

## ИСТОРИОГРАФИЯ, ИСТОЧНИКОВЕДЕНИЕ И МЕТОДЫ ИСТОРИЧЕСКОГО ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

### The Immortal Host of Prince Igor

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The attention of the author of this paper is focused on “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign” (*Slovo o polku Igoreve*), a famous work of Russian literature. Before the revolution the text was included in the school curriculum, and within the period of 1850–1917 its separate editions exceeded 150. The early Soviet period was marked by a brief decline of the popularity of the “Tale”, but since mid-1930s, the number of its separate editions started to grow, and the negative or indifferent comments on Prince Igor Sviatoslavich in Soviet encyclopedias were replaced by the favorable ones. The heroization of its characters during the Great Patriotic War also contributed to the popularity of the “Tale”. After the war, “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign” was effectively used again as a symbol of the unity of three brotherly nations — Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian. The celebrations of different anniversaries, such as the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Tale” and 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first publication were also typical of the Soviet era. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the “Tale” has become an object of rivalry between Russia and Ukraine. Each country claims to be the only true heir of the “Tale”, actively contributing to its popularization via publications, the organization of commemorative events and the introduction of its

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text into school curriculums. However, further prospects of the “Tale” commemoration-wise are quite obscure — the article argues that the “Tale” (as well as many other literary works) does not constitute an effective tool for building of national past.

*Keywords:* *The Tale of Igor’s Campaign*, historical memory, historical policy, literary works, the Old Russian book-learning, Igor Sviatoslavovich Novgorod-Seversky, Yaroslavna, Boian, memorial places.

## Бессмертный полк князя Игоря

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В центре внимания автора статьи самое известное произведение древнерусской литературы «Слово о полку Игореве». В тексте прослеживается история востребованности «Слова», взлетов и падений его популярности. В дореволюционный период «Слово о полку Игореве» было включено в школьную программу, а количество его отдельных книжных изданий в 1850–1917 гг. перевалило за 150. В начале советского периода популярность «Слова» падает, однако ненадолго. Уже с середины 1930-х гг. растет количество отдельных книжных изданий памятника, негативные или нейтральные оценки князя Игоря Святославовича в советских энциклопедиях сменяются на позитивные. Росту популярности произведения способствовала героизация его персонажей в годы Великой Отечественной войны. В послевоенное время «Слово о полку Игореве» успешно использовалось как символ единения трех братских народов — русских, украинцев и белорусов. Для советского времени также характерно празднование юбилеев «Слова»: 750-летие создания памятника и 150-летие его первой публикации. Кроме того, в советские годы продолжают создаваться произведения искусства на эту тему: оратория «Слово о полку Игореве» Л. А. Пригожина (1966 г.), балет «Ярославна» Б. И. Тищенко (1974 г.), симфония «Слово о полку Игореве» О. Г. Янченко (1985 г.) и мн. др. После распада СССР «Слово о полку Игореве» стало предметом соперничества между Россией и Украиной. Каждая из стран видит себя истинной наследницей «Слова» и потому активно способствует его популяризации — посредством включения в школьные программы, издания памятника, проведения различных связанных с ним коммемораций. Однако дальнейшие перспективы «Слова» в ландшафте памяти не вполне ясны — в статье показано, что это произведение древнерусской литературы (как и другие литературные памятники) не является эффективным инструментом для конструирования национального прошлого. Вероятно, такими инструментами будущей исторической политики может стать не столько «Слово», сколько его персонажи — Игорь, Ярославна, Боян.

*Ключевые слова:* *Слово о полку Игореве*, историческая память, историческая политика, литературные памятники, древнерусская книжность, Игорь Святославович Новгород-Северский, Ярославна, Боян, места памяти.

There seem to be few motifs in historiography as widely covered as “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign”. At the same time, the discussions mostly focus on the issues of authenticity/time of the creation of the “Tale” and its literary and cultural value<sup>1</sup>. The genesis

<sup>1</sup> See a basic work of the “The Tale”: *Entsiklopediia “Slova o polku Igoreve”*: v 5 t. / eds L. A. Dmitriev, D. S. Likhachev, S. A. Semiachko, O. V. Tvorogov. St. Petersburg, 1995.

of the text has been a subject of heated debates for a long time. The manuscript of the “Tale”, obtained by Musin-Pushkin in the 1790s, was lost in the 1812 Fire of Moscow, and the 1800 edition was recognized as the original text<sup>2</sup>. Many scholars point out the similarity between some motifs of the “Tale” and another well-known work of the Old Russian literature *Zadonshchina*, which tells of the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380. Although most of the experts believe the “Tale” to have been created circa 1187 (among these there are D. S. Likhachev, A. L. Dmitriev, B. A. Rybakov, O. V. Tvorogov, A. A. Zalizniak and many others), some scholars ascribe it to a later period — for example, the 13<sup>th</sup> century (N. Gumilev, D. N. Al’shits), the 15<sup>th</sup> century (A. G. Bobrov, M. A. Shibaev). Some scholars consider it to be a literary stylization of great talent, in other words — a hoax of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. (A. Mazon, A. A. Zimin)<sup>3</sup>. Heated debates about the “Tale” and its authenticity/falsity in the historiographic and semi-historiographic milieu have not ceased even now<sup>4</sup>. In fact, this aspect is not particularly relevant to the issues covered by this article. Rather, its main objective is to analyze the “Tale” and the image of Prince Igor in the context of the historical memory of the modern and contemporary time.

**The invention of a memorial place.** The question whether Prince Igor Sviatoslavich and his Polovtsian campaigns were well-known to the public (at the level of mass historic consciousness) in medieval Russia has a univocal answer — no, they were not, although the detailed account of the 1185 battle can be found in Russian chronicles<sup>5</sup>, and a number of researchers propose a hypothesis about its impact on *Zadonshchina* and other Old Russian texts<sup>6</sup>. Probably, it can be explained by the fact that the dismissive attitude of “Tale” towards Vladimir Monomakh and Vsevolod the Big Nest, whose images were of great importance for the ideologists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, ran counter to the memory policy of the

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<sup>2</sup> Slovo o polku Igoreve. Iroicheskaia pesn’ o pokhode na polovtsov udel’nago kniazia Novagoroda-Severskago Igoria Sviatoslavicha: Pisannaia starinnyim russkim iazykom v iskhode XII stoletia: S prelozheniem na upotrebliaemoe nyne narechie. Moscow, 1800.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Istoriia spora o podlinnosti «Slova o polku Igoreve»*. Materialy diskussii 1960-kh godov / Vst. stat’ia, podgot. tekstov, komment. L. V. Sokolovoi. SPb., 2010; *Mazon A. Le Slovod’ Igor*. Paris, 1940; *Likhachev D. S.*: 1) “Slovo o polku Igoreve”. *Istoriko-literaturnyi ocherk*. Moscow; Leningrad, 1962; 2) *Zoloto slovo russkoi literatury // Slovo o Polku Igoreve / podgot. teksta i vstup. stat’ia D. S. Likhacheva*. Moscow, 1987. P. 3–20; *Zimin A. A.*: 1) *Slovo o polku Igoreve*. St. Petersburg, 2006; 2) *Spornye voprosy tekstologii “Zadonshchiny” // Russkaia literatura*. 1967. No. 1. P. 84–104; *Dmitrieva R., Dmitriev L., Tvorogov O.* Po povodu stat’i A. A. Zimina “Spornye voprosy tekstologii ‘Zadonshchiny’” // *Russkaia literatura*. 1967. No. 1. P. 105–121; *Rybakov B. A.* Petr Borislavich. Poisk avtora slova o Polku Igoreve. Moscow, 1991; *Shibaev M. A.*: 1) “Zadonshchina”, “Slovo o Polku Igoreva” i Kirillo-Belozerskii monastyr’ // *Ocherki feodal’noi Rossii*. Moscow, 2003. Iss. VII. P. 29–57; 2) “Slovo o polku Igoreve” i politicheskie sobytiia serediny XV v. // *Trudy kafedry istorii Rossii s drevneishikh vremen do XX veka*. St. Petersburg, 2006. P. 503–508; *Bobrov A. G.* Problema podlinnosti “Slova o polku Igoreve” i Efrasim Belozerskii // *Acta Slavica Iaponica*. Sapporo, 2005. Vol. 22. P. 238–298; *Gumilev L. N.* Mongoly XIII v. i “Slovo o polku Igoreve” // *Doklady otdeleniia etnografii*. Leningrad, 1966. Iss. 2. P. 55–80; *Zalizniak A.* “Slovo o polku Igoreve”: vzgliad lingvista. Moscow, 2003; and others. See also: *Dmitriev L. A.* Vremia sozdaniia “Slova” // *Entsiklopediia “Slova o polku Igoreve”*. Vol. 1. P. 246–251.

<sup>4</sup> *Zimin A. A.* Khram nauki (razmyshleniia o prozhitom). M., 1976 // *Sud’by tvorcheskogo naslediia otechestvennykh istorikov vtoroi poloviny XX veka*. Moscow, 2015. P. 35–384; *Kozlova N. A.* O piratskom izdanii knigi A. A. Zimina “Khram nauki”: Zaiavlenie docheri i naslednitsy avtorskikh prav uchenogo N. A. Ziminov (2015). URL: <http://www.arran.ru/?q=ru/node/602> (accessed: 01.09.2017); *Bazanov M. A.* Memuary A. A. Zimina “Khram nauki”: kartina nauchnoi sredy i nabor tsennostnykh orientirov avtora // *Istoriicheskaia ekspertiza*. 2016. No. 4. P. 232–247.

<sup>5</sup> *Letopisnye povesti o pokhode kniazia Igoria*. Iz Ipat’evskoi letopisi // *Pamiatniki literatury Drevnei Rusi*. XII vek. Moscow, 1980. P. 230–246.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example: *Dmitrieva R. P.* *Zadonshchina // Entsiklopediia “Slova o polku Igoreve”*. Vol. 2. P. 202–211.

Muscovite autocracy<sup>7</sup>. Anyway, by the dawn of the modern time Prince Igor and his host had fallen into oblivion.

The introduction of the “Tale” into the public space and cultural memory took place in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mostly due to the “Columbus of Russian antiquities” N. M. Karamzin, who had translated the “Tale” and featured it in his work “The History of the Russian State”, which was recognized as a real bestseller of the time<sup>8</sup>. As we know from literature — many writers, contemporaries of Karamzin (N. I. Gnedich, N. V. Gogol, M. Yu. Lermontov and others) showed interest in the “Tale”<sup>9</sup>. It is necessary to point out the significance of the popularization of the text by A. S. Pushkin, a genius of the nation and the “sun of Russian poetry”, who emphatically insisted that Russian writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (with the exception of G. R. Derzhavin) en masse “did not have enough poetic talent to rival the lament of Yaroslavna, the description of the battle and the flight”, thus rejecting the very idea of the modern time falsification of the text<sup>10</sup>. For A. S. Pushkin, who “had reared a monument not built by human hands”, it was important to embed in the public consciousness the ideas of the “shallowness of Russian literature” and, in particular, of “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign’ standing out against the desert of the Old Russian literature”<sup>11</sup>. The proverb states that the exception proves the rule. Pushkin’s view on the “Tale” is similar to that of other classics of the golden age of Russian literature — A. S. Griboedov, A. N. Ostrovskii, A. K. Tolstoi, A. N. Maikov and many others<sup>12</sup>. Leading literary critic Belinsky, who not only undertook his own translation of the text but also expressed his strong opinion on its literary merits, having, yet, denied the existence of some “profound message” in it, agreed with these outstanding writers<sup>13</sup>. For the Soviet historiography the last part of Belinsky’s statement turned out to be unacceptable. As one of the authors claimed — “Belinskii failed to perceive the profundity of the patriotic idea which underlies the narrative of the ‘Tale’”<sup>14</sup>.

It is difficult to say to what extent the views of the skeptics (M. T. Kachenovskii, O. I. Senkovskii, M. N. Katkov, I. I. Davydov and others) impeded the entrenchment of the “Tale” in the public consciousness<sup>15</sup>. In popularity in socio-political sphere the skeptics

<sup>7</sup> *Al'shits D. N.* Legenda o Vsevolode — polemicheskii otklik XVI v. na “Slovo o polku Igoreve” // Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury. Moscow; Leningrad, 1958. Vol. 14. P. 64–70.

<sup>8</sup> *Karamzin N. M.* Istoriia Gosudarstva Rossiiskogo. St. Petersburg, 1816. Vol. III. P. 536. — On the relevance of the works of N. M. Karamzin as a translator and analyst see, for example: *Dmitriev L. A.* N. M. Karamzin i “Slovo o polku Igoreve” // Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury. Moscow; Leningrad, 1962. Vol. 18. P. 38–49.

<sup>9</sup> *Priima F. Ia.* “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” v russkom istoriko-literaturnom protsesse. Moscow, 1980.

<sup>10</sup> On A. S. Pushkin and the “The Tale” see numerous works of literature, in particular: *Odinokov V. G.* “Slovo o polku Igoreve” v otsenke Pushkina // Izvestiia Sibirskogo otdeleniia AN SSSR. 1986. No. 14. Ser. istorii, filologii i filosofii. Iss. 3. P. 33–37; *Priima F. Ia.* “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” v russkom istoriko-literaturnom protsesse. P. 156–178.

<sup>11</sup> *Pushkin A. S.* O nichozhestve literatury russkoi // Pushkin A. S. Sobraie sochinenii: v 10 t. Vol. 6. Moscow, 1962. P. 408.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example: *Sazonova L. I.* Pamiat’ kul’tury i barokko v russkoi literature Novogo vremeni. Moscow, 2012. P. 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Belinskii V. G.* (Stat’i o narodnoi poezii) // Sochineniia V. Belinskogo Moscow, 1885. Ch. 5. P. 7–24. — On the ideas of Belinsky about the “Song” see, for example: *Bulakhov M. G.* Belinskii // *Bulakhov M. G.* “Slovo o polku Igoreve” v literature, iskusstve, nauke: Kratkii entsiklopedicheskii slovar’. Minsk, 1989. P. 26–28; *Ol’shanskii O. E.* V. G. Belinskii i “Slovo o polku Igoreve” // Naukovi zapiski Slovians’kogo derzhavnogo pedagogichnogo Instituta. Vol. 2. Seriiia Istoriiko-filologichna. Iss. 2. Slov’ians’k, 1957. P. 118–140.

<sup>14</sup> *Berezina V. G.* V. G. Belinskii i “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” // Russkaia literatura. 1986. No. 3. P. 147–153.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example: *Zimin A. A.* Slovo o polku Igoreve. P. 387–401.

were much more inferior to the advocates of the “Tale”. It is noteworthy that both forward-looking public and the authorities joined efforts in its popularization — for both the “Tale” became an important constituent element for the construction of their own versions of the national past. From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the instigation of F. I. Buslaev it was introduced into the school curriculum in literature, where it remains to this day<sup>16</sup>. It is also one of the few literary works, which despite social and political cataclysms have remained in the list of “normative texts” (the texts, which from the point of view of memory studies are obligatory for all to read) for 150 years.

It should be emphasized that throughout the modern time the “Tale” was the most often published text of the pre-Petrine period. Within the period from 1850 to 1917, the number of the separate editions of the “Tale” doubled the total number of the editions of other popular texts, including “Russian’ Justice” (*Russkaia Pravda*), “The Tale of Bygone Years” (*Povest’ vremennykh let*) and “The Journey Beyond Three Seas” (*Khozhdenie za tri moria*) by Afanasii Nikitin (Table 1).

Table 1. The number of separate editions of pre-Petrine texts (1708–2017)<sup>17</sup>

Position	Text	1708–1800	1801–1850	1851–1917	1918–1991	1992–2017	Bcero
1	<i>The Tale of Igor’s campaign</i>	3	18	163	253	211	648
2	The Russian Justice	1	3	62	16	139	221
3	The Tale of Bygone years	0	1	23	32	49	105
4	Zadonshchina	0	0	1	26	16	43
5	The Tale of Mamay’s Battle ( <i>Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche</i> )	0	3	2	18	9	32
6	The Journey Beyond Three Seas	0	0	4	11	16	31
7	The Tale of the Ruin of the Russian Land ( <i>Slovo o pogibeli Russkoi zemli</i> )	0	0	0	11	14	25
8	The Instruction of Vladimir Monomakh ( <i>Pouchenie Vladimira Monomakha</i> )	0	0	4	4	13	21
9	The Tale of Petr and Fevronia ( <i>Povest’ o Petre i Fevronii</i> )	0	0	0	4	12	16
10	The Sermon on Law and Grace ( <i>Slovo o zakone i blagodati</i> )	0	0	0	1	12	13

It can be stated that it was due to the outstanding figures of the “golden age” of Russian literature that the “Tale” was integrated into the cultural memory of the nation. “Prince Igor”, a masterpiece of two great composers A. P. Borodin and I. A. Rimskii-Korsakov<sup>18</sup>,

<sup>16</sup> Buslaev F. O prepodavanii otechestvennogo iazyka. Moscow, 1844. Part 2. P. 237.

<sup>17</sup> Based on the NLR catalogue. URL: [http://primo.nl.ru/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do](http://primo.nl.ru/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do) (accessed: 11.08.2017).

<sup>18</sup> Compare, for example: *Bulycheva A. Kniaz’ Igor’ Borodina ili Rimskogo-Korsakova? // Operamusicologica. 2010. No. 4 (6). P. 70–99. Sud’in G. G. “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” v russkoi filosofii i kul’ture // Filosofii i obshchestvo, 2014. Ianvar’ — mart. No. 1. P. 179–186.*

and paintings of such famous artists as V. M. Vasnetsov and V. G. Perov contributed to the natural realization of this process. Late introduction of the text into mass consciousness by no means impeded its impact on the cultural milieu of the Silver Age. Some of its most outstanding representatives (V. S. Solov'ev, V. Briusov, M. Voloshin, N. Adamovich, M. Tsvetaeva and others)<sup>19</sup> took purposely the ideas from the imagery of the “Tale” in their works. What is equally important, the “Tale” and the quotes from it got entrenched even in the literary language of the authors who did not write about it intentionally, like, for example, I. A. Bunin, a classic of Russian literature of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a Nobel Prize winner<sup>20</sup>. The integration of the “Tale” into cultural memory inevitably resulted in its constant presence in the life of common people who were not deeply involved in cultural life. Opening any newspaper, irrespective of its agenda, an average reader could almost every day come across the advertisements and reviews of opera “Prince Igor” and, having subscribed to magazine *Niva* — the most popular in Russia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> — early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, published in large editions — would receive a set of illustrations for the “Tale” in addition to new issues<sup>21</sup>. Above all, the children of all social classes at different type of schools were required to learn the “Tale” by heart. Thus, in the 19<sup>th</sup> — early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the “Tale...” and its characters firmly gained ground among the most important elements of the social memory of medieval Russia, which has remained virtually unchangeable throughout two centuries<sup>22</sup>.

***A knight from the era of Russian feudalism.*** Could the situation with the “Tale...” have changed in the context of the new Soviet realities and the regime, whose memory policy is known to have been aggressive and destructive towards the myths of the past? At some point it seemed quite possible. The main “proletarian” poet Vladimir Maiakovskii in his poem “A grammar-school boy or a builder” (*Gimnazist ili stroitel'*, 1927) ridiculed the pointless curriculum of old gymnasiums and among other absurdities touched upon the “Tale”: “*V bashku vtemiashivaiut, gody tratia: 'Ne lepo li biashe, bratie'*” (They used to hammer into our heads: Is not it time, brothers...) <sup>23</sup>. However, this period of cultural nihilism did not last long. The dynamics of the popularity of the “Tale” is clearly seen in Table 1 and diagram. The latter demonstrates gradual growth in the number of the editions of the text after a dramatic fall (six times less) at the beginning of the Soviet era: if in 1920–1934 there were only 9 separate editions of the “Tale” published, in the 1980–1994 this number amounted to 57 (which broke the record of fifteen years 1905–1919).

It is noteworthy that in the pre-Soviet times the “Tale” remains the most published text of the pre-Petrine period. What is more, the number of its separate editions exceeds those of all other texts in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well (see Table 1). In these circumstances the

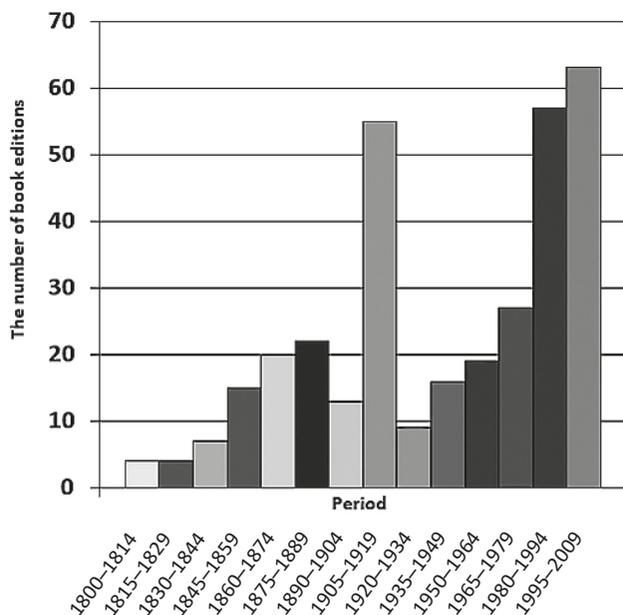
<sup>19</sup> Sazonova L. I. *Pamiat' kul'tury i barokko v russkoi literature Novogo vremeni*. Moscow, 2012. P. 19–66.

<sup>20</sup> Romanicheva E. S. “Slovo o polku Igoreve” v rannei lirike I. A. Bunina // *Literatura Drevnei Rusi* / ed. by N. I. Prokof'eva. Moscow, 1983. Iss. 4. P. 133–139.

<sup>21</sup> Miamlin I. “Slovo” i ego illiustratory // *Neva*. 1964. No. 4. P. 206.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example: Rostovtsev E. A., Sosnitskii D. A.: 1) *Zabytyi zolotoi vek: Iaroslav Mudryi i Rus' Iaroslava — pereosmysleniia XIX — nachala XXI v.* // *Rusin*. 2016. No. 4 (46). P. 26–43; 2) “Kulikovskii plen”: obraz Dmitriia Donskogo v natsional'noi istoricheskoi pamiati // *Quaestio Rossica*. 2017. Vol. 5, no. 4. P. 1149–1163; 3) *Kniaz' Vladimir Velikii kak natsional'nyi geroi: sozdanie obraza* // *Dialog so vremenem*. 2018. No. 4 (65). P. 150–164.

<sup>23</sup> *Maiakovskii V. V. Gimnazist ili stroitel' // Maiakovskii V. V. Sbranie sochinenii: v 8 t. Vol. 5*. Moscow, 1968. P. 364. Compare: *Uvarov K. A. Slovo o Polku Igoreve v literaturno-esteticheskoi otsenke V. V. Maia-kovskogo // Russkaia literatura XX veka. Sovetskaia literatura*. Moscow, 1975. P. 257–262.



The dynamics of the publications of “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign” (1800–2009)<sup>24</sup>

“Tale” and its characters were destined to remain among those few objects of historical memory relating to the Middle Ages which played an important role in the mass historical consciousness of the Soviet society.

Soviet encyclopedias of different periods demonstrate the changes in the interpretation of the “Tale” in the official Soviet discourse of the 1930s. Thus, if the article in the first edition of the Small Soviet Encyclopedia (*Malaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 1930) briefly characterizes the “Tale” as a “literary work dating back to the era of emerging Russian feudalism”<sup>25</sup>, the article in the second edition turns out to be three times as long praising the “Tale” as an “immortal work of the Old Russian literature, a great poem of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, permeated with a feeling of deep patriotism”<sup>26</sup>. The change in the view on Igor Sviatoslavovich and the “Tale” can be traced in the first edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia (*Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*), the publication of which was extended in time. Thus, the article about the Prince was published in 1933, and the one, focusing on the “Tale”, in 1945. The former consists of several lines and emphasizes the class affinity between Igor and Konchak, a Polovetsian Khan, as “he had married his son off to the daughter of Konchak (as it is typical of the Slavic and Turkic feudals to join forces through marriage)”<sup>27</sup>. The article on the “Tale” written by famous historian and expert in the Old Russian literature N. K. Gudzi, is much more extensive and amounts to several pages. The author not only refers to such authorities as A. S. Pushkin and K. Marx in order to prove

<sup>24</sup> Based on the NLR catalogue. URL: [http://primo.nlr.ru/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do](http://primo.nlr.ru/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do) (accessed: 11.08.2017).

<sup>25</sup> Sokolov Yu. Slovo o polku Igoreve // Malaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia: v 10 t. / ed. by N. L. Meshcheryakov. Vol. 8. Moscow, 1930. Col. 31–32.

<sup>26</sup> Novikov I. “Slovo o polku Igoreve” // Malaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia. Vol. 9. Col. 786–788.

<sup>27</sup> Igor’ Sviatoslavich // Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia: v 65 t. Moscow, 1933. Vol. 27. Col. 409.

the authenticity and cultural significance of the “Tale”, but also comes up with an idea which was of great importance for the Soviet historiography. “No other work of the Old Russian literature — argues N. K. Gudzii — can provide such a comprehensive account of the knightly way of life in Kievan Rus’ as it was done by the ‘Tale’. Igor and Vsevolod are portrayed there as warriors guided by honor and glory in all their actions <...> other princes, featured in the ‘Tale’, are also distinguished by knightly courage and military valor”<sup>28</sup>. Another important message of the article aims at the cultural consolidation of the Soviet people: “Having originated from Kievan Rus’, the common cradle of three fraternal peoples — the Great Russians, the Ukrainians and the Belarusians — it by right belongs to all of them”<sup>29</sup>. In the second edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia the article about Prince Igor is much more extensive and does not contain any negative allusions to his feudal kinship with Konchak. It states that Igor’s host was confronted by the “superior forces of Polovetsian hordes”, that he himself was “wounded in the arm” and taken prisoner but escaped captivity later<sup>30</sup>.

There was a predilection for the quotes from the classics (often used randomly) in the Soviet scholarly or semi-scholarly literature. As the main Soviet classic and his devoted companion (Lenin and Stalin) had never written a word about the “Tale”, several sentences from the letter of Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels of March 5, 1856 about the book by F. G. Eichhoff “History of the Language and Literature of the Slavs”, which Karl Marx was reading at that time, came in handy. Scholars were particularly partial to one quotation from Marx: “The main idea of the poem is the appeal of Russian Princes for integration on the threshold of the invasion of Mongolian hordes”<sup>31</sup>. These two motifs — knightly-lyrical and patriotic — were the cornerstone of the Soviet interpretation of the “Tale”. According to the leading article of “Pravda” (Russian newspaper) of May 25, 1938, which commemorated the anniversary of the “Tale”, “the author of the text was imbued with noble ideas of honor and gallantry <...> these chivalrous feelings are close and transparent to our people and our heroes”<sup>32</sup>. The Soviet patriotic poetry of the period of the Great Patriotic War made a particular emphasis on the “Tale”. The poem of Olga Bergol’tz “...I will talk to you today...” (*...Ia budu segodnia s toboi govorit’*, 1941) compares the heroic deeds of Prince Igor’s warriors and the feat of the defenders of Leningrad<sup>33</sup>. Other poets of the war time (P. N. Voronko, A. S. Malyshko, P. G. Antokolskii, N. L. Braun and others) also drew inspiration from the “Tale”<sup>34</sup>. It was often referred to in order to support the traditional Russian myth about the “eternal unity” and “common destiny” of fraternal Slavic peoples in its Soviet interpretation<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Gudzii N. “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” // Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia. Vol. 51. Col. 410.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Col. 410–411.

<sup>30</sup> Igor’ Sviatoslavich // Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia 2 izd. / ed. by S. I. Vavilov. Vol. 17. Moscow, 1952. P. 312.

<sup>31</sup> Marks — Engel’su, v Manchester, [London] 5 marta 1856 g. // Marks K., Engel’s F. Sochineniia. Vol. 29. P. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Bessmertnoe tvorenie drevnei russkoi literatury // Pravda. 1938. 25 maia. No. 142 (7467). P. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Bergol’ts O. “Ne dam zabyt’...” Izbrannoe. St. Petersburg, 2014. P. 152.

<sup>34</sup> Sazonova L. I. Pamiat’ kul’tury i barokko v russkoi literature Novogo vremeni. Moscow, 2012. P. 62; Derzhavina A. O. Obraz Yaroslavny v tvorchestve poetov XIX–XX vv. // Slovo o polku Igoreve: Pamiatniki literatury i iskusstva XI–XVI vv. Moscow, 1978. P. 189–190.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example: *Vodovozov N. V. N. V. Gogol’ i “Slovo o polku Igoreve”* // Uchenye zapiski MGPI. Moscow, 1954. Vol. 34. P. 12–13.

Since the 1930s the “Tale” had again played an important patriotic role in the Soviet educational literature. Its protagonist is featured as one of those progressive-minded princes who endeavored to eradicate fragmentation in Rus’ and to maintain peaceful co-existence of the princes with each other and with common people. With religious literature being excluded from the school curriculum, (due to this fact the popularity of St. Vladimir decreased significantly)<sup>36</sup>, “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign” remained one of few medieval texts studied at schools. This contributed to the popularization of the image of Prince Igor Sviatoslavich Novgorod-Severskii. One of the Soviet textbooks on literature gives the following description of him: “Getting ready for the campaign, he [Prince Svetoslav Vsevolodovich] called upon other princes to join forces with him. One of the princes who offered assistance to Sviatoslav was Igor, Prince Novgorod-Severskii. This Prince was famous for his courage and effective warfare against Polovtsy”<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, like other objects of the memory of pre-Mongolian Rus’, Igor and his host were equally welcome at the pages of both Soviet and emigrant textbooks on history and literature<sup>38</sup>. The fact that they were a *place of consensus* in cultural memory can account for this. However, it is noteworthy that Igor Sviatoslavich Novgorod-Severskii gained such authority only due to the “Tale...” (Even in the textbooks on Russian history the Prince as a historical figure receives little attention).

In the context of the official historiographic doctrine the “Tale” stands out as a striking literary work, a monument to the era of feudal fragmentation, the evidence of the highest level of the cultural and spiritual development of Rus’ on the eve of the Mongol invasion. This position was comprehensively elaborated in numerous texts by academician D. S. Likhachev and the experts of his school. Here is one of the typical comments on the “Tale” of this renowned scholar and public figure: “This integration of all Russian lands into one tangible, lively and emotive image, the wide expanses and scenery of the native Russian land — embody one of the author’s most vehement appeals for integration. It can be stated that the basic idea of the ‘Tale’ is inextricably linked to its realization. An appeal for integration naturally arises from the central image of the ‘Tale’ — that of a united, beautiful and suffering motherland. This image evokes sympathy for the Russian land, love for its nature, pride in its historical past and awareness of its untamable force”<sup>39</sup>.

Since the late 1930s, the practice of regular commemorative events related to the “Tale” was established in the USSR: in 1938, the “750<sup>th</sup> anniversary” of the “Tale” was celebrated, and in 1950 — 150 years since its first publication<sup>40</sup>. On the territory of the present-day Russia and Ukraine a number of monuments were erected to Boian and Igor’ Sviatoslavich not only in the places of the hypothetical past events, but also in the places

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<sup>36</sup> See: Rostovtsev E. A., Sosnitskii D. A. Vladimir Sviatoi — voskreshenie obraza // Dialog so vremenem. 2019. No. 4. P. 307–321.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example: Florinskii S. M. Russkaia literature: uchebnoe posobie dlia 9 klassa srednei shkoly. Moscow, 1964. P. 18.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example: Vipper R. Yu. Uchebnik istorii. Srednie veka. Riga, 1925. P. 189–190.

<sup>39</sup> Likhachev D. S. Velikoe nasledie. Moscow, 1975. P. 164. Compare with articles in encyclopedias: Dmitriev L. A. “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” // Sovetskaia istoricheskaya entsiklopediia Moscow, 1971. Vol. 13. Stb. 69–70; Likhachev D. S.: 1) “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” // Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia. Moscow, 1976. Vol. 23. P. 581–582; 2) “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” // Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia. Moscow, 1971. Vol. 6. P. 962–963; Bulanin D. M. “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” // Literaturnyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar’. Moscow, 1987. P. 388–389.

<sup>40</sup> “Slovo o polku Igoreve” // Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia. Vol. 39. P. 357.

allegedly associated with the activities of these characters<sup>41</sup>. Under such circumstances the issues raised in the “Tale” would necessarily have been of ideological nature. This was highly visible in the 1960s discussions about the hypothesis of A. A. Zimin, who had put forward an idea about the “Tale” being a forgery. This case was repeatedly featured in scholarly literature and journals. According to one of the participants of a close-door meeting in 1962, which discussed Zimin’s book on the “Tale”, “It is unsurprising that intelligentsia sympathized with a persecuted person and the idea of the text as a relatively recent construct aroused kindly interest”<sup>42</sup>. It is important to note that the authorities were very sensitive to any non-mainstream hypotheses about the “Tale” targeting the general public. In connection with the case of A. A. Zimin, it is necessary to mention an “academic crackdown” on O. O. Suleimanov<sup>43</sup> and A. L. Nikitin<sup>44</sup> regarding non-mainstream versions of the “Tale’s” origin.

At the same time, it is hardly possible to limit the debates about the “Tale” to the issue of official patriotism promoted in the context of the Soviet ideological trends. Challenging the view of the “Tale” as a great work of the Old Russian literature, its opponents spoke against the fundamental principles of the national cultural memory embodied in this text of Russian culture. Tables 2–5 demonstrate that the significance of the “Tale” in the Soviet period did not decline in comparison with the past, but on the contrary, showed considerable growth due to the fact that the “Tale” had taken the roots in different cultural practices.

Doubts about the authenticity of the “Tale”<sup>45</sup> touched a sore spot of such exiled intellectual leaders of Russian emigration and Russian historical Science as P. N. Miliukov<sup>46</sup> and G. V. Vernadskii<sup>47</sup>. Russian world-famous émigré writers, who used the images from the “Tale” in their works, like V. V. Nabokov, also didn’t question its authenticity<sup>48</sup>. In this connection it is important to note that in the Soviet period the number of the works of art related to the “Tale” and associated with the so-called “high culture”, in other words, the number of pieces which claimed to have a long-term impact on the information field

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<sup>41</sup> Voinov S. S. Pamiatniki, posviashchennye “Slovu” // Entsiklopediia “Slova o polku Igoreve”: v 5 t. Vol. 4. P. 8–9; Filiushkin A. I. Kogda i zachem stali stavit’ pamiatniki istoricheskim personazham Drevnei Rusi? // Drevniaia Rus’: vo vremeni, v lichnostiakh, v ideiakh. 2017. No. 7. P. 382–397.

<sup>42</sup> Al’tshuller M. Kto napisal “Slovo o polku Igoreve”? (Rets. na kn.: Kostin A. Slovo o polku Igoreve — poddelka tysiacheletii. M.: Algoritm, 2014). URL: <http://www.intelros.ru/readroom/nlo/nlo132-2015/27337-kto-napisal-slovo-o-polku-igoreve-rec-na-kn-kostin-a-slovo-o-polku-igoreve-poddelka-tysiacheletiya-moskva-algoritm-2014.html> (accessed: 19.08.2017).

<sup>43</sup> Suleimenov O. Az i Ia: Kniga blagonamerennogo chitatelia. Alma-Ata, 1975.

<sup>44</sup> Nikitin A. L. Slovo o polku Igoreve. Teksty. Sobytiia. Liudi. Moscow, 1998.

<sup>45</sup> Compare: Sokolova L. V. K istorii diskussii 1960-kh gg. o podlinnosti “Slova o Polku Igoreve” // Istoriia spora o podlinnosti “Slova o polku Igoreve”. Materialy diskussii 1960-kh godov. St. Petersburg, 2010. P. 96–97.

<sup>46</sup> Miliukov P. N. Eres’ professora Mazona. [Ch] I–II // Poslednie novosti. 1939. 25 maia, 2 iunია. — See a republication by P. N. Miliukov: Malozvestnaia stat’ia P. N. Miliukova 1939 g. o rabote A. Mazona «Slovo o Polku Igoreve» (podg. D. M. Shakhovskoi) // Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 2000. Moscow, 2001. P. 467–473.

<sup>47</sup> Vernadsky G. La Geste d’Igor au point de vue historique // La Geste du Prince Igor – épopée russe du douzième siècle (texte établi, traduit et commenté sous la direction d’H. Grégoire, R. Jakobson et M. Szeftel, assistés de J. A. Joffe). New York, 1948. P. 217–234. Compare: Dvornichenko A. Yu. Russkii istorik Georgii Vernadskii. St. Petersburg, 2017. P. 302–303.

<sup>48</sup> See: Egorova V. V. “Slovo o Polku Igoreve” v retseptsii V. V. Nabokova // Literatura Drevnei Rusi. Materialy X Vserossiiskoi konferentsii “Drevnerusskaia literatura i ee traditsii v literature Novogo vremeni”, posviashchennoi pamiati professora Nikolaia Ivanovicha Prokof’eva. Moscow, 2019. P. 124–137.

Table 2. The rating of the local objects of historical memory in the analyzed sources (1850–1917)<sup>49</sup>

Place in the rating	Fiction	Social and political literature	Periodicals	Cinema	Monumental sculpture
1	Ivan the Terrible	Ivan the Terrible	St. Vladimir	Ivan the Terrible	St. Vladimir (1–5) [1–2]
2	St. Vladimir	[2–7] Tatar-Mongol Yoke	Ivan the Terrible	[2–10] Boris Godunov	Princess Olga (1–5) [3–7]
3	Dmitrii Donskoi	[2–7] St. Vladimir	[3–4] Boris Godunov	[2–10] Pseudo-Dmitrii the I	Dmitrii Donskoi (1–5) [3–7]
4	Tatar-Mongol Yoke	[2–7] Land (Zemskie) councils	[3–4] Alexander Nevskii	[2–10] Maliuta Skuratov	Ermak (1–5) [1–2]
5	[5–10] Oprichnina	[2–7] Ivan Kalita	Aleksey Mikhailovich	[2–10] Smuta (Time of Troubles)	Bogdan Khmel'nitskii (1–5) [3–7]
6	[5–10] Prince Igor	[2–7] Ivan III	[6–9] Igor Novgorod-Severskii	[2–10] Minin and Pozharskii	Baptism of Rus' (6–10) [8–10]
7	[5–10] Yaroslav the Wise	[2–7] Schism	[6–9] Ermak	[2–10] St. Vladimir	Alexander Nevskii (6–10) [8–10]
8	[5–10] A. M. Kurbskii	[8–10] Stepan Razin	[6–9] Riurik	[2–10] Stepan Razin	Ivan Fedorov (6–10) [8–10]
9	[5–10] Sviatoslav	[8–10] Alexander Nevskii	[6–9] Nikon	[2–10] Dmitrii Donskoi	Minin and Pozharskii (6–10) [3–7]
10	[5–10] V. Shuiskii	[8–10] Dmitrii Donskoi	Ivan III	[2–10] Ermak Timofeevich	Ivan Susanin (6–10) [8–10]

continued to grow. In addition to regular performances of A. P. Borodin's opera Prince Igor, other musical compositions by Soviet composers were created. Among them, we can mention "The Tale of Igor's Campaign", an oratorio by L. A. Prigozhin (1966), the symphony by O. G. Ianchenko of the same name (1985) and ballet "Yaroslavna" by B. I. Tishchenko (1974). Similarly to the pre-revolutionary period, "cultural background" exerted influence on mass consciousness. From school years to old age the average Soviet people would come across the "Tale" everywhere: doing their school homework, turning over the pages of a newspaper or scanning theatre posters.

<sup>49</sup> The figures in parenthesis indicate the place in the rating of the local object in this source type (marked when objects share several positions in the rating). Relatively monumental sculpture the figures in parenthesis indicate the place in the rating taking into account the monuments, erected from 1850 to 1917, the figures in square brackets indicated the place in the rating, taking into account the monuments, erected earlier. See: *Sosnitskii D. A. Istoricheskaia pamiat' o dopetrovskoi Rusi v Rossii vtoroi poloviny XIX — nachala XXI v.: dis. ... kand. ist. nauk. St. Petersburg, 2015. P. 62–63.*

Table 3. The rating of the local objects of historical memory in the analyzed sources (1918–1991)<sup>50</sup>

Place in the rating	Fiction	Social and political literature	Periodicals	Cinema	Monumental sculpture
1	Stepan Razin	Ivan the Terrible	[1–3] <b>Igor Novgorod-Severskii</b>	[1–3] Ivan the Terrible	Alexander Nevskii
2	Ivan the Terrible	[2–4] Alexander Nevskii	[1–3] Stepan Razin	[1–3] Vasily Buslaev	Andrey Rublev
3	Ilia Muromets (Ilia of Murom)	[2–4] Smuta (Time of Troubles)	[1–3] Ivan the Terrible	[1–3] Oprichnina	[3–7] Stepan Razin
4	[4–7] Pseudo-Demirii the I	[2–4] Stepan Razin	[4–6] Ivan Susanin	[4–10] <b>Igor Novgorod-Severskii</b>	[3–7] Oleg Veshchii (the Prophet)
5	[4–7] Nikon	[5–10] Pseudo-Demirii the I	[4–6] Boris Godunov	[4–10] Alexander Nevskii	[3–7] Prince Igor the Old
6	[4–7] St. Vladimir	[5–10] Aleksey Mikhailovich	[4–6] Fedor Ioannovich	[4–10] Tatar-Mongol Yoke	[3–7] Yury Dolgorukii
7	[4–7] Schism	[5–10] Minin and Pozharskii	[7–9] Vladimir Monomakh	[4–10] Battle on the Ice	[3–7] Dmitrii Donskoi
8	[8–10] Aleksei Mikhailovich	[5–10] Baptism of Rus'	[7–9] Alexander Nevskii	[4–10] Maliuta Skuratov	
9	[8–10] <b>Igor Novgorod-Severskii</b>	[5–10] Tatar-Mongol Yoke	[7–9] Ivan III	[4–10] Oprichnina	
10	[8–10] Yaroslav the Wise	[5–10] Oprichnina	Baptism of Rus'	[4–10] Andrey Kurbskii	

<sup>50</sup> The figures in parenthesis indicate the place in the rating of the local object in this source type (marked when objects share several positions in the rating). See.: *Sosnitskii D. A. Istoricheskaia pamiat' o dopetrovskoi Rusi...* P. 113–115.

Table 4. The rating of the local objects of historical memory in the analyzed sources (1992–2010)<sup>51</sup>

Place in the rating	Fiction	Social and political literature	Monumental sculpture
1	Ivan the Terrible	Tatar-Mongol Yoke	[1] Alexander Nevskii
2	Oprichnina	[2–3] Alexander Nevskii	[2] St. Vladimir
3	[3–10] the Battle of Kulikovo	[2–3] Sergii of Radonezh	[3–4] Princess Olga
4	[3–10] Time of Troubles	[4–10] <b>Igor Novgorod-Severskii</b>	[3–4] Dmitrii Donskoi
5	[3–10] Riurik	[4–10] Evpatii Kolovrat	[5] Yurii Dolgorukii
6	[3–10] Ivan III	[4–10] Epifanii the Wise	[6] Mikhail Aleksandrovich Tverskoi (of Tver)
7	[3–10] <b>Igor Novgorod-Severskii</b>	[4–10] Joseph Volotskii	[7–10] Sviatoslav
8	[3–10] Alexander Nevskii	[4–10] Ivan the Terrible	[7–10] Yaroslav the Wise
9	[3–10] Boris Godunov	[4–10] Time of Troubles	[7–10] Daniel Moskovskii
10	[3–10] Pseudo-Demitrii	[4–10] Aleksei Mikhailovich	[7–10] Ivan the Terrible

Table 5. The most popular local objects of the historical memory of the pre-Petrine Rus' (1850–2010)<sup>52</sup>

No.	Local objects of historical memory	The number of references in different kinds of sources, %
1	Ivan the Terrible	10,9
2	St. Vladimir	8,7
3	Alexander Nevskii	8,5
4–5	Boris Godunov	4,6
	<b>Prince Igor Sviatoslavich</b>	4,6
6	Tatar-Mongol Yoke	3,9
7–8	Aleksei Mikhailovich	3,5
	Stepan Razin	3,5
9	Yaroslav the Wise	3
10	Oprichnina	2,8
11	Other objects	53,9

<sup>51</sup> The figures in parenthesis indicate the place in the rating of the local object in this source type (marked when objects share several positions in the rating). See: *Sosnitskii D. A. Istoricheskaia pamiat' o dopetrovskoi Rusi...* P.159–160.

<sup>52</sup> See: *Ibid.* P.195.

*The defender of Ukraine/Russia and the “black hole” of historiography.* Being the main “common” property of the East Slavic peoples, the “Tale” by no means became less popular at the time of the “post-Soviet disintegration”, quite the other way round. Indeed, it was due to the entrenchment of the “Tale” and its protagonist in the pantheon of the main heroic objects of the medieval past in the consciousness of many generations of the Soviet people that this “treasure of Ukrainian lyric epic literature” (as one of Ukrainian text-books on literature features the “Tale”)<sup>53</sup> turned not only into an object of rivalry between its East Slavic inheritors, but also into an instrument of the formation of different national identities. As in Ukraine, Russian schoolchildren nowadays begin the study of their native literature with the “Tale” (it is interesting that after that they proceed to the works of M. V. Lomonosov). We will quote one of the typical methodological tips on the analysis of the “Tale” at Russian schools: “The text can be traced back to the 1180s. This period witnessed a decline of the Russian state in the first place as a result of the princely strife, which had undermined the military power of Rus’. The author of the ‘Tale’ appealed for the integration of princes, having expressed in his work the aspirations of the Russian people of those days <...> ‘The Tale of Igor’s Campaign’ is a priceless treasure of Russian culture which evokes the lofty public spirit in the hearts of the readers”<sup>54</sup>. The “Tale” is still actively exploited in the cultural space of both states. The authorities of the Donetsk People’s Republic also did not fail to take advantage of the “Tale” in the context of their own “memory of the war”, having organized a national park in a region where, according to one of the versions, some events of the “Tale” had taken place<sup>55</sup>. It is an interesting, but quite expected fact, that the imagery of the “Tale” was exploited in the poetry of the “hybrid” war, where the forces of Igor Strelkov are identified with the host of Igor Sviatoslavich<sup>56</sup>.

Table 4, given above, demonstrates that the “Tale” still holds its positions as one of the traditional tools of the formation of mass historical perceptions. At the same time, modern infomedia despite the existence of different methods to control it, is becoming more and more network content-oriented and interactive. In this context, the analysis of internet resources is of great interest. It is noteworthy that according to the results of some internet queries and the analysis of the most popular networks, neither the “Tale” nor Igor Sviatoslavich are among the most sought-after historical objects of the interactive content. Reference network resources represent a certain exception to this rule. According to Wikipedia (which records the number of queries of not only the Russian audience, but Russian-speaking audience all over the world as well), the “Tale” ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the number of queries about the objects of the historical memory of pre-Petrine Russia. At the same time, the “Tale” has outstripped such search objects as Dmitrii Donskoi, “Oprichnina” or the “Battle on the Neva” (*Nevskaia bitva*) and all the pre-Petrine works, including “The Tale of Bygone Years” and “Russian’ Justice”. It is remarkable that the statistics for the queries about Igor Sviatoslavich, the protagonist of the “Tale”, clearly demonstrate the insignificant attention the readers of Wikipedia pay to this character (see Table 6).

<sup>53</sup> Slovo o polku Igoreve (programma po ukrainskoi literature) 8 klass // Ukrainskaia literatura 8 klass 2015–2016. URL: [http://www.parta.com.ua/school\\_program/view/126/](http://www.parta.com.ua/school_program/view/126/) (accessed: 30.04.2020).

<sup>54</sup> Chapova O. I., Artem’eva N. A., Podshivalova L. V. Vse proizvedeniia shkol’noi programmy v kratkom izlozhenii. Moscow, 2008. P. 3–4.

<sup>55</sup> Soroka E. Tam razvorachivalis’ sobytia iz “Slova o polku Igoreve”: Chto v sebe tait novyi zapovednik DNR? // Komsomol’skaia pravda v Donetske. 2020. 5 fevralia. URL: <https://www.donetsk.kp.ru/online/news/3756087/> (accessed: 06.04.2020).

<sup>56</sup> Benevich G. V. Poeziia gibridnoi voiny // Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie. 2019. No. 3 (157). P. 226–238.

*Table 6. Wikipedia information (the number of visits of internet pages on Russian medieval history in 2015–2020)<sup>57</sup>*

No.	Object	The number of visits in the Russian-language Wikipedia from 1.07.2015	The number of versions (from the moment of the publication of an article)
1	Ivan the Terrible	7 338 128	4590
2	St. Vladimir	5 315 424	1992
3	The Battle of Kulikovo	3 967 156	1986
4	Ivan III	3 794 915	1414
5	Baptism of Rus'	3 719 136	2229
6	Alexander Nevskii	3 256 821	2141
7	Riurik	2 783 023	1828
8	Yaroslav the Wise	2 662 230	1908
9	Smuta (Time of Troubles)	2 594 038	1085
10	Battle on the Ice	2 569 349	1296
11	Tatar-Mongol Yoke	2 383 772	1204
12	The Tale of Igor's Campaign	2 030 147	1207
13	Vladimir Monomakh	1 825 926	889
14	Oprichnina	1 740 446	863
15	Dmitrii Donskoi	1 597 714	1077
16	Sergii of Radonezh	1 594 728	2328
17	Russian' Justice	1 518 455	690
18	Andrei Rublev	915 204	595
19	Petr and Fevronia	721 549	193
20	Princess Olga	522 343	1205
21	<b>Igor Sviatoslavich</b>	369 465	300
22	The Instruction of Vladimir Monomakh	358 405	108
23	The Tale of Petr and Fevronia	299 141	217
24	The Journey Beyond Three Seas	295 920	247
25	The Sermon on Law and Grace	279 362	183
26	Zadonshchina	265 863	114
27	The Tale of the Ruin of the Russian Land	113 730	79
28	The Tale of Mamai's Battle	112 029	101

<sup>57</sup> Based on the materials of Wikipedia. URL: [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%8F\\_%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0) (accessed: 30.04.2020).

The relevance of these data is confirmed by the fact that they have not undergone any significant changes of late. In particular, according to our estimates, in 2017 the “Tale” also ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in this rating<sup>58</sup>. In the framework of the Wikipedia statistics, it can be suggested that under current circumstances the “Tale” is being backed by the interrelated cultural, educational and scholarly traditions of referring to this text rather than its exploitation as a political tool and as an object of the memory policy of the state. The latter mostly counts on the popularization of the heroic events and the characters rather than the texts, with Igor Sviatoslavich or the defeat he suffered from Pololvtsy hardly being among such objects. In this connection low popularity of the “Tale” as an object of cyberspace reflects general indifference of the mass consciousness towards intellectual and aesthetic values of the high culture. However, this fact doesn’t tarnish the status of the “Tale” as the most popular patriotic hymn and the oldest Russian heroic song; but it is the cultural and historiographic tradition (which has been developing for the last 200 years) that this status is based on. Indeed, the “Tale” together with “The Russian Justice” ranks 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> in popularity in modern scholarly literature (see Table 7).

According to the RSCI information, we can see that within the period from 1992 to 2017 there were published at least 467 texts dedicated to the “Tale”. It is interesting that only 27 of them (around 5,6%) have 5 or more citations<sup>59</sup>. Such a situation with the study of historical texts can hardly be called unusual. However, the number of the unquoted (unused) texts about the “Tale” has significantly outstripped the number of the unquoted works dedicated to other historical texts, having become a kind of a “black hole” — again and again sucking in new generations of scholars. It is noteworthy that the stream of Ukrainian scholarly literature related to the “Tale” started to grow significantly in the post-Soviet era<sup>60</sup>. Curiously, some Ukrainian scholars who advocate the idea of the falsification of the “Tale” consider it to be a tool of propaganda, “a disgraceful element of the Russian world”, unmistakably “a Russian hoax”, similar to the the “story of a crucified boy” and the like. Their opponents, the champions of the authenticity of the “Tale”, on the contrary, insist that “the text entirely belongs to Ukrainian culture. Allegedly, it was taken from Chernigov to Yaroslavskii monastery (where it appears to have been found) by Father Superior Ioil, who apparently sold it to Musin-Pushkin. The latter, in turn, promoted it as a Russian literary work”<sup>61</sup>. In this context it can be suggested that the historiography of both countries reflects the relevance of the “Tale” to mass historical consciousness and its importance as an instrument of memory policy. Moreover, social and political enthusiasm for the “Tale” inevitably extends the swirl of the above-mentioned “black hole” in historiography because it is hardly possible to solve all the scholarly problems related to the “Tale” under current social and political circumstances, whereas a continuous stream

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<sup>58</sup> See: *Rostovtsev E. A., Sosnitskii D. A. Srednevekovye geroi i sobytia otechestvennoi istorii v setevykh resursakh // Istoricheskaia ekspertiza. 2018. No. 1. P. 41–58.*

<sup>59</sup> In fact the situation has not changed in 2020 as well. From 1992 to 2020 the number of such texts amounts to 705. Of these 49 (6,5%) have 5 or more citations. (Estimates are based on: the Scientific Electronic Library. Elibrary.ru. URL: [https://elibrary.ru/query\\_results.asp](https://elibrary.ru/query_results.asp) (accessed: 30.04.2020)).

<sup>60</sup> See, for example: *Kostikova I. I. Vivchennia “Slova o Polku Igorevim” v Ukraini u 1970–1990-kh rokakh: avtoref. dis... kand. filol. nauk. Khar’kiv, 1998.*

<sup>61</sup> See a typical discussion in the facebook account of R. B. Kharchuk (Taras Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the national Academy of Science of Ukraine), his advocates and opponents, in particular, Professor P. V. Belous (I. Franco University of Zhitomir). URL: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1801557023455319&id=100008031159841](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1801557023455319&id=100008031159841) (accessed: 06.04.2020).

Table 7. The number of works and citations in RSCI (Russian Science Citation Index) of all the articles whose titles contain references to the works of the Old Russian literature (1900–2017)<sup>62</sup>

Position	Text	The number of works, whose titles refer to the following texts	The number of works, whose titles refer to the following texts (from 1992)	The number of works in RINTS, including titles, key words and annotations	The number of works in RINTS, including titles, key words and annotations (from 1992)	The number of citations
1	<i>The Tale of Igor's Campaign</i>	371	336	508	476	2769
2	The Russian Justice	254	253	637	637	1828
3	The Tale of Bygone Years	49	47	214	212	3692
4	The Sermon on Law and Grace	49	44	91	86	875
5	The Instruction of Vladimir Monomakh	27	27	57	57	309
6	The Tale of Mama's Battle	23	21	40	38	654
7	The Tale of Petr and Fevronia	19	19	39	39	298
8	Zadonshchina	11	10	31	30	252
9	The Tale of the Ruin of the Russian Land	9	9	13	13	189
10	The Journey Beyond Three Seas	0	0	7	7	167

of historians turning to this theme give rise to heated debates about various aspects of the text and extend the subject field of the discussion.

It should be noticed that due to the lack of censorship in the post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine, the number of ideas and constructions which apparently go far beyond the realities of science has significantly increased<sup>63</sup>. Despite the availability of the “Tale” in the

<sup>62</sup> Estimates are based on: Scientific Electronic Library. URL: <https://elibrary.ru/defaultx.asp> (accessed: 15.08.2017).

<sup>63</sup> See, for example: *Bogdanov V.M., Nosov N.V.* “Slovo o polku Igoreve” velikaia mistifikatsiia. St. Petersburg, 2005; *Kostin A.* Slovo o polku Igoreve — poddelka tysiacheletii. Moscow, 2014; *Akavov R.Z.* K voprosu o kul'turno-istoricheskom znachenii i khudozhestvenno-literaturnykh predposylkakh “Slova o polku Igoreve” v srednevekovom evraziiskom poliethicheskom i polikul'turnom prostranstve // *Uchenye zapiski Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo sotsial'nogo universiteta*. 2009. No. 9. P. 244–248. (The same: *Literaturnoe obozrenie: istoriia i sovremennost'*. 2012. No. 2. P. 54–64); *Nikonov A. A.* Seismicheskii kazus 1185 g. v Severnom Priazov'e: Aktual'nyi razbor sobytii v aktivnoi seismogennoi zone // *Geofizicheskie protsessy i biosfera*. 2019. Vol. 18, no. 1. P. 103–110.

internet format, the number of its post-Soviet editions is continually growing (see Table 1 and diagram). It is significant that in the 2000s — 2010s the representatives of creative professions continued to draw from the “Tale”. It will be enough to mention some contemporary poetic texts (like the “Tale of Strelets Igor’s Campaign” (*Slovo o polku streletskom-Igoreve*) by Yu. Osipov-Biver) or musical compositions (for example, an album of popular folk-group Vedan-Kolod or the “Night of the Werewolf” by a rock-group Vozvrashchenie). It can be stated that the “Tale” as a text entrenched in the cultural space (cultural memory) of Russian society is quite capable of drawing public interest, even being outside the scope of state memory policy. However, it is hardly possible to imagine any state authority (Russian or Ukrainian), sharing, for example, a thesis about the “Tale” being a hoax. References to the images of the main character of the story and other characters, so far overshadowed by the popularity of the text itself, might contribute to the more effective exploitation of the “Tale” by contemporary memory policy. The canonization of the Prince and the practice of regular commemorations, associated with it, might be helpful here.

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Summing up all the arguments given above, it can be stated that one of the essential features of the “Tale” (irrespective of the time of its creation) is rooted in the fact that by the period when it was “discovered” and “introduced” to the public, the Pre-Mongol Rus’ had already been not only a far-away fairyland, but a heroic era, a *place of consensus* in the national memory. Moreover, the “Tale” appeared in the period marked by an emerging and deepening split between two views on the Russian history, constructed from liberal and conservative positions, with regard to the values of the new time. Under these circumstances the “Tale” became an important cohesive cultural force, having quickly earned recognition in both political camps and having gained a firm foothold in cultural memory and mass consciousness.

Historical nihilism of the early Soviet era affected the “Tale” only with respect to the fact that together with some other pieces of old culture it was briefly stigmatized as “feudal bric-a-brac”, and the number of its editions dropped dramatically. Undoubtedly, the change of social and political demands in the early 1930s again introduced the “Tale” to the circle of the main objects of historical culture and again made it a tool of official propaganda. The latter predetermined the ideological nature of historiographic discussions and the support of a new generation of skeptical scholars on the part of liberal-oppositional intelligentsia. However, no discussions could drive the “Tale” out of its place in cultural memory determined by the works of art and literature and the educational tradition rather than by the directives of propaganda and historiography.

The post-Soviet period witnessed the same situation, when in the context of political and historiographic liberalization the number of editions of the “Tale” continued to grow alongside with the attention it received from the general public and historical science. At the same time, the prospects of the “Tale” as a memory policy instrument are quite vague — being the most popular text of the Old Russian literature, the “Tale” is superseded in the rating of the memory objects by other objects (events and characters) more suitable for the construction of mass consciousness. Probably, it is the characters of the “Tale” — Igor, Yaroslavna and Boian — so far overshadowed by the popularity of the text, who

might become the instruments of the future historical policy rather than the “Tale” itself. However, irrespective of these projects the “Tale” is already entrenched in the memory of the nation and its inviolable immortality is guaranteed at least until the culture, an integral part of which it has become, declines.

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