

THE RITES OF BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE IN THE MOST ANCIENT SLAVONIC MANUSCRIPTS

(Summary)

The article is dedicated to the problems of establishing the redactions of the rites of betrothal and marriage in the oldest preserved Slavonic manuscripts and of reconstructing the history of their development. The article contains an overview of studies on the rites of betrothal and marriage in the Greek manuscript sources, a list of the oldest Slavonic manuscripts available (there are 11 Slavonic manuscripts of the rites of betrothal and marriage pre-dating the 15th century; the oldest of them is dated to the turn of the 13–14th centuries), and a thorough analysis of their contents. The main results of the study may be summarized as follows. The oldest Slavonic redactions of the rites of betrothal and marriage are based on the Constantinopolitan redaction of these rites, which emerged at the turn of the 10–11th centuries. In the oldest Slavonic sources this redaction is never given in its “pure” form, but displays some peculiarities. The presence of these peculiarities points out that the oldest Slavonic tradition mirrors the liturgical practice of some Byzantine ecclesiastical center, with a liturgical practice which slightly differed from that of Constantinople (probably, Thessaloniki). Not later than in the first third of the 14th century the oldest Slavonic redaction of the rites of betrothal and marriage was supplemented by new euchological material and a service of readings; most probably, this was done by Athonite Bulgarian and Serbian men of letters in the 13th century. In the first half of the 14th century the service of readings was transferred from the beginning of the rite of marriage to its middle part. In the second half of the 14th century a completely new translation of the rites of betrothal and marriage was made by Metropolitan Cyprian of Moscou; later on on the Russian manuscript tradition this translation was combined with the earlier redactions.

*Michael Zheltov,
Moscow Spiritual Academy*