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## Postnikov's Pskov Museum document catalogue

by Daniel Waugh

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A[rsenii] B[orisovich] Postnikov. *Drevlekhranilishche Poskovskogo muzeia. Obozrenie russkikh rukopisnykh dokumentov XVI-XVIII vv.* Moskva:BuksMArt, 2013. 976 pp + 76 color plates. ISBN 978-5-906190-08-6.

One can almost visualize the compiler of this magnificent volume, A. V. Postnikov, spending years on end in the pose of the copyist shown in the frontispiece depicting a monastery scriptorium, a miniature in one of the Pskov Museum's illuminated books from the early 18th century. Known previously primarily from a number of articles in local history publications, Postnikov has performed a great service. The nearly thousand pages here in large format include:

- A history of the collection and previous efforts at its systematization and cataloguing.
- A description of more than 1200 documents in nearly 200 files of the Museum, the earliest dated 1538, the most recent early 19th century.
- Some 175 pp. of detailed personal and geographic name indexes.
- A generous selection of excellent color plates sampling across a range of the documents.

In compiling his catalogue, Postnikov undertook further systematization of the collection, where often documents had been mis-filed and in some cases cannibalized for use in the re-binding of books. He is describing here individual *akty* and various categories of administrative and legal paper, but not literary and religious manuscripts, which had been described in two volumes by N. P. Osipova in 1991. Her catalogue of printed Cyrillic books in the collection appeared in 1985, but she never completed her catalogue of Old Believer manuscripts.

The descriptions here follow the current standards for such catalogues. The entries are grouped under three main categories: state institutions, religious institutions, and personal *fondy*. Within each of these categories are subdivisions for individual offices, individual monasteries and churches, and private collections. Descriptions provide ample detail to indicate clearly contents, inscriptions, dating, etc. Where a copy book with multiple sections or documents is involved, the entry lists all the individual parts. Generally the indications of watermarks are cryptic, with apparently no effort made to identify them in standard albums. Where there is other indication of dates, of course, this may be irrelevant, though I suppose someone might like to know more about patterns of paper usage in Pskov. One goal Postnikov had was to provide a clear indication of the state of preservation of each manuscript, in order to identify which ones need more immediate attention for survival; so there is rubric on "preservation" at the end of each entry.

This imposing volume takes me back in memory to my only visit to Pskov, in the cold of November 1968, when we had to travel after dark by train from Leningrad in order not to be able to see anything strategic along the way. We arrived in the middle of the night and walked the snowy streets to our lodging. The river next to the fortress had just frozen over enough for youngsters to be playing hockey on it the next day. The trip was memorable for a visit to Izborsk and to Pechory, where we were conducted through the caves below the monastery by candle light. And it also was memorable for a too brief visit to the Pskov Museum, where for some in our group the excitement was its having on display a painting by Marc Chagall at a time when exhibiting him in the USSR was *verboten*. I suspect none of us appreciated the fact that the Museum's collection of old manuscripts, which since has grown, is a major one, to which, thanks to Postnikov (and, earlier, Osipova) we now have access. Postnikov's volume belongs on the shelf of every serious Slavic collection.