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New Text edition: the Sofiiskii sbornik

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*Antologija pamiatnikov literatury domongol'skogo perioda v rukopisi XV v. Sofiiskii sbornik.*  
Izd. Podgotovili G. S. Barankova, N. V. Savel'eva, O. S. Sapozhnikova. Pod red. N. V.  
Savel'evoi. Moskva=S.-Peterburg: Al'ians-Arkeho, 2013. 540 pp. ISBN 978-5-98874-088-9.

Even though the manuscript (RNB, Sofiiskoe sobr. No. 1285) published in this meticulous, large format edition is dated to the early 15th century, as the editors argue on the basis of linguistic and textual criteria, it contains a very faithful copy of a compilation that likely dates to the late 12th century. Its contents overlap to a considerable degree with a less accurate copy, the so-called "Miscellany of Paisii" (RNB, sobr. Kirillo-Belozerskogo mon., No. 4/1081), also dated to the first quarter of the 15th century. The collection of texts in the Sofiiskii sbornik includes a good many found also in the "Izbornik" of Sviatoslav of 1073. There is an emphasis on anti-Latin polemic and works relating to the effort to stamp out pagan practices amongst the local population, with the ordering and selection suggesting the original compilation was carefully thought out, not just a random potpourri.

The edition is typeset in Slavonic preserving all the features of the original orthography, abbreviations, punctuation. The description of the manuscript includes headings and incipits for each text. There are word and name indexes and photographs of manuscript pages (the copy is in a single hand) and the several inscriptions relating to later ownership. Sapozhnikova writes about the history of the manuscript, her focus being on the question of whether a cryptic inscription ("kniga gosudar'skoe danie sobornik") is evidence for a commonly accepted assertion it passed through the hands of Tsar Ivan IV, and whether the palaeography of the inscription should lead us to conclude this was one of several manuscripts donated to monasteries by Ivan's contemporary, the priest Syl'vestr. Savel'eva follows this with a review of the contents of the manuscript. Barankova's essay in the front matter examines the linguistic features of the text, concluding that they indicate a Novgorodian provenance. The content would seem to suggest not a monastic but rather an episcopal scriptorium.

Following the text itself are several essays on the textual filiations of the major works in the manuscript: Savel'eva writes about those directed against paganism; Barankova discusses Metropolitan Georgii's "Stiazanie s latinoiu" and then focuses on the articles the manuscript shares with the Izbornik of Sviatoslav; Sapozhnikova discusses the "Bogoslovie" of John of Damascus; Barankova returns to consider several "unknown" translations. Appendices include a description of the "Miscellany of Paisii" and the texts it contains which are also found in the Sofiiskii sbornik.

This has to be a most welcome addition to the corpus of published texts dated to pre-Mongol Rus.