

REPORT FROM OXFORD: *The Thirteenth International Congress of Byzantine Studies*

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THE THIRTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BYZANTINE STUDIES WAS held, for the first time in England, at Oxford, from September 5 to 10. Some seven hundred participants from twenty-seven countries were present. The opening ceremony in the University Sheldonian Theatre began with the traditional processions of the Vice-Chancellor and the Lord Mayor. After the obligatory speeches a special item, the *Festive Prelude for Organ and Voices*, composed for the occasion by the doyen of Oxford composers and Vice-President of the Congress, Dr. Egon Wellesz, was performed. Although written in a modern, tonal idiom, the *Prelude* introduces in its middle part a 13th-century unison Byzantine melismatic setting of the Magnificat. Played by the organist of New College, Dr. David Lumsden, and sung by a number of Oxford undergraduates, the *Festive Prelude* contributed to the solemn opening of the Congress.

Among the various sections (archaeology, history, history of art, literature, theology, law, demography, numismatics, etc.), musicology was more fully represented than previously: two main and three supplementary papers and six communications were read. The main and supplementary papers were printed and distributed before the beginning of the Congress.

Professor Oliver Strunk, who succeeded Professor Varsten Høeg as director of *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, wrote a comprehensive and revealing main paper on "Byzantine music in the light of recent research and publication." The paper reviewed the principal achievements of the last sixteen years under three headings: the melismatic repertory, the Byzantine *Hirmologion*, and the relationship of East and West in music. In his introduction Professor Strunk described the results of the expeditions to Jerusalem and Mount Sinai carried out with the cooperation of the Library of Congress in Washington under the auspices of the American Schools of Oriental Research and the American Foundation for the Study of Man, in which more than 1,750 Greek manuscripts were microfilmed and placed at the disposal of interested scholars.

The study of the melismatic repertory developed greatly after the appearance in 1956 of Volume IV of *La Série principale* of *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, the magnificent *Psaltikon (Contacarium Ashburnhamense)* of the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence, written at Grottaferrata in the year 1289, and of Dr. Wellesz's definitive paper and critical transcription of the *Akathistos Hymn* (*Mon. Mus. Byz., sér. transcripta* ix, Copenhagen 1957). Since 1960 seven scholars from different countries have published the results of their investigations into the melismatic chant, the most recent being the thesis of the young Danish scholar Christian Thodberg, *Der byzantinische Alleluiarionzyklus* (*Mon. Mus. Byz., sér. subsidia* vii, Copenhagen 1966).

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Concerning the syllabic repertory, the distinction was pointed out between the *Sticherarion*, whose melodic tradition is extraordinarily stable, and the *Hirmologion*, which developed independently and whose melodic tradition rapidly deteriorated. While the contents of the former were settled by the middle of the 11th century, those of the latter were closely connected with the development and revision of the office books. From an examination of the *Hirmologion* Professor Strunk arrived at a number of far-reaching conclusions: that the author of the texts of the *hirmoi* was not necessarily also the composer of the melodies to which they were sung; that as a general rule the texts of our *hirmoi* are of uncertain authorship and hence of uncertain date; that the same is true of their melodies; and that we have no real way of knowing whether any of our sets or sequences are made up of *hirmoi* originally designed to follow one another.

The third part of the main paper discussed the comparative study of Eastern and Western chants. While for the syllabic repertory further research calls for close collaboration between the musicologist and the philologist, in this comparative field the "considerable interdisciplinary teamwork" of musicologists and experts in comparative liturgical history is essential. Despite a number of studies "we know no more about the relation of the Western neumes to the Eastern than we did sixty years ago, unless it is that the problem is more complicated than we at first supposed." A considerable advance in the comparative study of the two Christian chants was made by Wellesz's *Eastern Elements in Western Chant* (*Mon. Mus. Byz.*, sér. subsidia ii, Copenhagen 1947). More recently this field has benefited greatly from the important contributions of Michel Huglo (Paris), who has traced a number of Greek melodies in various Western hymns.

Among new publications on various aspects of Byzantine music, two further editions appeared within the *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae* series in 1966. One is the useful large palaeographical atlas *Specimina Notationum Antiquiorum* (sér. principale vii) prepared and introduced by O. Strunk, containing nearly two hundred reproductions from more than twenty libraries together with an instructive study of the so-called Coislin stage of Byzantine notation. The other publication is the thesis of the secretary of *Monumenta Musica Byzantinae*, Jørgen Raasted, *Intonation Formulas and Modal Signatures in Byzantine Musical Manuscripts* (sér. subsidia vii).

The first supplementary paper was given by Professor Giuseppe Schiro (Rome) on "Problemi hirmologhici." Professor Schiro discussed the contents of the *Hirmologion*, arrangements of the *Kanons*, and their authors. The other supplementary paper by Michel Huglo on "Relations musicales entre Byzance et l'Occident" was divided into two parts: (a) pieces transmitted in Greek by Western manuscripts and (b) Latin pieces translated from Greek. Huglo lists places in the West where until the 12th century a number of texts translated from the Greek were sung, viz., in Ravenna, in Benevento, in Rome, and also at St. Denis in France.

In the first category, i.e., pieces transmitted in Greek by Western manuscripts, Huglo quotes, among others, the following, which constitute the *Missa greca*: *Doxa en ipsistis*, *Pisteuo eis ena*, *Agios, o Amnos*, *Doxa Patri*. It appears that, generally speaking, the original melodies have been well-preserved. Of the other group, Latin pieces translated from Greek, the most important are

the antiphons *Veterem hominem* in mode seven, which gained great importance in the West while almost none at all in the East. The translation took place in 802 to satisfy a desire of Charlemagne. Another interesting discovery is the Greek acclamation *Πουα τα ετη*, whose melody served as a model for Kyrie XIV of the Vatican Gradual edition. Of this group a general conclusion allows melodic dependence on the original if the Latin text is a complete, not partial, translation of the Greek. Also, similarities are greater where a hymn was officially adopted by the West in order to imitate the Eastern rite. The Greek pieces and those translated from the Greek did not represent an exotic note in the repertory of the West but in fact bear witness to the profound cultural and spiritual unity which existed between East and West.

The other main paper, "The Influence of the Byzantine Chant on the Music of the Slavic Countries," was given by Professor Miloš Velimirović of Yale University. It was an unfortunate coincidence that at the same time another main paper, a collective work by three Soviet scholars on the related subject, "The Relations between Ancient Russia and Byzantium in the 11th and the first half of the 12th Centuries," was being delivered. This in itself would not have provoked comment had the third Soviet author, Z. V. Udalj-cova, whose contribution was concerned with Russian-Byzantine cultural relations not written about Russian church music. Mme. Udajlcova made the assertion that whereas Byzantine influence was dominant in the spheres of theology, ecclesiastical organization, and liturgy, its influence on church music was limited. Paraphrasing some Russian musicologists, she stressed that the *melody* of the Russian Znamenny Chant differed from the Byzantine, that it was in many ways original, that for its tunes it drew on the precious treasury of folk, even pagan, Slavic *melos*. Moreover, the author stated that the comparison of the (Russian) *kriuki* and *kondakarian* notations with the Greek notation "shows" that both Russian systems were "original aspects of the Russian notation." Since these statements represented a completely opposite position to that taken in the musicological section, the musicologists expressed their dissatisfaction to the program organizers for arranging the two papers to be presented simultaneously. It is to be hoped that at future congresses and conferences not only Soviet historians, but musicologists as well, will take the opportunity to present the results of their investigations.

The study of Byzantine music obtained international recognition for the first time at the Second Congress for Byzantine Studies held in Belgrade in 1927. It was only at the Sixth Congress in Paris that the late Mme. Palikarova-Verdcil presented her conclusions about the influence of Byzantine Chant on the music of the Slavic countries. After outlining some of the characteristics of Byzantine music, Professor Velimirović went on to discuss the corresponding features of Slavic Chant and their relation to Byzantine originals. The comparison of two Slavic versions of a hymn with the Greek prototype clearly showed that the second Slavic version, a correction of the first, is much closer to the Greek original, both in number of syllables and in notational signs. There is no longer the slightest doubt that the notation of Slavic musical manuscripts is of Byzantine origin. "The honour of being the first one to say so belongs to the founder of Russian musicological studies in this field, the priest Dimitry Razumovsky, who stated this in so many words ninety-nine years ago." The first among Western scholars to study the notation in Slavic

manuscripts was H.J.W. Tillyard in his article twenty-one years ago. Professor Kenneth Levy (Princeton University) was the first in the West to start unraveling the difficult problem of the so-called *kondakarian* notation. With some additional results contributed by Constantine Floros (Hamburg), "tentative counterpoint transcriptions" of the *kondakarian* notation may be attempted.

Next were discussed notational correspondences in Byzantine and Slavic manuscripts and the important findings of Professor Strunk. The speaker came to the conclusion that it is now possible, by means of identical melodic formulæ in both versions, to obtain partial transcriptions of some segments of the chant. Furthermore, with a "vocabulary of formulæ" it may eventually be possible to transcribe parts of individual chants in Slavic manuscripts for which no Byzantine counterpart is known to exist.

A considerable contribution to further research is made by Professor Velimirović's revealing analysis of two hymns, *Stichera*, in honor of the first martyrs of the Russian Orthodox Church, SS. Boris and Gleb (11th century). Part of the hymns in the notations of seven Slavic and four Byzantine music manuscripts from different countries are reproduced in the paper. The differences between the various versions are few, while the overall resemblance is striking. Moreover, Velimirović's conclusive discovery that the second of those hymns is not a hymn with a melody of its own but a direct borrowing of another hymn with a melody composed for a different feast is of great importance for further research in this field. Despite a certain degree of creativity among the Slavs in the 11th century (some words not found in Greek were added to the otherwise literal translations), Velimirović concludes that in musical performance the texts were adapted to Byzantine melodies. However, in the process of adaptation to the Slavic texts these Byzantine melodies retained their structural organization and their basic melodic vocabulary. In other words, Russian Chant had its beginnings in the musical practices of Byzantium in the 11th century.

The supplementary paper on the same subject ("The Influence of Byzantine Chant on the music of the Slavic countries") was given by the author of this survey. While the main paper dealt with Russian, the supplementary paper concentrated on Bulgarian and Serbian Chant for which, apart from two Bulgarian manuscripts, no other musical document from the earlier period has been preserved. A new theory was advanced that in certain cases, notably in some Greek and Slavic hymns for the service of St. Clement of Ochrid (died July 27, 916), it seems possible to restore their melodies. The analysis of the Greek hymns has shown that some of them are in fact borrowings from, or partial or complete adaptations of, Byzantine hymns composed by earlier authors for other saints. These hymns occur in other manuscripts with neumes; the possibility therefore presents itself that their tunes also might have been taken over in the service of St. Clement of Ochrid. Moreover, the South Slavonic translations follow the Greek word order, grammatical construction, division into phrases, number of syllables, and accents. By finding the Greek prototypes with neumes, upon which other Greek hymns and their Slavonic translations for the service of St. Clement of Ochrid (without neumes) were adapted, and by superimposing the transcribed melodies onto the corresponding texts, it is hoped that the musical restoration may be achieved. In

this way we may be on the road to restoring the chant for which no other contemporary musical evidence is available. A number of hymns, and indeed whole services, for Slavic, Bulgarian, and Serbian saints offer promising material for such an investigation.

Of the nine communications planned, only six were given due to the inability of three authors to attend. Markos Dragoumis (Athens) spoke on the music of the Greeks on Corsica. The musical director of the monastery of Grottaferrata, Dom Bartolomeo di Salvo, discussed the various problems of the historical development, authorship, and the contents of the *Oktoechos*. The Reverend Nilo Somma, also of Grottaferrata, devoted his paper to the iambic *Kanons* of Christmas, Epiphany, and Pentecost, while Leonardo Cali (Rome) examined another type of liturgical hymn, the *Hypakoai*.

Dr. Jørgen Raasted (Roskilde) read an interesting paper on the so-called *Theta* notation. The sign *Theta* appears above some words in non-music manuscripts and perhaps suggests a melodic phrase. Raasted also reported on his recent discovery of some other signs appearing in a non-music manuscript in the British Museum which enlarge on the number and system of signs which he proposes to call *Theta* notation.

A demonstration of neo-Byzantine music was given by Mr. G. Araouzos and six singers of the London Greek Church of St. Nicholas. The program consisted of a number of liturgical hymns which were sung to the drone, the *ison*. Another opportunity to hear appropriate music was provided by a recital of Byzantine and Slavic music given in the Cathedral of Oxford by a choir consisting of some twenty-five singers belonging to seven nationalities. The program here contained Byzantine chants and harmonized hymns of the Russian, Bulgarian, and Serbian Orthodox Churches.

During the Congress a new series, *Studies in Eastern Chant*, to be published by the Oxford University Press, was inaugurated. The first volume, edited by Miloš Velimirović, was offered as a tribute to the pioneering scholarship of H.J.W. Tillyard and Egon Wellesz on the occasions of their respective eightieth birthdays.

The fourteenth International Congress of Byzantine Studies will be held in 1971 in Bucharest, Rumania.