



Figure 128. Julian and Gregorian drifts of the “14th moon” in the Metonic cycle

March 21. Apparently, this was the reason for the traditional conclusion that the Church fathers of the Council of Nicaea assumed that the equinox fell exactly on March 21. A similar conclusion was drawn by Matthew Vlastar [331, sheet 190]. But, first, such a conclusion, strictly speaking, does not ensue from the Easter Book; we only can imply that the Church fathers of the Council who established the Easter Book assumed the spring equinox to occur no later than March 21. Second, the date of the spring equinox presumed by the Church fathers *could differ from the date of the true (astronomic) equinox!* There is nothing surprising about that; for example, even in the 14th century, Matthew Vlastar determined the contemporary spring equinox with a 6-day (!) error. The spring equinox is an astronomic event not so easy to determine. An exact determination of it requires special astronomic equipment and (in Middle Ages) long-time observations. Thus, there is nothing surprising about the fact that it was not determined quite accurately even in late Middle Ages. The problem is that an inaccurately determined date of the spring equinox used for dating its determination brings about an error amounting to hundreds and even thousands of years.

Apparently, we come across an example of such dating in the case of Scaliger’s (nowadays accepted) dating of the First Oecumenical Council, which established the Easter Book, to the 4th century A.D. The following considerations could lie at the basis of this dating.

- 1) The earliest Easter falls on March 22, hence the Church fathers of the First Oecumenical Council assumed the spring equinox to fall on March 21 (this is the way Matthew Vlastar could reason).
- 2) The true (astronomic) spring equinox fell on March 21 in the 3rd and 4th