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Cahiers du monde russe, 39:3 (1998): 375-388. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20171094>

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The Imaginary World of Semen Koltovskii: Genealogical Anxiety and Falsification in Late Seventeenth-Century Russia*

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Draft: Not for Citation

The later seventeenth century was an era of unprecedented social mobility in the upper reaches of Muscovite society. Prior to the reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich, the boyar *duma* had been the preserve of a small set of pedigreed families, each of whom held the right to place their senior members on the high council. However Aleksei altered the traditional *duma* recruitment policy in the 1650s and began to promote undistinguished “new men” into the *duma*.¹ Over the course of his reign, the proportion of parvenus in the *duma* slowly increased until they comprised half of its membership. Tsars Fedor, Ivan, and Peter continued to appoint servitors of middling status to the *duma* and the percentage of new men hovered around fifty percent for the remainder of the century.

Historians have traditionally interpreted the rise of the new men in a political light, seeing them as a counterweight to a recalcitrant aristocracy that stood in the way of evolving absolutism.² The parvenus, so the traditional interpretation has it, disliked aristocrats and supported government efforts to curtail their privileges, particularly the campaign against *mestnichestvo*, the ancient system of precedence that favored the old families. Yet, as has recently been pointed out, the evidence for this understanding of the attitudes of the new men is entirely circumstantial. The record contains no indication that the parvenus conceived of themselves as a group or resisted aristocratic privilege.³ In fact, as I will argue in this essay, more than the *argumentum ex silentio* suggests that the traditional interpretation is a misreading of the mentalities of the new men. An appointment to the *duma* was in a sense a mixed blessing for a parvenu. Certainly it was a high honor, but it was an honor that had to be justified within the context of a society that deeply believed in the sanctity of hereditary privilege. And here the parvenus were found wanting. The new men, unlike their aristocratic counterparts, could not legitimize their seats in the council by pointing to long lists of ancestors with distinguished service records. This lack of pedigree caused anxiety among the new men, an anxiety that was heightened by the court’s decision in 1682 to abolish *mestnichestvo* and call for the submission of new genealogical records from all the court

*The author would like to thank Boris N. Morozov for his help in researching this essay. The comments of an anonymous reader greatly improved this essay. All errors are my own.

¹See R. Crummey, “The Origins of the Noble Official: The Boyar Elite, 1613-1689,” in *Russian Officialdom*, ed. W. M. Pintner and D. K. Rowney (Chapel Hill, N. C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1980), 46-75.

²See, for example, V. O. Kliuchevskii, “Istoriia soslovii v Rossii” [1886], in *Sochineniia v deviaty tomakh* (Moscow: Mysl’, 1989), 6: 321-23 and especially 382; V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Boiarskaia дума drevnei Rusi* (Moscow: Tip. T. Malinskago i A. Ivanova, 1883), 387-92; A. I. Markevich, *Istoriia mestnichestva v Moskovskom gosudarstve v XV - XVII v.* (Odessa, 1888: Tip. “Odesskago Vestnika”), 559-60 and 582; N. Pavlov-Sil’vanskii, *Gosudarevy sluzhbylye liudi* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tip., 1898), 163-64; E. D. Stashevskii, “Sluzhiloie soslovie,” in *Russkaia istoriia v ocherkakh i sta’iakh*, ed. M. V. Dvornar-Zapol’skii (Kiev, 1912), 32; V. N. Storozhev, “Boiarsstvo i dvorianstvo XVII veka,” *Tri Veka. Rossia ot Smuty do nashego vremeni* (Moscow: Tip. I. D. Sytina, 1912; Reprint Moscow: Izd. “GIS,” 1991), 201-31.

³H. J. Torke, “Oligarchie in der Autokratie — Der Machtverfall der Boiarduma im 17. Jahrhundert,” *Forschungen zur Geschichte Osteuropas* 24 (1978): 197. Similarly, see R. Crummey, *Aristocrats and Servitors. The Boyar Elite in Russia, 1613-1689* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 87.

families.⁴ No doubt many of the parvenus were encouraged by the elimination of the old system of preferment for pedigreed clans, as the traditional interpretation suggests. But, given their humble backgrounds, they had to look with some suspicion on a new government-sponsored inquiry into the lineages of its servitors. They were men of the *duma*, but not *duma* men, and this would certainly be found out by the court, to what effect no one knew.

For many of the new men, the solution to this paradox was clear, and in it we find positive evidence that the parvenus did not want to fight aristocracy, but to become aristocrats: they would have to re-invent themselves, use the call for new genealogies as an opportunity to fashion historical identities that would give them the pedigrees necessary to justify their positions.⁵ In what follows we will investigate the way in which one family — the Koltovskii — proceeded to re-make itself along these lines.⁶ They are typical of many parvenu families that moved members into the upper reaches of the Muscovite court and then attempted to defend their gains *via* historical falsification in the 1680s and 1690s. As we will see, the Koltovskii and those like them practiced three types of deception, each of which was carefully calculated to raise and protect their status at court. First, they artificially linked their genealogies to those of more distinguished clans, thereby gaining valuable ancient ancestors. Second, they falsified documents to make it seem that their predecessors had served in higher offices than they actually had. Finally, and more unusually, they recast well-known historical scenes to make them metaphorically relevant to their concerns. In these ways, anxious servitors manipulated historical materials to fashion for themselves a usable imaginary past.

The Rise of the Koltovskii

In the Muscovite court, a man was defined first and foremost by the dignity of his clan, the status of which was measured by its antiquity and the quality of its service to the grand prince. The ancient clans that dominated the *duma* in the second half of the seventeenth century were distinguished by centuries of honorable sacrifice, all of which was recorded in the official Genealogical Books and Court Service Registers.⁷ By the standards of the aristocratic families, the Koltovskii were neither old nor well tested. The patriarch of the family was probably a man named Mikhail Ivanovich who may have served V. I. Shemiachich and, later, Grand Prince Ivan Ivanovich of Riazan' in the first quarter

⁴M. Ia. Volkov, "Ob otmene mestnichestva v Rossii," *Istoriia SSSR* (1977), no. 2: 53-67; M. E. Bychkova, "Iz istorii sozdaniia rodoslovnnykh rospisci kontsa XVII v. i Barkhatnoi knigi," *Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie distsipliny* 12 (1981): 90-109; A. B. Kamenskii, "K voprosu rodoslovnnykh rospisiakh XVII v.," *Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie distsipliny* 21 (1990): 211-25.

⁵The subject of falsification is a traditional one in Muscovite historiography. Major treatments include: N. P. Likhachev, *Razriadnye d'iaki XVI v.* (St. Petersburg: Tip. V. S. Balasheva, 1888), 431-33; N. P. Likhachev, "Gosudarev rodoslovet' i rod Adashevnykh (St. Petersburg: Tip. V. S. Balasheva, 1897); A. A. Vvedenskii, "Fal'sifikatsiia dokumentov v Moskovskom gosudarstve XVI-XV vv.," *Problemy istochnikovedeniia* 1 (Moscow, 1933): 85-109; A. A. Zimin, "K izucheniiu fal'sifikatsii aktovykh materialov v Russkom gosudarstve XVI - XVII vv.," *Trudy moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo istoricheskogo-arkhivnogo instituta* 17 (1983): 399-28; V. P. Kozlov, *Tainy fal'sifikatsii. Analiz poddelok istoricheskikh istochnikov XVIII-XIX vekov*, 2nd. ed. (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 1996). More specific studies, which are numerous, include: L. M. Savelov-Savelkov, "Podlozhnye razriady," *Novik. Istoriko-Genalogicheskii Zhurnal* 2 (1941): 5-10; V. A. Aleksandrov, *Pamflet na rod Sukhotiinykh (XVII v.)*, *Istoriia SSSR* (1971), no. 5: 114-22; B. N. Morozov, "Rodoslovnaia kniga XVII veka v semeinom sobranii Buturlinykh," *Letopis' istoriko-rodoslovnoogo obshchestva v Moskve* 4 (1994): 14-19. Most of this literature is focused on the question of authenticity itself and only tangentially touches on the question of the importance of falsification as evidence of historical mentalities.

⁶On the Koltovskii falsifications, see: S. F. Platonov, "Rechi Groznogo na zemskom sobore 1550 g.," *Stat'i po russkoi istorii (1883-1912)*, Izd. 2. (St. Petersburg, 1912), 201-205; P. G. Vasenko, "Khrushchevskii spisok Stepennoi knigi i izvestie o Zemskom sobore 1550," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia*, (April, 1903): 386-400; V. N. Avtokratov, "Rech' Ivana Groznovo 1550 goda' kak politicheskii pamflet kontsa XVII veka," *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 11 (1955): 255-79; Kozlov, *Tainy fal'sifikatsii*, 11-21.

⁷See M. E. Bychkova, *Rodoslovnnye knigi XVI-XVII vv. kak istoricheskie istochniki* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975) and V. I. Buganov, *Razriadnye knigi poslednei chetverti XV-nachala XVIIv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1962).

of the sixteenth century.⁸ Though Mikhail Ivanovich appears in no official source, two of his supposed five sons do: Fedor Mikhailovich is reported to have served as a *voevoda* in a campaign against the Tatars in 1492;⁹ and Grigorii (aka Istoma¹⁰) Mikhailovich is found serving in Riazan' in 1537.¹¹ In the mid-sixteenth century the grandsons and great-grandsons of Mikhail Ivanovich begin to appear frequently in the official record as town governors, military commanders, and estate holders in Kolomna, Kashira, and Tarus.¹² In 1572 the fortunes of the Koltovskiis, who were at best a well-connected clan of provincial military servitors, changed dramatically as Ivan IV took Anna Alekseevna Koltovskaia as his wife.¹³ This brought the Koltovskiis directly into the circle of the tsar.¹⁴ Paradoxically, however, the match bore no fruit, either for Anna or her family. Though it appears Anna's distant cousin Daniil Grigor'evich may have been made *okol'nichii* in 1572, the Koltovskiis proved unable to capitalize on the marriage and place additional members in the *duma*.¹⁵

Though Anna's wedding did not bring the clan high honors, it did transform the Koltovskiis from provincial gentry into courtiers, albeit humble ones in constant military and civil service. Their new status is reflected in the fact that after the wedding large numbers of Koltovskiis began to hold court ranks on the "Moscow list" (*Moskovskii spisok*). In the first quarter of the seventeenth century approximately sixteen Koltovskiis entered service at court, twelve of whom held a Moscow rank, usually *dvorianin Moskovskii* or *stol'nik*.¹⁶ In the following quarter century approximately thirty Koltovskiis are recorded as entering court service, twenty of whom held a Moscow rank, again usually *dvorianin Moskovskii* or *stol'nik*. In the remainder of the century, twenty-one Koltovskiis are recorded as entering service, all of whom held Moscow

⁸This is reported in both the Glebov and Koltovskii articles of the Velvet Book. See *Rodoslovnaia kniga kniaziei i dvoriani rossiskikh i vyezhibikh..., i kotoraiia izvestna pod nazvaniem Barkhatnoi knigi*, ed. N. I. Novikov, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1787), 2: 184. Hereafter "*Barkhatnaia kniga*."

⁹*Razriadnaia kniga 1475-1605 gg*, ed. V. I. Buganov, 2 vols. (Moscow: Inst. istorii AN SSSR, 1977), 1: 31. Also see *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1841-), 8: 224-25. Hereafter "PSRL."

¹⁰The Koltovskii entry mentions that Grigorii had two sons, Grigorii Bol'shoi and Grigorii Temir. In the *Dvorovaia tetrad'* we find two Koltovskiis, "Grigorei da Temir Istominy deti Koltovskogo." See *Tysiachnaia kniga 1550 g. i dvorovaia tetrad' 50-x godov XVI v.*, ed. A. A. Zimin (Moscow and Leningrad: Isd. Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1950), 160. They were the sons of a man with the nickname "Istoma." This is the same Istoma mentioned in the *Razriadnaia kniga* serving in 1537.

¹¹*Razriadnaia kniga, 1475-1598*, ed. V. I. Buganov (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 91. Here after "RK 1475-1598."

¹²RK 1475-1598 records sixteen Koltovskiis serving in various capacity from 1551-98. The *Dvorovaia tetrad'* records seventeen Koltovskiis holding service estates in Kolomna, Kashira and Tarus. See *Tysiachnaia kniga*, 159-64.

¹³See M. E. Bychkova, *Sostav klassa feodalov Rossii v XVI v. Istoriko-genealogicheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), 134 and S. B. Veselovskii, *Issledovaniia po istorii oprichniny* (Moscow: Izd. Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1963), 194, 301, 304, 397.

¹⁴Several of them are found, for example, attending Ivan IV in the Novgorod campaign of 1572. See RK 1475-1598: 243-44.

¹⁵Daniil is mentioned as *okol'nichii* only once, in a document describing the campaign against Novgorod in 1572. See RK 1475-1598: 244. It is unclear from this source whether Daniil was a true *okol'nichii* or whether he had been given the rank in a ceremonial sense for the duration of the campaign. There is some disagreement on this point in the literature. A. A. Zimin, "Sostav boiarskoi dumy XV-XVI vekakh," *Arkhograficheskiĭ ezhegodnik za 1957 god* (Moscow, 1958), 76, counts him as a true *okol'nichii*, while Veselovskii, *Issledovaniia po istorii oprichniny*, does not mention Daniil as a *duma* member. Bychkova explains that the Koltovskiis were unable to benefit from the marriage because Anna's male kin were few and inactive in 1572: her father and uncle were dead and her brother and cousin were very young. The lack of relatives made her an attractive match. See Bychkova, *Sostav*, 136-37.

¹⁶These figures and those that follow in this paragraph are based on two sources: N. N. Golitsyn, *Ukazatel' imen lichnykh upominaemykh v Dvortsovykh razriadakh* (St. Petersburg: Senatskaia tipografiia, 1912), which indexes mentions of servitors in the court service registers of the seventeenth century and thereby provides a rough measure of years of service at court; and P. I. Ivanov, *Alfavitnyi ukazatel' familii i lits, upominaemykh v boiarskikh knigakh* (Moscow: Tip. S. Selivanovskogo, 1853), which indexes the court ranks held by servitors as they were recorded in the Boyar Books. It should be emphasized that these figures indicate the approximate number of Koltovskiis entering service for the first time, not the total number of Koltovskiis in service at the time.

rank, most frequently *striapchii* or *stol'nik*. These figures clearly suggest that though the Koltovskiiis succeeded in ensconcing themselves within the Moscow ranks, they were held at arms length by the court, perhaps due to the fact that they were neither titled nor one of the old Muscovite service families.

The Koltovskiiis Remake Themselves

The court itself provided the Koltovskiiis and other Moscow service families with the opportunity to do something about their genealogical deficiency: immediately after the abolition of *mestnichestvo* and the burning of the old genealogical records, the court ordered the compilation of new official genealogies on January 12, 1682.¹⁷ The edict imagined the creation of a hierarchy of registers, each to be based on genealogies with supporting documents submitted to the “Chamber of Genealogical Affairs” (*palata rodoslovnykh del*) by the families themselves — one for the elite clans in the old register; another for new families that had members in the *duma* or had served in high offices since the time of Ivan IV; a third for men who had served in high offices or in the elite ranks of provincial service since the time of Mikhail Fedorovich; and a fourth for men in the middling ranks of provincial service. The clans began immediately to search their private archives for the genealogical information and the substantive documentation necessary to compose an official genealogical rescript (*rodoslovnaia raspis'*).¹⁸ The rescripts began to pour into the Chamber a bit more than a month after the January act and continued to be collected as late as 1694, however the majority of the more than 500 genealogies was submitted between 1682 and 1686.¹⁹

By all rights the Koltovskiiis belonged in the second level of the proposed multi-tiered genealogical register: though they had not placed members on the boyar council, many Koltovskiiis had served as military commanders, chancellery directors, and provincial governors. Yet an investigation of the rescripts they submitted to the Chamber of Genealogical Affairs suggests that they had their sights set higher. Dmitri Afanas'evich Koltovskii submitted two sets of documents: one on May 20, 1686 and the other on June 25, 1686.²⁰ These served as the basis for the Koltovskii entry in the Velvet Book (*Barkhatnaia kniga*), the product of the labor of the Chamber.²¹ We find this entry, somewhat surprisingly, in chapter 32, which is devoted to the Sorokoumov-Glebovs, a clan with which the Koltovskiiis had never been associated in any previous genealogical records. The Sorokoumov-Glebovs were a pedigreed clan that had fallen on hard times. Indeed they managed to have their names included in the first official genealogical registers compiled in the 1540s, an act

¹⁷Published in *Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov* (Moscow: Tip. Selivanskovskago, 1819), *chasť* 4, no. 130, 404-405. Hereafter “SGGD.”

¹⁸That they had such information is clearly indicated by the fact that virtually all surviving Genealogical Books are “private” copies of the official versions. They also had copies of official documents with which to support the claims made in their rescripts. See B. N. Morozov, “Sluzhebnye i rodoslovnye dokumenty v chastnykh arkhivakh XVII v. (k postanovke voprosa),” in *Issledovaniia po istochnikovedeniiu istorii SSSR dookt'iabrskogo perioda*, ed. V. I. Buganov (Moscow: In-t istorii AN SSSR, 1982), 70-98.

¹⁹On the operation of the Chamber of Genealogical Affairs, see Bychkova, “Iz istorii sozdaniia rodoslovnykh raspisei,” 95-100. On the number of rescripts, see A. B. Kamenskii, “K istorii izucheniia genealogii v Rossii v XVIII v., in *Istochnikovedcheskie issledovaniia po istorii feodal'noi Rossii* (Moscow, 1981) and Kamenskii, “K voprosu o rodoslovnykh raspisiakh kontsa XVII v.,” 211-25.

²⁰See Avtokratov, “Rech' Ivana Groznogo,” 264. The originals are found in the *Russkii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnykh Aktov* (“RGADA”), *fond* 210 (*razriadnyi prikaz*), *Stolbtsy rodoslovnykh raspisei*, no. 18 and no. 46.

²¹*Barkhatnaia kniga*, 2, 180ff.: “Rod Glebovykh ot Sorokouma.”

which established their hold among the elite clans.²² There they traced their lineage back to the mythical Redigi, a Cherkessian prince of the eleventh century.²³ Though a few members of the family had served in the *duma* in the late fifteenth century, they did not continue to do so in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In fact, the Sorokoumov-Glebovs were very poorly represented in court activities. Only three Sorokoumov-Glebovs are recorded in court registers of the sixteenth-century.²⁴ In seventeenth-century court records they are equally scarce.²⁵

According to the Koltovskii rescripts and the Velvet Book, the progenitor of the Koltovskii clan was, as we have seen, one Mikhail Ivanovich, “who served Shemiachich in Starodub on a prebendal estate, and thereafter served the grand prince of Riazan’ and began to be called Koltovskii.”²⁶ The Sorokoumov-Glebov entry in the Velvet Book informs us that Mikhail Ivanovich’s father was Ivan Andreevich Durnoi, who was sent to Vil’na in Grand Princess Elena Ivanova’s suite in 1495 for her marriage to Grand Prince Aleksandr of Lithuania.²⁷ Thus, according to their rescript and the Velvet Book, the Koltovskii were rightfully a branch of the Sorokoumov-Glebovs. This, however, was a fiction invented by senior members of the Koltovskii clan with the complicity of the Glebovs.²⁸ No Ivan Andreevich Durnoi is recorded in the list of those who attended Elena in 1595, and neither is he mentioned in the court service registers.²⁹ Like his putative father, Mikhail Ivanovich Koltovskii is not noted in the official record. Our earliest possible reference to him comes from the Sorokoumov-Glebov entry in the Chronicle redaction of the Genealogical Book (*rodoslovnaia kniga*) of the 1540s, where he is not identified as the founder of the Koltovskii and is referred to only as Mikhail

²²On the Glebovs, see Likhachev, ‘*Gosudarev rodoslovet’s i rod Adashbelykh*’, S. B. Veselovskii, “Vladimir Gusev — sostavitel’ Sudebnika 1497 goda,” *Istoricheskie zapiski* 5 (1939): 32-33; S. B. Veselovskii, *Issledovaniia po istorii klassa sluzhbilykh zemle-vladel’tsev* (Moscow: Nauka, 1969), 289-330; Bychkova, *Rodoslovnye knigi*, 30-31; A. A. Zimin, *Formirovanie boiarskoi aristokratii v Rossii v vtoroi polovine XV-pervoi treti XVI v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), 214-23. All authorities agree that the Glebov entry in the Genealogical Book is full of dubious information. Bychkova argues that the Glebovs found a place in the original Genealogical Book *via* close association with the Shuiskii and the brief but brilliant career of Ivan Ivanovich Khabarov, a boyar of Ivan IV.

²³See the Beliaevskii I copy (1600-50) of the Chronicle redaction (protograph 1540s) of the Genealogical Book, reproduced in *Redkie istochniki po istorii Rossii*, ed. Z. N. Bochkareva and M. E. Bychkova, 2 vols. (Moscow: Int. istorii SSSR, 1977), 2: 68-73. On the dating of the Chronical redaction, see Bychkova, *Rodoslovnye knigi*, 19-20. The story of Redegi is recounted in the *Laurent’evskii svod* under 1022. See PSRL 1: 146-47. Mythical, non-Russian ancestors were standard in elite genealogies, including that of the grand prince. On them, see Bychkova, *Rodoslovnye knigi*, 135-44 and V. N. Bochkov, “‘Legendy’ o vyezde dvorianskikh rodov” *Arkhheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1969 g.* (Moscow, 1970): 73-93. They were almost always included in the rescripts submitted to the Chamber of Genealogical Affairs after 1682. See Bychkova, “Iz istorii sozdaniia rodoslovnykh respisei,” 100-104.

²⁴Nazarii Semenovich: ten mentions [1529-57]; Mikhailo Nazarievich: twelve mentions [1559-76]; Fedor Vasil’evich (?): five mentions [1591-97]. Source: RK 1475-1598.

²⁵Arist Vasil’evich: *golova* in 1644/45; Pavel Aristovich: *Stol’nik* 1686/87; Vasilii Mikhailov: *Stol’nik* 1686/87; Petra Alekseevich: *Stol’nik* 1691/92; Semen Avraamov: *Dvorianin Moskovskii* 1691/92. Sources: Golitsyn, *Ukazatel’ imen* and Ivanov, *Alfavitnyi ukazatel’*. There were two Glebov clans in the seventeenth century, the Sorokoumov-Glebovs and the Oblagin-Gelbovs. I have done my best to distinguish them, but in some cases this is impossible. Therefore there were likely more Sorokoumov-Glebovs than recorded here, but not many.

²⁶*Barkhatnaia kniga*, 184.

²⁷*Barkhatnaia kniga*, 184.

²⁸An edict of March 27, 1682 issued to the Chamber of Genealogical Affairs ordered that all claims of kinship should be verified by families already registered in the old Genealogical Book. See Bychkova, “Iz istorii sozdaniia rodoslovnykh respisei,” 96. Thus the Glebovs would have had to have attested to their kinship with the Koltovskii. That they did so is clear from a note made on the Glebov rescript entered in the *Barkhatnaia kniga*, which tells us that “according to the Glebov rescript, Mikhail [Ivanovich-Durnoi] is the progenitor of the Koltovskii clan.” See *Barkhatnaia kniga*, 184.

²⁹G. F. Karpov, ed., “Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii Moskovskogo gosudarstva s Pol’sko-Litovskim, 1487-1533 gg.,” *Sbornik imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obschestva* 35 (1882): 163-64. This was first noted by Likhachev, ‘*Gosudarev rodoslovet’s*’, 42. Also see Avtokratov, “Rech’ Ivana Groznovo 1550 goda,” 264-65.

Ivanovich.³⁰ Even if Ivan Andreevich was sent with Elena in 1595 he could not have been Mikhail Ivanovich *Koltovskii's* father. The Koltovskii entry in the Velvet Book says that Mikhail Ivanovich Koltovskii had five sons. Two are mentioned in the official record, as we have seen: Fedor, who was a *voevoda* in 1492, and Grigorii (aka Istoma), who was a *voevoda* in 1537.³¹ If Ivan Andreevich had been sent to Lithuania, we have to imagine he was a young man, otherwise he would have been noted in the official document listing personnel, which he was not. And if he was young in 1495, he could not have had a grandson, Fedor, serving almost simultaneously (1492) as a *voevoda*.³² Therefore we can conclude that the father of Mikhail Ivanovich Koltovskii was not Ivan Andreevich Durnoi (Sorokoumov-Glebov).

It is possible to reconstruct how and why the Koltovskiis came to recognize the Sorokoumov-Glebovs as their ancestors. Opportunity was provided by the old Genealogical Books, where many men were identified only by their first name and patronymics and their progeny (if any) were not recorded. Thus the Koltovskiis found in the Genealogical Book a certain “Mikhail Ivanovich,” the childless son of Ivan Andreevich Durnoi. The court service records provided a suggestive link. The Koltovskiis knew that some of their actual ancestors, such as Fedor and Grigorii, had served the court in the early sixteenth century and that their father was named Mikhail. Armed with this rather tenuous connection, the Koltovskiis may have approached the Sorokoumov-Glebovs in the early 1680s and suggested that their “Mikhail Ivanovich” was the father of “Fedor Mikhailovich Koltovskii,” hence “Mikhail Ivanovich Koltovskii,” son of Ivan Andreevich Durnoi. The Koltovskiis had ample motive to connect themselves to the Sorokoumov-Glebovs. Though they were not a prominent family in the seventeenth century, the Sorokoumov-Glebovs were pedigreed, as was evidenced by the very fact of their presence in the old Genealogical Books. If a connection could be established, this would at the very least affirm the Koltovskiis’ place among the second group of families imagined in the genealogical project of 1682, and would perhaps move them into the first group, meaning that they would be hereditary candidates for membership in the boyar дума. As we know, the link was established and the Koltovskiis made their way into the circle of elite families recorded in the Velvet Book.

Yet the Koltovskiis did not stop at this. Evidence of their further attempt to re-fashion themselves is found in a late seventeenth-century copy of the famous Book of Degrees (*Stepennaia kniga*).³³ The Book, probably written under the direction of Metropolitan Afanasii between 1560 and 1563, was in essence a genealogical history of the Riurikids, and particularly their Moscow branch. It was well known to the elite families of the late seventeenth century, and thus it comes as no surprise that Semen Semenovich Koltovskii owned a copy of the text.³⁴ However Semen, unlike many of his historically-minded fellows, did more than simply read the book.³⁵ He made two rather suggestive additions to it.³⁶

³⁰*Redkie istochniki*, 72.

³¹RK 1475-1598, 91.

³²Likhachev was the first to note the chronological confusion regarding Fedor’s parentage. See Likhachev, ‘*Gosudarev rodoslovets*’, 49. Also see Avtokratov, “Rech’ Ivana Groznovo 1550 goda,” 264-65.

³³On the Book of Degrees, see “Afanasii,” in *Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti drevnei Rusi*, ed. D. S. Likhachev, 2 vols. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988), 1: 73-79. The Book is published in PSRL 21.

³⁴Specifically, the Khrushchovskii copy. It is found in a collection of historical materials, also of seventeenth-century provenance, currently catalogued in RGADA, *fond* 181, no. 26/34. On the composition of the collection, see Vasenko, “Khrushchevskii spisok Stepennoi knigi,” 389. The book itself bears the name of Semen Semenovich Koltovskii (“*Kniga granograf okolnichago Semena Semenovicha Koltovskago*”).

³⁵That Semen was the author of the interpolations was first suggested by Vasenko, “Khrushchovskii spisok,” 393-94. The case is thoroughly argued by Avtokratov, “Rech’ Ivana Groznogo.”

The first of them begins in the twenty-third chapter, fifteenth “degree,” which tells the tale of Ivan III dispatching Grand Princess Elena to Vil’na to marry Aleksandr, Grand Prince of Lithuania in 1495. (See Appendix 1.) In the Book of Degrees, the match is made and the princess married, but rather quickly the affair turns sour as Ivan III learns that Aleksandr is pressuring his daughter to convert to Catholicism. Several years later Ivan III declares war on Lithuania, but fails to extricate his daughter from Aleksandr’s court.³⁷ Semen’s rendition of events is quite different.³⁸ Elena is sent to Lithuania in the company of many notables, among them one “Ivan Andreevich Chevkin Durnoi,” who we recognize as the Koltovskii’s putative connection to the Glebov family. Ivan Andreevich himself writes to the Grand Prince and informs him that he and Elena are being persecuted for their faith by the Lithuanians. Soon after, word reaches Ivan that the entire suite, including Ivan and Elena, have perished, martyrs for their Orthodoxy. Ivan, stricken by grief, is moved to compensate the kinsmen of those who died in Lithuania. Thus “Mikhail Ivanov syn’ Chevkin” is granted the *volost’* of Kashira.

The psychological value of Semen’s re-telling of the Elena episode is manifest, for the story of Ivan Andreevich Durnoi’s sacrifice in Lithuania provided proof that Mikhail Ivanovich (Koltovskii) existed, that he was Ivan Andreevich Durnoi (Sorokoumov-Glebov)’s son, and that he had been granted estates in Kashira, a region with which the Koltovskii’s had been associated since the mid-sixteenth century.³⁹ The fabrication may have had practical value as well, but this is not certain. According to the practice of the Chamber of Genealogical Affairs, evidence drawn from old genealogical records was not sufficient to substantiate claims to distinguished lineage. Such claims had to be supported with copies of or references to official documents — court records, cadastres, grant charters, etc.⁴⁰ Indeed such official proof was almost always included in the rescripts submitted to the Chamber in the 1680s.⁴¹ As we have seen, the Koltovskii rescripts claimed (falsely) that Ivan Andreevich Durnoi had been sent with Elena to Lithuania and that he was the father of Mikhail Ivanovich Koltovskii.⁴² Given the strictures of the Chamber, the Koltovskii’s may have had some reason to suspect that more might be needed to establish their connection to the Sorokoumov-Glebovs. It was perhaps for this reason that Semen composed the first interpolation. It seems, however, that Semen’s invention was never submitted to the Chamber: the Koltovskii and Glebov rescripts make no mention of Ivan Andreevich Durnoi writing to Ivan III, of him perishing with Elena, or of his “son,” Mikhail Ivanovich, receiving estates in recompense for the loss of his “father.”⁴³ It is not easy to determine why the Koltovskii’s decided not to put the story into evidence. Several

³⁶There are actually three changes to the text, but one of them (fol. 469-70) consists of nothing more than the movement of original text to another place. Since it did not involve substantive alteration, it has been left aside.

³⁷*Stepennaia kniga*, 571ff.

³⁸Reproduced in Vasenko, *Khrushchovskii spisok*, 390.

³⁹See Vasenko, “Khrushchovskii spisok,” 394 and Avtokratov, “Rech’ Ivana Groznogo,” 264-65.

⁴⁰This is hinted at in the edict of January 12, 1682, which states that only clans “with clear proof” (*s’ iavnyim svidel’svom*) are to be entered in the new genealogical registers. See SGGD 4, no. 130, 405.

⁴¹Bychkova, “Iz istorii sozdaniia rodoslovykh rospisei,” 105-6. The documents submitted to the Chamber include many of the earliest known Muscovite texts. They were first published in *Akty XIII - XVII vv., predstavlennye v Razriadnyi prikaz predstavliteliami sluzhbilykh familii posle otmeny mestnichestva*, ed. A. Iushkov (Moscow, 1898), *chast’ 1* (1257-1613). Long ago Likhachev pointed out that, in view of the source, many of these documents were likely forged or falsified. See N. P. Likhachev, *Po povodu sbornika A. I. Iushkova . . .* (St. Petersburg, 1898) and *Razriadnye d’iaki XVI v.*, 431ff. Also see Veselovskii, *Issledovaniia po istorii oprichniny*, 244-54.

⁴²*Barkhatnaia kniga*, 184.

⁴³Avtokratov, “Rech’ Ivana Groznogo,” 266.

possible explanations present themselves. It may be that Semen's invention was written after the rescripts had been submitted to and accepted by the Chamber. If this were so, further proof of the Koltovskii's link to the Glebovs would have been unnecessary. Further, it could be that the fabrication was seen as too flagrant to be believed by the authorities, who regularly checked the facts adduced in the genealogical documents, or by other elite families, who also closely watched the genealogical claims of their competitors.⁴⁴ Thus the Koltovskii's, fearing that their ploy might be found out, elected to keep the revised version of the Elena tale to themselves. In any event, it seems the Koltovskii's were wise not to use Semen's falsification (if they had the opportunity to do so). For, as we can see from the Velvet Book, they succeeded in linking themselves with the Glebovs without it.

Semen Semenovich's second interpolation in his copy of the Book of Degrees is more difficult to interpret. The text differs most significantly from the first interpolation in that it was of no apparent genealogical value to the Koltovskii's — no member of the clan is even mentioned.⁴⁵ Rather, the second interpolation relates the text of a speech given by Ivan IV in Red Square in 1550. (See Appendix 2.) The speech consists of four parts. In the first, the twenty-year-old Ivan summons a council of all the land to discuss how the sedition and corruption of the boyars, who ruled Russia in his minority, might be stamped out. The second part consists of an address to Metropolitan Makarius in which Ivan attacks the boyars for their misdeeds and promises retribution. The third part is an address to the people gathered in Red Square in which Ivan enjoins all to cease fighting and aid him in his struggle to bring order to the land. Finally, in the fourth part, Ivan makes Aleksei Adashev an *okol'nichii* and charges him with the task of gathering petitions from those who have been unjustly done. The text could have been inspired by a number of sources widely available to men such as Koltovskii.⁴⁶ Both the 1512 Chronograph rendition of the Council of 1550 and the text of the Stoglav Council of 1551 relate similar scenarios: Ivan IV speaks to a general gathering, including Makarius, about the outrages committed by the boyars during his minority and goes on to promise justice.⁴⁷ The story of Adashev bears some resemblance to a passage in Ivan IV's letter to Kurbskii in which Ivan "took him from the dung-heap and placed him together with the grandees."⁴⁸ Whatever sources the author of the second interpolation had at hand, he was clearly no copyist: the text is a true composition, not a transcription.

If the story was of no genealogical value to the Koltovskii's, why did Semen produce it? A partial answer is suggested if we put the tale in the context of Semen's life and the history of the court of the 1680s.⁴⁹ Koltovskii entered service in 1641 as a *striapchiu*, in 1661 he was made *stol'nik*; and in 1690 he was promoted to *okol'nichii*, the first of his kind to achieve *duma* rank. Leaving aside two short periods early in his career, he served continuously in the circle of the royal family. The service registers frequently record him performing important ceremonial duties at court — receiving

⁴⁴Avtokratov, "Rech' Ivana Groznogo," 266, argues it was written after the Koltovskii's submitted their rescript. However it seems just as likely that they decided not to submit it because they believed, rightly, that their mendacity would be found out by the investigators in the Chamber.

⁴⁵The second interpolation is reproduced in SGGD 2, no. 37, 45-46.

⁴⁶On possible sources, see Vasenko, "Khrushchovskii spisok," 394-98 and Avtokratov, "Rech' Ivana Groznogo," 266-69.

⁴⁷See PSRL 22: 528-29 and *Stoglav*, ed. D. E. Kozhanchikov (St. Petersburg: Tip. Imp. Akademii Nauk, 1863; Reprint Letchworth: Bradda Books, 1971), 25-35.

⁴⁸*The Correspondence between Prince A. M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia, 1564-1579*, ed., trans. and notes J. L. I. Fennell (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1955), 73.

⁴⁹The following information concerning Semen's career is drawn from Avtokratov, "Rech' Ivana Groznogo," 276-77.

ambassadors, escorting dignitaries, and even bearing the body of Aleskei Mikhailovich during the fallen tsar's funeral. Koltovskii was not simply a servitor at court, he was a courtier. Given his long experience and close connection with the royal family, he would have doubtless been disturbed by the events following the death of Aleksei Mikhailovich in 1676. Unlike his father, Fedor Alekseevich was feeble. He was under the control of a group of favorites headed by Vasili Golitsyn, and it was Golitsyn who sponsored the elimination of *mestnichestvo* and the new call for genealogical rescripts. Fedor's death brought additional disorder to the court: a revolt by the *strel'tsy*, the regency of Sophia, and finally the coup of Peter I. The confusion of the later eighties, and particularly the infighting among the elite boyars, must have reminded Semen of the events of Ivan IV's minority, about which he could have read in any number of sources. In the second interpolation he used this historical vignette to work out a fantastic solution to the troubles of the realm. He imagines Peter as Ivan IV: a strong tsar, who had suffered in his youth, brings order to chaos by bridling the willful boyars.⁵⁰ And he imagines himself as Adashev: the tsar raises up the worthy, though of lowly birth, so that they might bring justice to the common people. Koltovskii was made *okol'nichii* (like Adashev in the tale) on July 10, 1690, suggesting that the story — and the imaginary world it depicted — was composed sometime after this date and before Semen's death in March, 1692.⁵¹

Conclusion

As the case of the Koltovskii suggests, the new men who made their way into the upper-reaches of court society in the seventeenth century were not radicals. It is true that many of them had made their way to the top by virtue of their service and skill, and not due to any hereditary right to elite ranks or offices. They were the beneficiaries of a very mild drift toward meritocratic appointment, or at least away from hereditary exclusivity. But it appears that the new men did not necessarily share the principles standing behind the policy that brought them into the heights of Muscovite society. And it is easy to understand why they would not. Men such as Semen Koltovskii had been born and bred in a society that took for granted the existence of a class of men who were the natural born leaders of the realm. Their names were memorialized in ancient official documents — the Genealogical Books and the Court Service Registers — for all to read. The new men recognized that though they were among the elite, they were not of it in a genealogical sense. It likely never occurred to them (though it may have to men such as Golitsyn) to alter the basic principles of the old status system. The parvenus wanted to become members of the hereditary elite, to have their names inscribed in the official status registers. The evidence of widespread genealogical falsification in the late 1680s is *prima facie* indication of this desire and the mentality that stood behind it. It is, of course, ironic that this flowering of the hereditary mentality occurred immediately before Peter began his open campaign against the old order. But, as we know from events following his reign, the belief in a hereditary aristocracy was more deeply rooted than the tsar-reformer imagined.

⁵⁰Avtokratov sees the speech as an expression of conservative opposition to Peter. Avtokratov, "Rech' Ivana Groznogo," 274-76. Such an interpretation is supported neither by the text nor Semen's biography. The tale approves of Ivan IV's attempts — and, by analogy, Peter's — to bring order to the court. And it was Peter who appointed Semen *okol'nichii* in 1690.

⁵¹Avtokratov believes the story was probably written during Semen's disgrace, between October 18, 1691 and January, 1692. See Avtokratov, "Rech' Ivana Groznogo," 278. But why would Koltovskii praise the tsar who had shunned him and imagine himself as an ascendant Adashev, rather than one "unfairly" in disgrace?

Appendix 1

The First Interpolation in the Khrushchovskii Copy of the Book of Degrees

Source: P. G. Vasenko, “Khrushchovskii spisok Stepennoi knigi i izvestie o Zemskom sobore 1550,” *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia*, (April, 1903), 390. In translating the interpolation I have omitted long passages borrowed directly from the Book of Degrees. Short phrases borrowed from the Book of Degrees are included in parentheses. All items in square brackets are my own.

In the year 7001 [1492/93], following much strife, the Lithuanian King Albrekht and his brother Grand Prince Aleksandr sent [ambassadors] to Grand Prince Ivan Vasil’evich to discuss peace, amity, and marriage. He asked that Grand Prince Ivan Vasil’evich give his daughter Grand Princess Elena Ivanovna [to Grand Prince Aleksandr], and [said that] he would (cede to him the towns of Viazma, Serpeisk, Meshchovsk and others up to the Ugra river). The Grand Prince sought council with his [spiritual] father the Metropolitan Simion as to how he should give his daughter [in marriage] and, according to [his] council, she was engaged in Moscow. And two years later . . . [the Grand Prince] sent the Grand Princess to be married to Grand Prince Aleksandr in Vil’na. And to Vil’na he sent his ambassadors to accompany [the Grand Princess]. Before the wedding [he sent] the boyar Iakov Zakharich with his subordinates to ensure that they might live in amity and not forsake the Greek faith, to build an Orthodox church, and to bind [the contracting parties] with trust and with holy oaths. And having prepared the wedding, the boyars, Iakov Zakharich with his subordinates, were to return to the Grand Prince in Moscow, and the *dvorianin* Ivan Andreevich Chevkin-Durnoi with his subordinates were to go with the Grand Princess to Lithuania. And they were ordered to remain there until further notice. (And the marriage took place in Vil’na.) And with the Grand Princess were dispatched an Abbot of Pereiaslav’-Zaleskii [Monastery], an archpriest, two priests, one white and the other black, and two deacons . . . (And in the year 7008 [1499/1500]) Ivan Chevkin writes to the Grand Prince that (his son-in-law Grand Prince Aleksandr is exposing his daughter) and all of them (to great want, orders them to convert from the Greek to the Roman faith), and is oppressing the Grand Princess and all of them mightily, having forgotten (his holy oath and his writ confirmed by a pledge) . . . [Later the Grand Prince is informed by defecting Lithuanian princes] that, due to the oppression [of Aleksandr], Grand Princess Elena has passed away and Ivan Chevkin and many others [had died] of want . . . And the Grand Prince was very sad about his daughter and blamed himself for her suffering. But he took comfort in the fact that she had suffered for her faith in Christ. And he began to show favor on the surviving kinsmen of those who had died, to Mikhail Ivanov syn Chevkin [he granted] a *volost’* in Koshira and other various favors, and consoled them, saying: “I am more grieved then you, for I have killed my daughter. I will repay you for the deaths of your fathers, mothers, uncles, and brothers.”

Appendix 2

The Second Interpolation in the Khrushchovskii Copy of the Book of Degrees

Source: *Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov* (Moscow: Tip. Selivanskovskago, 1819), 2, no. 37, 45-46.

When the Sovereign, Tsar, and Grand Prince Ivan Vasil'evich was twenty years of age, he saw that his realm had been brought to great grief and sadness by the violence of the powerful and by injustice, and he designed to unite all [his people] in amity. And having sought council with his spiritual father the Metropolitan Makarius concerning how he should stamp out sedition, destroy injustice, and still enmity, he ordered his entire realm to gather, [representatives] of all ranks from [all the] towns. And on Sunday he proceeded in the company of [holy] crosses to the *Lobnoe Mesto* and, having completed a benediction, began to speak to the Metropolitan thus: "I implore you, lord, to be our aid and champion in amity. And we know that you are desirous of goodness and love. As you know, lord, my father the Sovereign Grand Prince Vasilii Ivanovich passed away when I was four years of age, and my mother passed away when I was eight years of age. My parents did not protect me, and [therefore] my powerful boyars and magnates treated me badly and were arbitrary. They stole dignities and honors in my name, no one stood in their way, and they engaged in much greed, embezzlement, and offense. And they ruled because, due to my youth and inexperience, I was deaf and could not understand, and I did not have the voice to accuse them [of malfeasance]. Oh unjust corrupters and embezzlers! Oh unjust, self-serving judges! Today you will answer us [for your misdeeds], you who have brought tears on yourselves, and I am innocent of this blood! Await your retribution!" And bowing to all on all sides, he spoke: "People of God, given to us by God! I beseech you to be faithful to God and to show to us love. Because of my youth, inexperience, and powerlessness and because of the unfair injustice, usury, and love of money of my boyars and magnates, today we cannot make right your injuries, ruin, and burdens. I implore you, cease fighting among yourselves and suing one another, for this is not appropriate in the course of important matters! And in this and other affairs I, as is our place, will judge and protect you, and will destroy injustice and return stolen goods." And on this day [Ivan IV] granted that Aleksei Adashev be made *okol'nichii*, and spoke to him thus: "Aleksei! I took you from low and most inferior people. I heard of your good deeds, and today have raised you higher than your station for the sake of my soul. And though you did not wish it, I desired it. And not only you, but [I raised up] others of your kind in order to allay my sadness and watch over my people, whom God has entrusted us with. I assign you to accept petitions from the impoverished and offended, and to take care that they are duly reviewed. And do not fear the powerful and distinguished who fraudulently appropriate honors and who, by their violence, have despoiled the poor and powerless. [Neither should you fear] the poor with phony tears, who calumniate falsely the rich, hoping with these phony tears to unjustly slander and seem righteous. But everything should be examined and brought to us truthfully, fearing the judgment of God. [You should] select just judges from among the boyars and magnates." And he spoke to them forbiddingly, and from that point on he himself began to judge many cases and truthfully to investigate [affairs].