

### 3. On Modern Tradition

3.1. *The extremity of modern dating* ("the more ancient the better"). In Sec. 1 and Sec. 2 we have shown that Scaliger's dating of two epochal events of antique and medieval history (the global chronology of antiquity and the Middle Ages is based to a considerable extent on these two events), the birth of Christ and the First Oecumenical Council, contradicts the data on these events available from the ecclesiastical tradition. Let us stress once more that *these data are primary, but not the dates we got used to today*. These two reached us "from the depth of centuries", and all the dates of ancient, antique and early medieval history we "know" today are the result of calculations which began, apparently, not before the 13th century, were accomplished in the 17th century (Dionysius Petavius) and canonized in general at the Council of Trent of the Roman Church at the end of the 16th century (1545-47, 1551-52, 1562-63).

It is important to note that the Council of Trent canonized the result of incomplete chronological work. Scaliger's chronology, which is commonly accepted now and therefore seems the only one possible and ever known, was in the 16th century, when it was canonized, only one of several possible versions of global chronology (see, for example, [21]). It is even possible that Scaliger's chronology was the most widely spread version among the scientists of Rome and Western Europe, but this does not mean that it was true, even though roughly. It is rather doubtful that a true view of the general chronology of human history *could* come from medieval calculations at all. Modern investigations show that the reconstruction of general chronology from the set of available historical sources is a very complicated scientific problem, which requires application of modern scientific methods and extensive computer calculations. Unfortunately, the methods of modern chronologists remain for the most part similar to those available at the times of Scaliger and Petavius.

It is interesting to note a particular feature of Scaliger's (and not only Scaliger's) dates: almost all of them follow the rule "the more ancient the better": *when calculating the date of an event, of all admissible dates (the set of solutions), the earliest was chosen*. It looks like the rule is still in force nowadays. We will demonstrate its effect on the accepted dates of the birth of Christ and of the First Oecumenical Council.

Imagine a chronologist of the 16th century who dates these events using their description (see Sec. 1, Sec. 2). What simplest lower boundaries did he have available? In different words, what were the most earliest dates he could use? Recall that in the description of both events, the birth of Christ and the First Oecumenical Council, the day of the equinox (spring point) occurs, the rate of its shift along the dates of the Julian calendar was already known well in the 16th century. The value of this rate was widely used by chronologists (by Scaliger among them).

In case of dating the birth of Christ, a chronologist of the 16th century knew that in the year of this event (and of the First Easter) the spring equinox fell on March 24 (that is, to the eve of Sunday: according to the Gospel, that day was Passover); consequently, the spring point could not come later than on March 24. The spring point fell on March 24 about the year 100 B.C., and before this year it fell on earlier days in March. Hence, our imaginary chronologist could not assign the birth of Christ to an earlier date than 100 B.C. The date a real chronologist fixed was only a hundred years short, but he had to ensure that the rest of the conditions should also be satisfied! Indeed, he used the Easter Book in his calculations (recall that the year 31 B.C. he points out satisfies the First Easter conditions only if the full moons, the