

1.7. The "first and second" Oecumenical Council. *Canonization of the Easter Book.* It is known, however, that the Easter Book was not canonized by the Church Council as soon as it had been compiled (and this is quite natural). Consequently, the complete Easter tables for 532 years (the great indiction) were not compiled at once. It is likely that the tables were piled right at the Council which canonized the Easter Book, or on the instructions of the Council. The same Council had to appoint the beginning of the great indiction, the year that began the first complete 532-year table. Since the Easter Book was not compiled before the 8th century, this could have been only the year 877 (the beginning of the 13th indiction; the beginning of the next, 14th indiction falls already into the year 1409).

A natural question arises: Could the date of the Council that canonized the Easter Book be near 877? If it is so, then all contradictions are eliminated and everything becomes quite natural: compilation of the Easter Book in the second half of the 8th century and the establishment of the great indiction at the end of 9th century. Specialists think just the same: the Easter Book had been compiled approximately 100 years before its canonization [335, 337].

877 A.D. is in the middle of the reign of Basil I Macaedonian (867–886), the founder of a new (Greek) dynasty in Byzantium. It was under Basil I that the so-called first and second (!) Oecumenical Council was held which, in particular, discussed the questions of chronology (!) and of ordering (canonization?) of the Church Books [331, sheet 12; 4].

*Hypothesis.* This is probably the point where medieval chronologists got confused. The fact is that the "first and second" Oecumenical Council was placed by Matthew Vlastar (i.e., by Constantinople tradition of the 14th century) as the last one in the rank of Oecumenical Councils, after the 7th. This is, probably, the result of a chronological mistake made in the 12–14th centuries, when attempts were made in Byzantium to date Oecumenical Councils. The "first and second" Oecumenical Council (two Councils constituting one because of a break) was placed correctly to the end of 9th century, and the 3rd to 7th Councils were attributed to dates too far in the past. As a result, the first and second Council appeared once more in the beginning (now as two separate Councils divided by 52 years). In the 16th century, Scaliger and his collaborators did not understand the essence of the matter and attributed the canonization of the Easter Book, carried out ecclesiastical tradition by the 1st Oecumenical Council not to the 9th century but to the 4th century, where they placed the 1st Oecumenical Council, leaving its "original", i.e., the "first and second" Council, in the 9th century.

*Remark.* Note that "Collection of the Holy Father's Rules" by Matthew Vlastar, which reflects Orthodox tradition of the 14th century, gives no explicit dates before the 8th century A.D. No dates of Oecumenical or local Councils are indicated in this book. It contains only some indications of time intervals between some of the Councils, of the durations of reigns of some of the emperors and of the positions of years of Councils with respect to the beginnings of the reigns of emperors. All these uncoordinated chronological data are insufficient for constructing a continuous chronological scale. There is an impression that the work on the compilation of global chronology had begun, but was never finished (apparently, some contradictions arose, and the work reached a deadlock). However, 200 years later this incomplete chronological scheme was taken as a basis by Scaliger, evidently without any analysis, and was brought by him to absolutely precise dates (year, month, day, sometimes the hour!) of all principal events of human history. This Scaliger