

nel duecento e nel primo trecento e la sua evoluzione tecnica. Charles Verlinden (of the Belgian Academy in Rome): *Venezia e il commercio degli schiavi provenienti dalle coste orientali del Mediterraneo.*

The conference organized an excursion to the small island of Torcello on the afternoon of Sunday 2nd June. Here the members of the conference had the opportunity to see the Cathedral church of S. Maria (of the seventh century), which is considered as one of the most beautiful monuments of Veneto-Byzantine art on the Adriatic. They also visited the octagonal church of S. Fosca and the small Museum. On the evening of the 4th June a reception was given at the Sala Presidenza of the Cini Foundation in honour of the conference members.

The conference closed at midday on the 5th June. Recommendations were made and recorded, and among them was the recommendation made by the Greek academician G. Nova that the Cini Centre for Education and Culture should undertake the organization of a conference in 1971 on the occasion of the four hundredth anniversary of the battle of Lepanto (1571).

The papers read at the conference will be published shortly in a series of volumes.

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TWO CONGRESSES AT VENICE ON CARDINAL BESSARION (May 29th - June 1st. 1968)

It is now five hundred years since the foundation of the rich Library of Saint Mark in Venice. This Library owes its beginning, as is well known, to the generous gift made to the Serenissima in 1468 by the great Greek humanist of Trebizond Bessarion (1400-1472), who first was bishop of Nicaea, then cardinal in Italy, and who very nearly became Pope. That gift consisted of a collection, unique in this period, of manuscripts *utriusque linguae*, which Bessarion had assembled with great effort and at huge expense. The collection contained 482 Greek and 264 Latin manuscripts and remained the basic and most valuable part of the Marcian's possessions throughout the Library's long history. The Italian authorities celebrated the Quincentenary of this Great Venetian institution at the end of May, and the celebrations were arranged to coincide with two important conferences, the 2nd Italian Congress of Byzantine Studies (29-31 May) and the 18th Congress of the Italian National Union of Librarians (30 May-1 June). So it is not surprising that the historical personality of Bessarion overshadowed all the papers of the participants

in both conferences. This is one of the main reasons why the Greek contribution was so prominent. The members of the organising committee included a Greek scholar, M. Manoussacas, Director of the Greek Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies at Venice, and Professor of Medieval and Modern History at the University of Thessaloniki. Professor Manoussacas was also the first speaker at the opening session on May 29th.

The meeting-place for these conferences was the halls of the Giorgio Foundation, on a pleasant island in the centre of Venice. Many papers were read to the crowded auditorium by scholars from Greece, Italy and elsewhere. On the first day (May 29th) three introductory papers (*relazioni*) were presented before the organising authorities and all the delegates of both conferences in the great Hall of the Foundation. Professor Manoussacas in his paper entitled: *Bessarione e i suoi sforzi per la conservazione della cultura greca e per la difesa dell'Occidente*, presented general information as well as some of his own observations on the activities of the Greek cardinal as patriot and humanist in Italy, his great attempt to initiate a crusade by European leaders against the Turks to free his fatherland, his contribution to the spreading of Greek learning in the West, his literary achievements and his rôle as savant and humanist. The second speaker, Elpidio Mioni, Professor at Padua University, on the subject: *Bessarione ricercatore di codici e filologo*, gave detailed information on codices which once belonged to Bessarion and are now in various Italian libraries. Finally Tullia Gasparini-Leporace, Director of the Marcian Library: *La libreria del Bessarione nella casa del cardinale ai SS Apostoli in Roma*, discussed the foundation and development of the Greek humanist's personal library at Rome. In the afternoon there were further papers (*comunicazioni*) — from the well-known Byzantinist and Professor at the Catholic University of Milan, Agostino Pertusi: *Il pensiero politico del card. Bessarione e i suoi rapporti con il pensiero di Giorgio Gemisto Pletone*, — the Professor of Modern Greek Studies at the University of Padua Filippo Maria Pontani: *Epicedi inediti del Bessarione*, — Z. Kadar from Hungary: *Le illustrazioni d'oggetti naturali dello pseudo-Opiano contenuto in un codice bessarioneo*, — the Italian Byzantinist Enrica Follieri: *Il nome del Bessarione*, — and the former Professor at Leyden University and Director of the Greek Institute of Venice (1955-1966) Sophia Antoniadis: *Della condotta e dell'attività del Cardinale Bessarione*, who sought psychological explanations for all the Greek scholar's career. The following morning there were two more *relazioni*, one from the well-known historian of the Council of Florence Father Joseph Gill, S. J.: *Oriente e Occidente nell'epoca del Bessarione—Theologia e religione*, the other by the Professor of Athens University Nicholas Tomada-

kis: *Bessarione: l'uomo religioso e il pensatore*, who introduced his own original views about Bessarion as a man of religion and an intellectual—views somewhat different from those of his Catholic audience. In the afternoon the last introductory paper was presented by the Yugoslav Professor S. Radojčić: *La pittura bizantina nella prima metà del quattrocento*, and three more papers (*comunicazioni*)—by the Professor at Trieste University Marcello Gigante: *Bessarione lettore*, — by S. Belandrinello: *I testi bessarionei della metafisica di Aristotele* and — by Dr. Th. Vlachos from Kologne: *Bessarion als päpstlicher Legat in Venedig im Jahre 1463*.

On May 31st there was a celebration in the fine newly-restored halls of the Marcian Library, a famous and magnificent building by Sansovino. The Director of the Library Mrs. Tullia Gasparini Leporace stressed the importance of Bessarion's gift not only for the intellectual life of Venice but also for the propagation of Greek learning throughout Italy. The Mayor of Venice and the representative of the Italian Ministry of Education made similar speeches. Next followed the inauguration of an interesting exhibition housed in some of the most imposing rooms of the Marcian building. This exhibition was centered on the Greek cardinal's gift and on the first Venetian editions of Greek books. About a hundred Greek and Latin manuscripts were put on show. A large and finely-illustrated catalogue of these manuscripts has been published containing a full description of them and many excellent plates. This catalogue was compiled by Tullia Gasparini Leporace and Elpidio Mioni and was distributed as a souvenir to the delegates.

There were also exhibited some of the most interesting Greek books printed at Venice in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, such as the first Aldine editions of the Greek classics (*editiones principes*) as well as the first liturgical books ever printed in Venice.

Greek participation in these Congresses was considerable. The presence of Greek scholars, both those who read papers and those who merely attended the sessions (the latter included the representative of the Institute for Balkan Studies Mr. Cl. Tsourkas) gave a special atmosphere to the various meetings and underlined the interest and participation of Greek intellectual circles in Bessarion's personality. Mention must also be made of the presence at the two conferences of the Greek Institute at Venice, which, represented both by its Director and its resident and visiting scholars, contributed as much as possible to their success.