The earliest witnesses of the Old Church Slavonic Sticherarion

The Sticherarion is a single-genre hymnographical collection containing hymns arranged according to the feast calendar of the ecclesiastical year of the Eastern Church. There are two different types of the Sticherarion: 1) the Menaion Sticherarion containing hymns for the fixed dates of the ecclesiastical year, and 2) the Lenten Sticherarion containing hymns for the Lenten liturgical cycle. The source base are two manuscripts dating from the 12th century: The Minaion Sticheraria BAN 34.7.6 and GIM Syn.279, both of them originated in Novgorod (this is proved by examples of cokan'je). By comparing the sources mentioned above with other available copies of the Sticheraria dating from the 12th century (in particular MS GIM Syn.572) one can see the distinct difference between the two versions, which are probably of Southern and Northern origin. These versions have common features in grammar and lexis as well as in their contents and the order of the chants. According to our preliminary results, the contents of the MSS BAN 34.7.6 è Syn.279, 418 are the same. 87 stichera attested by Syn. 279 are missing in BAN 34.7.6, although the number of hymns in this copy exceeds that in the Syn.279. The composition of the hymns contained in BAN 34.7.6 and GIM Syn.279 are very similar, especially in the offices for the most important holidays (such as the Nativity, Epiphany, Transfiguration, and Assumption). The number of chants for these days is usually great. The similarity and unity of these sources can be also demonstrated by their linguistic parameters, for example, the use of conjunctions or prefixes, word order, the omission of words or even whole phrases, and the use of certain grammatical forms (those of case or tense). The origin of both versions, however, still remains to be established.