

Let us begin with several quotations from the book by I. A. Klimishin "Calendar and Chronology", which reflects the modern point of view on the origins of the Easter Book.

"The problem of "combining" lunar and solar (Julian) calendars faced Christian theologians in all its magnitude in the 2nd century A.D., when the Christian tradition of celebrating Easter began to be established ... They compiled a schedule of lunar phases ("ages") for calendar months of 19-year cycles. In other words, a specific kind of "perpetual calendar" was framed, in which the new moons of each year were associated with concrete dates of calendar months. This schedule was used for centuries for calculating the dates of Easter as well as for dating events ..." [335, p. 74].

"The schedule of new moons for a 19-year cycle, used invariably for the determination of Easter lunar phases till now, had been already framed by the 5th century A.D." [335, p. 87].

"... In the 3rd century A.D. reliable methods for calculating the dates of Easter had been already worked out ... Thus, from the 4th century A.D. on, the Christian church connected its annual cycle of festivals to the Julian calendar, and the most important of them, Easter (and its accompanying cycle of feasts and "transitional" festivals), with the lunar-solar calendar" [335, p. 214].

Thus, the modern tradition presumes that the rules for calculating the dates of Christian Easter began to be established in the 2nd century A.D. and assumed the modern form in the 4th century A.D. Moreover, all reference books assert quite definitely that the rules had been canonized at the First Oecumenical Council of Nicaea:

"At the (First Oecumenical) Council it was decreed that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first spring full moon" [God Law, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., U.S.A., 1-987].

"The controversy lasted until the Oecumenical Council of Nicaea, which ... determined ... that Easter should be celebrated by Christians certainly separately from Israelites and certainly on Sunday after full moon. Appropriate calculations had been done in order to make determination of Easter for each year more precise" [Encyclopaedia of Brockhauz-Evfron, "Easter"].

"The original text of the Nicene decree of the Council of Nicaea did not survive. It was already absent in the archives of the Church of Constantinople in the early 5th century. As an official document, only the message of Emperor Constantine from Nicaea to the bishops absent at the Council is available. The message asserts that 'it appeared to the Council unbecoming to perform the Holy Festival in the custom of Israelites'" [335, p. 212].

Nevertheless, a serious chronological problem is hidden here. Let us cite several quotations from papers of specialists dealing with the Easter Book and with chronology.

"Calendars, text-books and treatises on compiling the Orthodox Easter Book contain references to the determination of the First Oecumenical Council that prescribes to celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after Passover, which in its turn is performed on the arrival of the first spring full moon. But, as is known, there is no such rule available among rules of the First Oecumenical Council. The Antiochian Council also refers to the prescript of the First Oecumenical Council ... but gives no concrete instructions for the time to celebrate Easter, as if the prescript of the First Oecumenical Council confined itself to the prohibition of celebrating Easter at the same time as the Israelites ... Russian paschalist archipriest D. Lebedev characterizes