

VENICE AND THE EAST UP TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF VENETIAN CIVILIZATION

The Conference on *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV* was held with great success from 1st to 5th June, 1968, on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice. It was organized by the Centre for Education and Culture of the Giorgio Cini Foundation with the collaboration of the foundation's four scientific Institutes, namely, The Institute for the History of Art, The Institute for the History of the Society and State of Venice, The Institute of Music, Literature and Theatre, and the Institute "Venice and the East." The announcement that the conference would take place was made as far back as 1963.¹ Scholars and research students from both Eastern and Western countries were invited to it and contributed reports and studies. They had the opportunity of expounding problems relating to the historical, legal, economic, social, religious, artistic, and cultural relations between Venice and peoples of the East, in particular the peoples of the Balkan peninsula.

From the eleventh century onwards Venice was increasingly expanding her influence along the Dalmatian coast. After 1204 she became growingly predominant as a commercial power, and conquered, ruled and settled for many years particularly in the area of the Greek islands. She also advanced systematically up towards the Black Sea and into Rumanian and Bulgarian territories. These developments led to the movement of ideas and in general to the mutual influence of cultural patterns. They have excited the interest of innumerable scholars and were considered worth examining at this international conference.

It seems from the program that more than five hundred people were planning to attend the conference although only about half of this number eventually participated. The absence of French scholars was particularly felt. They were unable to travel to Venice because of the general strike in France at the time. Some other scholars who had announced that they would read reports were not present and their absence necessitated program changes at several points.

The life and soul of the entire conference was the distinguished Professor Agostino Pertusi, who was assisted by his collaborator Antonio Carile. Mr.

1. See the volume: *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento* (for the reports of the conference of the same name in 1963) a cura di Agostino Pertusi, Venezia 1966, p. XI-XII of the introduction.

Manoussos Manoussacas, Professor at the University of Thessaloniki and present Director of the Greek Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice, was a member of the honorary committee of the conference and was the only foreigner among his Italian colleagues.

The areas of research of the conference were divided into five groups, namely, History, Law and Economy, Linguistics, Literature and Music, Church History and Liturgy, and the History of Art. The inauguration of the conference in the presence of the five groups took place on the morning of Saturday 1st June. The opening address was made by Professor Italo Siciliano, the chairman of the Centre for Education and Culture of the Giorgio Cini Foundation and the participants were greeted by the Mayor of Venice and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education. They were welcomed also by Professor F. C. Lane on behalf of the foreign scholars. During the following days both morning and afternoon reports and studies were presented by Professors and research students among whom there were Greeks, Greek-Americans, Italians, French, English, Belgians, Yugoslavs, Bulgarians, Rumanians and others. It is worth mentioning the reports and studies which were more particularly concerned with the Greek area and the Balkan area in general.

Greek scholarship was represented by the Professors Nikolaos Tomadakis, Manoussos Manoussacas and M. Chatzidakis. The report of Professor Tomadakis was entitled, *La politica religiosa di Venezia a Creta verso i Cretesi Ortodossi dal XIII al XV secolo* (Professor Tomadakis has for many years been preparing an ecclesiastical history of Crete). In his report Mr. Tomadakis gave a clear and comprehensive description of the conditions imposed on Crete by the Venetians at the beginning of the thirteenth century with the surrender of one third of Cretan territory to the Latin Church, the withdrawal of the Greek Orthodox priests and the enthronement of Catholic high priests and an Archbishop. He referred to the subsequent revolutions of the Cretans for their political and religious freedom, and he stated that despite the oppressive measures of their conquerors the Cretans kept their thoughts turned towards the Oecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and preserved their Orthodox faith and their national conscience intact. He stressed the fruitful missionary work of the Cretan monk Joseph Bryennios and on the other hand the gradual decline and dissolution of the Latin Church in Crete. In conclusion he maintained that by their constant resistance the Orthodox Christians imposed the direction to be followed by Venice in religious matters.

The report made by Professor Manoussos Manoussacas, was entitled

L'isola di Creta sotto il dominio veneziano. Problemi e ricerche. In it the director of the Greek Institute in Venice referred at length to the studies on Venetian-occupied Crete, which have been published since the eighteenth century and he judged these works with keen discrimination. He divided them according to their contents into the history of the Cretan Revolutions, literature, economy, society, laws and trade, archaeology, ecclesiastical history and so on. He stressed, however, the many problems which have so far remained unsolved and the necessity for the study and the systematic publication of at least the most important documents among the vast unpublished archive material which exists in Venice (in particular the Archives of the Duke of Crete and the records of the Cretan notaries in the state archives of Venice). For this reason he considers the writing of a comprehensive study on the history of Venetian-occupied Crete to be premature until the more important unpublished material has been published.

The report of M. Chatzidakis on the history of art entitled, *Influences vénitiennes sur la peinture crétoise*, was most interesting. During this talk the audience of international scholars heard about splendid masterpieces of post-Byzantine art painted by Cretan artists. These paintings came from Mount Athos, Patmos, Crete, the Greek Institute in Venice and so on. Slides of the paintings were projected during the talk. These were successfully placed side by side with works of Venetian artists and in this way it was possible to estimate the degree of influence which Venetian art had on Cretan artists.

The historian Maria Chereti (of the Greek General State Archives) spoke on *I catastici antichi del Duca di Candia come fonti storiche*. She examined these records from the economic, social, geographical, and historical points of view and stressed their importance.

Other papers presented by Greek scholars, were: by Vassiliki Papoulia: *Venedig in welthistorischer Sicht*; by Chrysa Maltezou: *Notizie sulla guerra veneto-bizantina del 1306-1309*, and by Mr. G. Demetrokallis: *La cattedrale di Marco Sanudo nell'isola di Nasso*.

Greek-American Professors and Greek Professors in Europe spoke as follows: — G. Arnakis (of the Texas University, Austin): *Foreign Influences in Bessarion's Trebizond*. — D. J. Geanakoplos (of Yale University): *The Text of Demetrius Chalcocondyles Oration on the inauguration of Greek Studies at the University of Padua in 1463*. — P. Enepekides (of the University of Vienna): *Bessarion in Wien*.

In addition to it, Venice's relations with the Greek East were presented by many foreign speakers. The most important were: Agostino Pertusi (of the Catholic University of Milan) on: *Episodi culturali tra Venezia e il Levante nel*

medioevo. The speaker mentioned the problems and the necessity for exhaustive study of certain events relating to the cultural links between Venice and Byzantium in the eleventh and mainly in the twelfth century. — Freddy Thiriet (of the University of Strassburg) on: *Problemi dell' amministrazione veneziana nella Romania, XIV-XV sec.* Mr. Thiriet distinguished three groups of problems: The first were the problems of human relationships between the conquering Venetians and the conquered Cretans, the second, economic problems, and the third, problems concerning the communication with the colonies and their dependence on the capital. During the discussion which followed this talk Miss Sophia Antoniadou, Mr. Kl. Tsourkas and Mr. Manoussos Manoussacas put forward points of view which helped to clarify certain aspects of the problems under examination. — G. Dennis (of the University of Los Angeles) on: *Problemi storici concernenti i rapporti tra Venezia, i suoi domini diretti e le signorie feudali nelle isole greche*. The speaker referred mainly to the relevant problems concerning the Cyclades and the Peloponese in the fourteenth century. — D. Stiernon (Director of the Institut Français d'Etudes Byzantines de Paris) on: *Rapporti religiosi di Venezia con l'ortodossia bizantina*. He examined the most important stages of the ecclesiastical relations of East and West from the ninth to the fifteenth century and considered Venice to be the bridge which linked Orthodoxy with Catholicism. — B. Spuler (of the University of Hamburg) spoke on: *I cristiani orientali e le loro relazioni con i Veneziani e gli Italiani in generale durante il dominio latino nell' Oriente*. — David Jacoby (of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) on: *Les Assises de Romanie et le droit vénitien dans les colonies vénitiennes*. The speaker laid particular stress on the application of the well known feudal code of the Assises on Euboea and Corfu. — Tommaso Bertelé spoke on: *Moneta veneziana e moneta bizantina*. The speaker who is a great expert on Byzantine economics and numismatics demonstrated the differences between the Venetian and Byzantine monetary systems and the Byzantine influence on the illustrations on Venetian coins. — Manlio Cortelazzo (of the University of Padua) on: *I rapporti linguistici fra Venezia e la Grecia prima della caduta di Costantinopoli*. — Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne (of the Brussels' Academy of Archaeology) spoke on: *Monuments vénitiens de Chypre*. — Claudio Tiberi (of the University of Rome) on: *Monumenti veneziani a Creta* referred mainly to the Venetian monuments in Chanea, Crete. — A. Luttrell (of the British Academy in Rome) on: *Venezia e il Principato di Acaia: Secolo XV*. He provided much new data from unpublished material. — F. X. Leduc on the subject: *Contribution à l'étude quantitative de l'économie*

vénitienne au Moyen-Age: *Les céréales orientales dans l'économie publique de Venise aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles.*

From the representatives of the neighbouring Balkan countries, the contingent of Yugoslav scholars made a most important contribution to the conference. They dealt in particular with the various relations and the mutual influences between Venetian-occupied Dalmatia and the Serenissima Democracy of St. Mark. I cite the following papers: — Vojslav J. Djurić (of the University of Belgrade): *Influence de l'art vénitien sur la peinture murale en Dalmatie jusqu'à la fin du XV^e siècle.* — Cvito Fiscović (of the University of Spalato): *L'influenza dell' arte veneziana nella Dalmazia sulla scultura e architettura fino al secolo XV.* — Grgo Gamulin (of the University of Zagreb): *La pittura su tavole nel Tardo Medioevo sulla costa orientale dell' Adriatico.* — Barišić Krekić (of the University of Novi Sad): *Le relazioni fra Venezia, Ragusa e le popolazioni serbo-croate.* — Domenico Mandić (of the Croatian Historical Institute of Chicago): *Gregorio VII e l'occupazione veneta di Dalmazia nell'anno 1076.* — Žarko Muljačić (of the University of Zagreb): *Dalmatico, veneziano e slavo.* — Ivan Ostojić (Spalato): *Relations entre la Venise Médiévale et les monastères Bénédictins en Croatie.* — Branka Pecarski (of the University of Belgrade): *L' influenza dell' arte veneziana nella Dalmazia sulla miniatura medievale* — Kruno Prijatelj (Director of the "Galerye Umjetnina" in Spalato): *I contatti dei pittori della scuola dalmata del Quattrocento con la pittura veneziana.* — Jorio Tadić (of the University of Belgrade): *Venezia e la costa orientale dell' Adriatico fino al secolo XV.*

Rumania was represented by Serban Papacostea (of the Historical Institute N. Iorga in Bucharest), who spoke on the subject: *Rapporti tra Venezia ed i paesi romeni nel Medioevo*, and Bulgaria by Ivan Dujčev (of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) on: *Rapporti fra Venezia e la Bulgaria nel Medioevo.* Finally the albanologist Giuseppe Valentini (of the University of Palermo) referred to the relations between Albania and Venice in his paper: *I territori albanesi sotto signoria veneta.*

The following scholars spoke on subjects of a more general interest concerning the East, the Balkans and Venice. — Giuseppe Caraci (of the University of Rome): *Viaggi fra Venezia ed il Levante fino al XV secolo e relativa produzione cartografica.* — F. C. Lane (John Hopkins University, Baltimore): *I marinai veneziani nella rivoluzione nautica del medioevo.* — Roberto S. Lopez (of Hall of Graduate Studies, Yale University): *Il problema della bilancia dei pagamenti nel commercio del Levante.* — Silvio Tramontin (of the Seminario Patriarcale in Venice): *Influssi orientali nel culto dei santi a Venezia.* — Ugo Tucci (of the Archivio di Stato di Trieste): *La navigazione veneziana*

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.

University of Thessaloniki

Z. N. TSIRPANLIS

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