

the requirements, usually ascribed to the Church fathers of the First Oecumenical Council and traditional for our Easter Book, as 'a later formulation of the principle of the Alexandrite Easter Book' [337].

"The question on the time when the rule of celebrating Easter only after the spring equinox was formulated remains open" [335, p. 213].

"What did the decisions of the First Oecumenical Council on the celebrating Easter consist of? A detailed account of *this problem ...*" [337].

What does the difficulty of this problem consist in? The question seems clear. Although the original rule of the Council of Nicaea did not survive, it is known that the Council did determine that rule; moreover, it did it in 325 A.D., when a "reliable methods for calculating the dates of Easter had been worked out" and the schedule of Easter dates had been already compiled, which later "was used for centuries". The latter is quite natural because "every 532 years the Christian Easter recurs in the same order ... Easter tables for all 532 years were known" [336, p. 4]. Thus, calculation of a new 532-year Easter Book reduces to a mere shift of the preceding one by 532 years. This rule obtains till now: the last great indiction (as the 532-year period of the Easter Book is called) began in 1941 and is a shift of the preceding one (1409-1940) which, in its turn, can be obtained by shifting the indiction of 877-1408, and that one by shifting the indiction of 345-876.

Thus, the original form of the Easter Book can easily be restored. Besides, the rules lying at the basis of the Easter Book are well known from the ecclesiastical tradition. In "The Collection of Rules of the Holy Fathers of the Church" of Matthew Vlastar (Constantinople, 14th century), an account of enactments of the oecumenical and regional councils, it is said:

"The rule on Easter includes two restrictions: not to celebrate together with the Israelites and to celebrate only after the spring equinox. Two more were added to them by necessity: to perform the festival after the very first full moon after the equinox, and not on any day but on the first Sunday after the full moon. All these restrictions except the last one have been kept firmly till now, but now we often change for a later Sunday. Namely, we always count two days after the Passover (i.e., the full moon—G. Nosovsky) and then turn to the following Sunday. This happened not by ignorance or inability of the Church fathers who confirmed the rules, but because of the lunar motion ..." [331; 340, part P].

That is, the Church fathers of Council, who established the Easter Book, added to the two basic (apostolic) rules, not to cocelbrate Easter with the Israelites and to celebrate it after the spring equinox, two more rules: to perform the celebration after the first spring full moon (i.e., after Passover), and not on any day but on the next Sunday. According to Vlastar, the first three of the four rules are kept strictly, but the 4th rule, demanding that the Easter Sunday should be the one following the full moon, is infringed due to the discrepancy between the Easter lunar cycle ("circle for the moon") and the length of the Julian year; there are at least two days between the full moon and Easter (in the times of Vlastar, 14th century). This happened because of the slow (and apparently unknown to the Fathers of the Council) shift of the full moons away from the dates fixed in the "circle for the moon" (as we now know, this shift amounts to twenty-four hours per 300 years). The fourth rule is infringed, for example, if Passover falls on a Saturday. Indeed, by the 4th rule, the Easter should fall on the next day, the Sunday. But because of ensuing two-day shift, Easter is placed by the Easter Book to be a week later, on the next Sunday.

The above excerpt from "Rules" by Matthew Vlastar contains a complete set of rules the Easter Book is based on. Thus, we know much about the Easter Book,