 81)

I omit here different corresponding points in details, which certainly strengthen reflecting parody character of the plot about Vasili. Parody alternates with quite serious episodes, with heroics. It's enough to remind, that it is in this bylina that we find the famous initial stanza about *aurochs*' and their mother, about a maiden with a book, crying on the wall of Kiev. Parody element is somehow exceeded by the seriously heroic one, but as reflection of parody is thrown on the heroic also. Vas'ka the Drunkard appears as a buffoon, who has by chance assumed the role of a *bogatyr*'. The main thing is that this role, somehow forced upon him, was played by Vas'ka successfully: in the end he became a winner, destroyed the Tartar hordes and made the Tartar tsar fly from Kiev. But he accomplished one more task, which had been proved beyond Ilya's strength,- he made short work of boyars by hands of the Tartars. The means Vas'ka employs is simultaneously akin to a *bogatyr*' and a buffoon; in the most serious moments we can't help feeling deliberateness, unseriousness, grotesque "inside-outness" of his actions. Vasili the Drunkard is a peculiar double of Ilya Muromets, and this "doubleness" gets now quite a serious interpretation now a parody one (using the words of Yu. N. Tynianov, there happens "a daring confusion of semantic ranges") and moreover, these two interpretations are constantly mutually superimposed.

To all this I don't think that parody element in the bylina about Vas'ka the Drunkard aims at discrediting the *bogatyrstvo*. On the contrary, this element reveals the possibilities of *bogatyr*'s capacity in the environment which in a *bylina* tradition used to be represented merely as a background (on which greatness of Ilya as a *bogatyr*' was displayed) - in the environment of *gol' kabatskaia* (the pot-house poor). In a bylina "Ilya's rebellion against Vladimir" the *bogatyr*' makes the pot-house poor his allies, stands them drinks and food. Now these poor claim to be a *bogatyr*' force not at all inferior to Ilya. Here also epic art exercises utmost tact in not making a "pure" *bogatyr*' out of representative of the "gol's" and not equaling a narration about his exploit with a classical bylina plot. Parody spirit of the bylina about Vasili contains one more sense: elements of satire, buffoonery of it are directed towards discredit of princely and boyars' camp.

5.

There is a parody element also in bylinas about Vasili Buslaev of Novgorod. This image is strikingly paradoxical: in a thick coat of *bogatyr's* colours it's difficult to separate genuine features from false ones, it's difficult to tell, when he is a "genuine" *bogatyr'* and when he is an *antibogatyr'*, *bogatyr'* "inside out". The ambivalent treating of Buslaev (both serious and parody one) may be prompted by a conception of creating an image of Novgorod *bogatyr'*. Bylinas about Buslaev are saturated with epic stereotypes, but many of them are either parodied directly, or reveal their true parody nature in a corresponding context. So, Vasili's education and his selection of *družina* (in order to enter it one must drink a bucket of wine and bear a blow of Buslaev's cudgel) have a parody character; and an absolutely parody character is born by the Buslaev's right-hand man, Potanjushka Hromenjkyj (Potanjushka the Lame), who passes cruel tests successfully:

"He stumbles on one leg,  
He limps on the other leg,  
He supports himself on two crutches." (Ast., Vol. I, pp. 189-190)

Scene of a Novgorod feast - *bratchina* - is certainly a parody on the scene of Kiev princely feast, and Vasili behaves himself just like Ilya Muromets - but in other social conditions. It is clear, that all the contents of episodes of battle: quarrels, challenge, conditions and the slaughter itself are "secondary". The *družina* has to fight without its ataman, who, like Ilya Muromets, is imprisoned in a cellar, but all this is represented in a parody and comical spirit. It is Buslaev's mother who locks him in the cellar, gets him drunk and uses sometimes her own force to stop a battle. There is grotesque episode, when the mother leads her son out of the struggle: she jumps from behind on his "mighty shoulders", she grasps him at her armpits. In the centre of the slaughter there appears Buslaev's serving girl - Chernavushka (black) maiden: she uses a yoke as a war cudgel, and in some variants the same yoke tears itself out of the maid's hands and "kills up to five hundred men".

Slaughters on the Volkhov bridge between different strata of Novgorod society is a historical reality. But this reality is depicted in quite a burlesque manner - with naturalistic details and use of epic colours with distinct comic tint. There are also many other details in these bylinas, which strengthen the parody effect.

For all this, Vasili Buslaev is perceived as a literary type, significant in its historical context, and parody here happens to act as means of creating such a type.

Most interesting is manifestation of parody in the second bylina - that about Vasili Buslaev's pilgrimage and death. Mockery and irony - these inevitable satellites of parody - here appear but seldom, by separate outbursts; parody here appears as a way of revealing latently the serious, dramatic sense of this or that episode. As an episode is being superimposed on the "second plan" (i.e. the source), parody reveals an element of irony in it. So, Buslaev's travel to Jerusalem, seemingly devout by purpose, proves not at all devout by its organization and behaviour of participants. Much of bylina's text correlates with some episodes from bylina "Ilya Muromets and Nightingale the Brigand": Ilya was also starting for Kiev with pious intentions and wasn't going to take out arms, but he had to break the prohibition, and on the day of Easter into the bargain. The correlation of the two plans reveals features of antibogatyrs in Buslaev: a genuine bogatyr' can break a prohibition for a sublime purpose; whereas the antibogatyr's does it for mere mischief, out of counteraction feeling. It doesn't mean, that the bylina censures Buslaev: he is simply a hero of another mentality, other social roles.

Another "second plan" (source) of the pilgrimage plot is a bylina "Sorok kalik" (The Forty Palmers), where the traveling to Jerusalem is raised as a holy deed and where all the heroes are animated by the idea of the strictest keeping of moral norms. The hero of the bylina, Kasian, is slandered and destroyed, but, being guiltless, having kept norms of sacred morals, he comes to life. On the contrary, another palmer, Vasili Buslaev, perishes because he breaks these norms and commits "sinful" deeds.

The central episode in the second bylina is one of Buslaev's encounter with a hollow human skull and also an episode with a stone. This is peculiar apotheosis of Buslaev as of an *antibogatyr'*. In many bylinas *bogatyr's* act despite threatening warnings and overcome the forces standing behind these warnings. Overcoming of a prohibition is a part of *bogatyr's* codex. Vasili Buslaev, acting despite the warning of the skull and breaking the prohibition, written on the stone, would seem to act as a genuine *bogatyr'*. But the tragic outcome of the breaking shows, that Buslaev exceeded his capabilities. Both the skull and the inscription on the stone (and the stone as well) are signs of Death. It seems, that the very idea of struggle with persons or objects, materializing Death, is strange to classical bylinas. *Bogatyr's* oppose the "living" (even if phantastic) evil forces and conquer despite threatening warnings. In one case only they have to recede: when encountering "unearthly force" (i.e. which came "from netherworld"): bylina "The Kama Battle". The nearest parallel to the bylina about Buslaev is a *dukhovnyi stikh* (spiritual verse) about Anika the warrior. This hero isn't one of the traditional body of Kiev *bogatyr's*. Fed up with former victories, he decides to start for Jerusalem.

"I'll cut down the whole city of Jerusalem,  
I'll capture it all." (Kir., Vol. 4, p. 115)

On the halfway he encounters a *Chudo Chudnoe* (Monster Monstrous) - an anthropomorphic creature with different attributes of a mythological monster. It bars the way to Jerusalem to Anika:

"I am your Death,  
I want to take you..."

Anika attempts to threaten the *Chudo*, but a warning follows: Death has mowed down stronger bogatyr's, and will mow him also. Parallels between the bylina and the spiritual verse suggest themselves. Buslaev plot could arise without direct correspondence with spiritual verse, but certainly in correlation with complex of ideas, typical for Russian Middle Ages. In the image of Buslaev features of a palmer and of a *bogatyr*' cross, but both are "turned inside out", and the character itself appears as highly complex, and the parody element of it helps to illuminate his extraordinarity and to a large extent - exceptionality.

## NOTES

### Ast.

Byliny Severa. Vol. 1. Writing down, introductory and commentary of A. M. Astakhova. M., L., 1938; Vol. 2. Preparation of texts and commentary of A. M. Astakhova. M., L., 1951.

### Gilf.

Onežskie byliny, writing down by A. F. Gilferding in summer 1871 year. Ed. 4-th. Vol. 1, M. L., 1949; vol. 3, 1951.

### Grig.

Arkhangelskie byliny i istoricheskie pesni, collected by A. D. Grigorjev in 1899-1901 years. Vol. 1, M., 1904; Vol. 2. Prah, 1939; Vol. 3 SPb., 1910.

### Ivl.

Ivleva I. M. Skomoroshiny: obshchie problemy izuchenija. - In: "Slavjyhski folklor". M., 1972.

### K. D.

Drevnie Rossijskie stikhotvorenija, collected by Kirsha Danilov. M., 1977.

### Kir.

Pesni, collected by P. V. Kireevski. Part 3, 4. M., 1861, 1862.

### Lev.

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**Put.**

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## PARODIJA U RUSKOM EPU

### SAŽETAK

U ruskim bilinama prevladava ozbiljan junački ton, ali "samo je jedan korak od junačkog do smiješnog". Prikazati nekoga u bilinama smiješnim znači poniziti ga, istodobno veličajući junaka koji mu je protivnik. Smijeh je ponekad sredstvo raščišćavanja odnosa, demonstracija nadmoći na društvenoj ljestvici, početna točka sukoba. Posebno mjesto u ruskom epu zauzima parodija, koja ima dvojako djelovanje. S jedne je strane usmjerena na zbilju, a s druge strane na sadržaj i estetiku biline. Pjesme koje tretiraju "niske" slojeve zbilje seljačke svakidašnjice obično su novijega datuma, ali sam princip parodiranja, kao oblik transformacije siže, zacijelo je u bilinama nazočan od davnina.

Različite razine komičnoga u ruskom epu prikazane u ovoj studiji rezultat su autorova temeljitog poznavanja ruske epike i u tekstu su ilustrirane znalački izabranim primjerima.