

THE SYRIAC MUSICAL TRADITION 17-21 MARCH 2021



CHRISTIAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF INDIA

THE SYRIAC MUSICAL TRADITION CONFERENCE, 17-21 MARCH 2021

Preliminary program

25 February 2021, subject to modification

All times are based on Geneva time (Central European Time, UTC+1). For other locations use the following conversion table:

UTC+5:30	India - Kerala	add 4h30
UTC+3:00	Iraq - Mosul	add 2h00
UTC+2:00	Lebanon – Beirut	add 1h00
UTC+1:00	Geneva, Paris (France), Germany	-
UTC	London	deduce 1h00
UTC-4:00	USA - New-York	deduce 5h00

Wednesday 17 March 2021

16h30-17h00	<p>Welcome and opening</p> <p>Philippe Dinkel, Director, <i>Geneva Haute école de musique</i>. P. Armando Pierucci, President, <i>The Laus Plena Foundation</i> Véronique Nebel, Vice-President, <i>The Laus Plena Foundation</i> Xavier Bouvier, Ethnomusicology, <i>Geneva Haute école de musique</i></p>
17h00-18h30	<p>Concert: A Panorama of Syriac Traditions</p> <p>Introductory concert streamed from Geneva St. Peter Cathedral. <i>Geneva HEM Syriac Choir</i>, directed by Jalal Polus Gajo</p>

Thursday 18 March 2021

12h00-13h20	<p>Session 1a: Sources and Development of Syriac Music Chair : Xavier Bouvier / Support : Giulia Valentini</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Sebastian Brock, Oxford, UK <i>What can the manuscripts tell us?</i></p> <p>Prof. Nida Abou Mrad, Université Antonine, Lebanon <i>La tradition musicale syriaque de la liturgie maronite en tant que dialecte musical de la langue monodique modale du Levant et de la Méditerranée.</i></p> <p>Dr. Enrico Fink, Shemah School of Jewish Studies, Florence, Italie <i>"Eloquentissima indicazione": Leo Levi and his study of the connections between the Syriac tradition and the</i></p>
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	<i>Italian Jewish system for the cantillation of the Bible.</i>
13h20-13h40	Pause
Thursday 18 March 2021 (cont.)	
13h40-15h00	<p>Session 1b Chair : Véronique Nebel / Support : Giulia Valentini</p> <p>Dr Tala Jarjour, King's College London, UK <i>Where to Go Next? Musicology meets life at a crossroads.</i></p> <p>Violaine Trentesaux Mochizuki, Marquartstein institute, Germany <i>A lifetime dedicated to research on Syriac Music: Ivar Schmutz Schwaller's Mrad-Method on the principles of composition of Syriac melodies and his transcription method.</i></p> <p>Nouri Iskandar, Former Director of the Institute for Eastern Music, Aleppo, Syria <i>« Takhshefto » in the rituals of the Syriac Orthodox Church.</i></p>
16h00-17h00	Concert: Syriac Orthodox Traditions
	Streamed from Mardin (Turkey, UTC + 3) and The Netherlands Monastic Choirs and Diocese choir.

Friday 19 March 2021

12h00-13h20	<p>Session 2a Chair : Xavier Bouvier / Support : Giulia Valentini</p> <p>Dr. Gabriel Aydin, Syriac Music Institute, USA <i>Characteristics of the Syriac tmone qintosho (eight modes) and gense (tetrachords).</i></p> <p>Prof. Dr. Elias Kesrouani, Lebanon <i>Structure de l'Octoéchos syriaque, Modes, tétracordes, théorie et pratique.</i></p> <p>Dr. Toufic Maatouk, Université Antonine, Lebanon <i>An outline of a modal grammar of the Syro-Maronite hymns of the Maronite office - Two interpretations, same tradition: Similarity and congruence</i></p>
13h20-13h40	Pause
13h40-15h00	<p>Session 2b Chair : Véronique Nebel / Support : Giulia Valentini</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Peter Jeffery, Notre Dame University, USA <i>Title to be announced.</i></p> <p>P. Fadi Lion Nissan, Iraq, Paroisse St Ephrem, Lyon, France <i>Les Chants de l'Eglise chaldéenne.</i></p> <p>Jalal Polus Gajo, Iraq, Geneva Haute école de musique</p>

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	<i>A Comparative analysis of the Mosul, Qaraqosh and Barthalla Syriac Catholic Musical Traditions for Holy Week: Interactions and Influences.</i>
16h00-17h00	Concert: Syriac Catholic Traditions and Traditions from Iraq
	Streamed from Qaraqosh (Iraq , UTC + 3) Choir directed by Fr. Duraid Barbar

Saturday 20 March 2021

12h00-13h20	Session 3a Chair : Xavier Bouvier / Support : Giulia Valentini
	Dr. Michael Henein , Egypte, St Kyrel Trust, UK <i>Interactions between the Coptic and Syriac musical traditions.</i>
	Prof. Dr. Luca Ricossa , Haute école de musique de Genève <i>Rythme et poésie. Texte et musique dans les traductions syriaques et slaves de chants byzantins.</i>
	Prof. Miled Tarabay , Université Saint Esprit de Kaslik (USEK) <i>La Musique sacrée de l'Eglise Maronite - Le chant de l'église maronite du Liban</i>
13h20-13h40	Pause
13h40-15h00	Session 3b and final discussion Chair : Véronique Nebel et Xavier Bouvier / Support : Giulia Valentini
	Dr. Joseph Palackal , Christian Musicological Society of India <i>Reviving the Sound, Sentiments, and Melodies of the Aramaic chants in India: Revisiting the Past to Redefine the Future.</i>
	Dr. Prof. Mammoottil P. George , Orthodox Theological Seminary, Sruti Liturgical Music School, Kottayam, India <i>The Influence of Syriac Music and Liturgy in the Spiritual life of west Syriac Churches in India</i>
	Final discussion
16h00-17h00	Concert: Maronite Tradition
	Streamed from Byblos (Jbeil) (Lebanon, UTC + 2) <i>Qolo Atiqa School of Music Choir.</i>

Sunday 18 March 2021

14h00-15h00	Concert: Syriac & other influences in the Coptic Tradition
	Recorded concerts by the Kyrel Trust Choir directed by Michael Henein.
15h30-16h30	Concert: Syro-Malankar Orthodox Tradition
	Recorded from Kottayam (Kerala, India, UTC + 5:30) <i>Sruti Liturgical Music School Choir.</i>



Abstracts (in alphabetical order)

Dr. Gabriel Aydin, Syriac Music Institute, USA

Session 2a

Characteristics of the Syriac tmone qinto (eight modes) and gense (tetrachords).

Friday 19, 12h00

Syriac-speaking Christians practice and preserve a chant tradition notable for its longevity as a worship form. In addition to their hymnographic and melodic beauty, what renders the hymns of Beth Gazo (The Treasury) so musicologically interesting is that this entire chant repertory is structured through the *qinto* system which, comprised of eight modes or tones, has come to be known as *tmone qinotho* (the eight-mode system). Tetrachord units known as *gense* (“genres” or “types”) are critical to the formation and identification of each *qinto*; these *gense* are constructed through pitch measurements, sets of unequal microtonal intervals.

Some musicologists have drawn close comparisons between the Syriac *qinto* music system and the Turco-Arabian *maqam* system, as well as the *Octoechos* of Byzantine music. In this paper, however, I will argue that Syriac *qinto* theory relies upon theoretical components not found outside of this genre, and that the *tmone qinotho* system therefore deserves study as a unique artistic and liturgical phenomenon. These unique musicological components include the formation of *gense*; the structure of intervals; the usage of commas; modal and tonal characteristics; patterns of melodic movement, structure, and dynamics; temporal organization; and the relation of Syriac *qinotho* to one another. This paper aims to describe the music theory underlying the *qinotho* and *gense* by drawing a comparative study between the three Syriac chant traditions—Mardin, Edessa, and Mor Gabriel—from perspectives of mode, melody, and practice. In doing so, I hope to establish the beginnings of practice-based prototypical guidelines that may accurately represent *qinto* music.

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Brock, Oxford, UK

Session 1a

What can the manuscripts tell us?

Thursday 18, 12h00

As is well known, no form of musical notation (with some very rare exceptions) was ever developed in the Syriac manuscript tradition. The paper will aim to outline what little information of a musical nature can be gleaned from the study of early manuscripts of the (sung) poems of Ephrem (d.373), and of the four main Syriac liturgical traditions, early Melkite, Syrian Orthodox and Maronite (in the West Syriac tradition), and the East Syriac tradition of the Church of the East. In the chronological sequence, I hope to cover: (1) the *qale* (melody titles) of Ephrem's poems, as evidenced in 6th/7th-century manuscripts; (2) the 7th-century Syriac translation of the Greek hymns of Severus of Antioch and others; (3) the early evidence for the eight tone system in the (Syriac) Melkite and Syrian Orthodox traditions, including the rare cases of some form of musical notation; and (4) the Syrian Orthodox Beth Gazo from manuscript to print.



Dr. Enrico Fink, Shemah School of Jewish Studies, Florence, Italie

Session 1a

“Eloquentissima indicazione”: Leo Levi and his study of the connections between the Syriac tradition and the Italian Jewish system for the cantillation of the Bible.

Thursday 18, 12h00

The work of Italo-Israeli ethnomusicologist Leo Levi (1911-1982) has been studied mostly for his pioneering fieldwork on Italian Jewish musical traditions. But his research also included Oriental Christian traditions, that enabled him to draw conclusions and formulate hypothesis on early liturgical Christian and Jewish chant, in particular drawing on comparisons between the neumatic system of the Italian Jewish rite, and Syriac and Samaritan systems. Such work is yet to be fully appreciated, but can offer useful insights in the context of contemporary research and the study of early systems of Bible cantillation. This talk will refer to Levi's research on Syriac Christian liturgical traditions, his exploration of the systems of musical reading of sacred texts in the various traditions of Italian Jews and his comparative analysis of Christian Oriental and Jewish Oriental liturgies, with a discussion of his findings and a focus on possible future developments of his studies.

Jalal Polus Gajo, Iraq, Geneva Haute école de musique

Session 2b

A Comparative analysis of the Mosul, Quaraqush and Barthalla Syriac Catholic Musical Traditions for Holy Week: Interactions and Influences.

Friday 19, 13h40

Whereas so-called Syriac Western traditions (current Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Holy Land) have been the focus of many researchers and academics, the Eastern Syriac traditions of today's Iraq, are the least studied. No systematic listing of chants or transcription was ever made. I started a systematic listing, recording and transcription exercise in past years for the three Syriac Catholic sub-traditions of Iraq (Mosul, Quaraqush, Barthalla), supported also by recordings made in the 1960-1970s. A first outcome of the results of this research will be presented with focus on the liturgy and chants of Holy Week.

I will present the context of the three sub-traditions, describe in a comparative approach the musical particularities of the Eastern Syriac Holy Week liturgy, the type of chants and melodies used by the three traditions, their modes, rhythm, structure and other characteristics, including some of the symbolisms and spiritual expression which the music carries.

I will also attempt to evidence the interactions with the Chaldean tradition of Iraq, and the differences found with the liturgy, melodies and chants of the Syriac Catholic Western tradition of Holy Week.



Dr. Prof. Mammoottil P. George, Orthodox Theological Seminary,
Sruti Liturgical Music School, Kottayam, India

Session 3b
Saturday 20, 13h40

The Influence of Syriac Music and Liturgy in the Spiritual life of west Syriac Churches in India

Part1 - Kerala, the cradle of Christianity in India./ The early worship of the St. Thomas Christians or Malankara Nazranis./ The Persian expedition of Christians under the leadership of Thoma of Cana with Bishop Jacob during the persecution of Saphor II. / The settlement in Kerala coast and the beginning of worship in the East Syriac language (343 A.D)./ The arrival of Portuguese under the leadership of Vasco da Gama in 16th century and the beginning of Roman Catholics in India. / Latinization and the decline of Syriac worship.

Part II -The Arrival of Bishops from Persia and beginning of West Syriac Liturgy in India (17th Century). Arrival of Dutch and British regime in India./ Fight against Anglican or Protestant faith against West Syriac worship./ Inviting Patriarch H.H. Ignatius Peter III to excommunicate the Protestant- Syrian Bishop, Mar Athanasius./ Arrival Patriarch Peter III and the official beginning of west Syriac liturgy in India (1885)./ Abolishing the East Syriac texts and the printing of west Syriac texts, beginning of the use of Octoechoes (Beth Gazo) through Seminaries and Malphanate Schools./ Syriac became the official liturgical language In the West Syrian Churches (Five Churches follows the west Syriac tradition).

Part III - The characteristics of West Syriac Music./The translation of Liturgical texts to Indian languages after 1950s and vast participation of laity rather than years before./ Feasts and sacraments in the spiritual life of Syrian Christians in India (The role of Seminaries and Monasteries). Why the Churches in India preserves the West Syriac Liturgy and music rather than the classical Indian Music.

Dr. Michael Henein, Egypte, St Kyrel Trust, UK

Session 3a
Saturday 20, 12h00

Interactions between the Coptic and Syriac musical traditions.

The antique Mesopotamian and Egyptian musical traditions starting from 5000-3000 B.C. were deemed to be developing culturally independently but with frequent exchanges between them. The Mesopotamian musical notation was found to have been used also in Egypt, which had its own notation system.

With the raise of the Christian faith, especially in the first centuries, the Syriac Church of the Patriarchate of Antioch and the Coptic Church of the Patriarchate of Alexandria were in close contact, and they remained in communion after the Council of Chalcedon, sharing and exchanging especially on the level of monasticism and theological colleges, as well as interactions among the respective Patriarchs. Syriac monasticism was practised also in Egypt. In the monastery of Deir-El-Syriani, the double Syriac and Coptic rite was practised by two monk communities sharing the same monastery.

From a musical point of view, little is known the interaction of the two Churches, but we find affiliations in the way the music is structured and composed, and in the spirit and purpose of sacred chant, as well as the way it was and is practised. The Copts did not adopt the Octoechos system. Recently, attempts have been made to join together in praise, and plans are under way for a solid collaboration.



Nouri Iskandar, Former Director of the Institute for Eastern Music, Aleppo, Syria

Session 1b

« *Takhshefto* » in the rituals of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

Thursday 18, 13h40

Our subject is about the « *Takhshefto* » chants in the rituals of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

Mar Rabula was born ca. 350 AD in Kenneschrin, near Aleppo, and served as Archbishop of Edessa from 411 to 435 AD. He was the one who wrote and compiled the first « *Takhshefto* » chants in Syriac, and created the rituals of the Church dedicated to the Feast of the Virgin Mary and the Saints, some of which are about repentance and death.

Patriarch Ephrem I Barsoum (1887-1957), the author of many scholarly works, says in his book « *Lulu Al-Manthoor* » (History of Syriac sciences and literature) that the « *Takhshefto* » was composed and written by Mar Rabula and other Church fathers, including Marutha of Tagrit (628-649).

We find « *Takhshefto* » chants of two types. The first type, « *Takhshefto gnize* », is dedicated to questions of life after death, such as judgement, the kingdom of heaven and the Saints. Eleven « *Takhshefto gnize* » chants are known to us, with one melody known for them respectively in the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and 8th mode, and 4 melodies known in the seventh mode (more may exist). The second type, « *Takhshefto Rabuloyto* », deals with topics such as feasts, Saints and repentance; Thirty-six such « *Takhshefto Rabuloyto* » are known to us. Many of the « *Takhshefto* » supplications have been lost with the passage of time.

We will review and analyse four « *Takheftos* » and evidence their main characteristics, typical structure and contents, and what this tells us about the principles that the Fathers adopted when composing the Syriac chants.

Dr. Tala Jarjour, King's College London, UK

Session 1b

Where to Go Next? Musicology meets life at a crossroads.

Thursday 18, 13h40

The history of the Syriac-speaking church is in many ways a story of displacement, disruption and survival; so is the story of its legacy, and people. In this paper I will use examples, in the form of narrative and snapshots from contemporary life, to demonstrate that the methods and theories used in studying Syriac chant have a similar history to that of its church. My aim is threefold: 1) to shed light on existing lacunae in commonly read musicological scholarship on the subject, 2) to highlight the importance of interdisciplinary research in understanding Syriac chant, and 3) to exemplify potential connections and disruptions in the process, with a view to the future. The overarching purpose of my paper, as it is particularly intended for this unique conference, is to offer a point of view on issues and questions which are most needed and most relevant to research on Syriac chant at the present moment in time. The implications of this paper are relevant to all varieties of Christian chant connected to the Syriac-speaking church, as well as to neighbouring chant traditions and other religious musical traditions with which the Syriac church has (or has had) close contact. The propositions of this paper would thus impact on perceptions of historical as well as contemporary literature on religious music in and from the Middle East. Equally, this paper's propositions have wider implications on understanding the shifting and migratory cultural contexts in which these musical traditions circulate today.



Prof. Dr. Peter Jeffery, Notre Dame University, USA

Session 2b

Title to be announced.

Friday 19, 13h40

Prof. Dr. Elias Kesrouani, Lebanon

Session 2a

Structure de l'Octoëchos syriaque, Modes, tétracordes, théorie et pratique.

Friday 19, 12h00

Pour formuler la description du système des huit modes de l'Octoïchos, les malfonés, savants de l'Église Syriacque, tel Bar Hebraeus, Ignatios Ya'qub III et autres, convergèrent leurs efforts et proposèrent les définitions suivantes : Le chaud, le froid, l'humide, le sec, le fortifiant, le délectant, l'attristant, l'abattant, etc.. Que signifieraient pour un musicien ou un musicologue des modes « chaud, froid ou sec... »? Comment peuvent-ils être traduits en échelles musicales et quelles pourraient être les fonctions des degrés au sein de ces échelles afin d'identifier les modes, distincts les uns des autres ? Nous avons jeté notre dévolu sur cette définition schématique et agrémentée pour restituer à l'Octoïchos syriaque son langage musicologique. Nous appliquerons une méthodologie systématique établie sur une analyse interne comparative, déductive et statistique de l'entité du Thesaurus syriaque dit Beth-Gazo, dont le nombre de mélodies syriaques dites (Qole), qui serait d'environ mille. Avons-nous été en mesure de formuler une théorie qui puisse expliquer les huit qole syriaques (huit modes)? Quels en ont été la procédure et le résultat ? Ce sont ces problématiques qui feront le sujet de notre intervention.

Dr. Toufic Maatouk, Université Antonine, Lebanon

Session 2a

*An outline of a modal grammar of the Syro-Maronite hymns of the Maronite office -
Two interpretations, same tradition: Similarity and congruence*

Friday 19, 12h00

This presentation offers a grammatical, generative-transformational musical approach to the traditional monophonic modal collection of the Syriac hymns of the Maronite Office. This research raises the issue of determining the process of the compositional elaboration of the typical melodies of the model stanzas of these hymns, and sets the hypothesis of a musical transformational grammar that would underpin this elaboration.

In this perspective, the gathering of the body of the melodic modes constitutes a transmodal language. By combining itself to the rhythmic hymns system, this melodic language acquires a finite group of syntagmatic rules, transformational and morphophonological, that explain the generating of all the monodies of this tradition and nothing but these monodies.

This hypothesis fits in the semiotic modal theory, elaborated by Nidaa Abou Mrad, in the wake of the Chomskyan grammars, of the Arabic theory of modal arborescence, of the Schenkerian analysis and of the theory of harmonic vectors of Nicolas Meeùs. It acquires a process of analytic reduction of the monophonic pitches, in terms of distinctive modal cores (with a root of thirds), which in turn gives way to vectorial reductions allowing a transformational grammatical rewriting of the monody.



This procedure of analysis and of modeling is applied to a recorded sample of typical melodies of the collection of hymns being studied, following two traditions of the Antonine Maronite order: The first tradition (of reference) is based on the interpretation of a traditional monastic precentor, Father Maroun Mrad (1913-2009). The second one is based on the interpretation of the same hymns by another Lebanese Antonine emeritus Eparch, Simon Attallah (Born in 1937). These two traditions are in the same time compared to the transcription of Dom Jean Parisot (1861-1923).

Prof. Nida Abou Mrad, Université Antonine, Lebanon

Session 1a

La tradition musicale syriaque de la liturgie maronite en tant que dialecte musical de la langue monodique modale du Levant et de la Méditerranée.

Thursday 18, 12h00

Cette présentation propose une approche musicologique analytique comparative de la tradition musicale syriaque de la liturgie maronite avec d'autres traditions musicales monodiques modales anciennes et/ou vivantes du Levant et de la Méditerranée.

Elle s'appuie à la fois sur une lecture intégrative des données historiques et anthropologiques et sur la théorie sémiotique modale pour décrire cette tradition en tant que dialecte musical particulier relevant de la langue musicale monodique modale commune de cette aire géographique qui s'étend de l'Asie occidentale à l'Europe médiévale, ce système modal matriciel constituant la lingua franca musicale du territoire (au sens deleuzien) originaire des religions abrahamiques.

Elle propose une réécriture morphophonologique rythmico-mélodique et une réécriture syntaxique modale transformationnelles qui met en exergue des règles grammaticales génératives musicales communes, sous-jacentes aux énoncés musicaux de ces différentes traditions, les différences étant inhérentes principalement de la surface rythmique des monodies, qui est tributaire des spécificités métriques des langues des textes chantés en même temps que des schèmes esthétiques (notamment rituels) contextuels.

P. Fadi Lion Nissan, Iraq, Paroisse St Ephrem, Lyon, France

Session 2b

Les Chants de l'Église chaldéenne.

Friday 19, 13h40

Ma présentation est un témoignage de ce que je connais et chante dans l'Église chaldéenne depuis mon jeune âge jusqu'à aujourd'hui ; C'est donc mon expérience vécue avec notre rite, aujourd'hui, tel que reçu de mes pères en ce qui concerne les chants dans le déroulement dans la liturgie.

J'aborde quatre thèmes : 1) une présentation brève du contexte historique de l'église chaldéenne; 2) les caractéristiques générales des chants de l'Église chaldéenne; 3) les formes de ces chants ; 4) leur place dans notre vie comme croyants et fidèles.



Dr. Joseph Palackal, Christian Musicological Society of India

Session 3b

Reviving the Sound, Sentiments, and Melodies of the Aramaic chants in India:

Saturday 20, 13h40

Revisiting the Past to Redefine the Future.

The generation that lived through the transition of liturgy from Syriac (Aramaic) to the vernacular in the 1960s in the Syro Malabar Church in India, continues to own an extensive memory base of sounds, melodies, and meanings and collective memories of the Syriac chants; these were once significant markers of identity of the St. Thomas Christians, also known as Syriac Christians. While many of the chant texts are available in books and manuscripts, the melodies and their specific sonorities, which were mostly transmitted orally, are gradually fading from the memories of the transitional generation. This generation is the last link to a unique legacy of the linguistic and musical traditions that came about through cultural interaction between India and West Asia, starting from the early Christian era. The interactions between the St. Thomas Christians and the Portuguese missionaries in the sixteenth century led to the creation of a vast repertoire of the Syriac translation of Latin chants. The film presents excerpts from the recent attempts to revive the memories and melodies and transfer them to the younger generation of the Syro Malabar Catholics in India, and the USA. The current political upheavals in the Middle East, which is the primary source of the Syriac heritage in India, are adversely affecting the preservation of these cultural treasures of humanity. Hence the relevance of the Aramaic Project in India. The film will also draw attention to the endangered linguistic and musical treasures that deserve immediate scholarly attention.

Prof. Miled Tarabay, Université Saint Esprit de Kaslik (USEK)

Session 3a

La Musique sacrée de l'Eglise Maronite - Le chant de l'église maronite du Liban

Saturday 20, 12h00

Le chant maronite est le chant sacré de l'Église antiochienne des maronites. C'est un chant syriaque provenant de l'Église d'Antioche, d'où dérive l'appellation syro-maronite. Le rite syro-antiochien devait connaître une évolution particulière et prendre une physionomie nouvelle suite au transfert de cette branche de l'Eglise syriaque, appelée maronite, dans les montagnes et les gorges du Liban provenant de la Syrie vers la fin du VII siècle. Le chant syro-maronite a pu sauvegarder sa nature authentique jusqu'à nos jours malgré les conflits continus et les diverses invasions et occupations et persécutions subies par cette terre du Liban. Comment ce chant est-il composé et quels sont ses caractéristiques ? Quelles sont les diversités musicales (de forme, de nature et d'identité) se présentant actuellement au sein de l'Église Maronite ? Nous allons tenter de répondre à ces diverses questions.



Violaine Trentesaux Mochizuki, Marquartstein institute, Germany

Session 1b

A lifetime dedicated to research on Syriac Music: Ivar Schmutz Schwaller's Mrad-Method on the principles of composition of Syriac melodies and his transcription method.

Thursday 18, 13h40

I will present and explain the result of Ivar Schmutz Schwaller's lifetime research to identify the rhythmic principles of composition of Syriac melodies, which he called the "Mrad-Method".

Ivar Schmutz Schwaller, a Swiss Catholic priest, composer and ethnomusicologist (27.9.1935-16.6.1999) studied several instruments as well as composition at the Conservatory of Fribourg and at the Musikhochschule of Cologne, and Ethnomusicology with Marius Schneider at the University of Cologne (DE). He wished to understand the principles of composition of the Syriac melodies, because he was convinced that it will help to a renewal in the composition of Christian melodies, as requested by the Second Vatican Council.

In 1972 he recorded in Lebanon and Syria as many Syriac melodies as possible from the Syriac Orthodox, Chaldean and Maronite Churches in particular. Studying especially the Maronite melodies, which for him are among the oldest, he discovered, after many years of relentless work, very precise rhythmic principles evidencing that these melodies are very carefully composed and rhythmically well-shaped. Understanding the rhythmic tools used in a melody, provides the foundation for a new approach of the composition of the melody. Ivar Schmutz Schwaller also developed principles for a precise transcription of Syriac melodies.

While the music recordings made by Ivar Schmutz-Schwaller now serve as a reference among the Maronites in Lebanon, his theory has remained largely unknown as not published until today. It will be made accessible to the lecturers of this Musicological Conference for the first time ever.

Prof. Dr. Luca Ricossa, Haute école de musique de Genève

Session 3a

Rythme et poésie. Texte et musique dans les traductions syriaques et slaves de chants byzantins.

Saturday 20, 12h00

Les Églises orientales ont de bonne heure commencé à traduire les textes liturgiques grecs dans les langues locales. Le rite byzantin de son côté a été adopté par les melkites de langue syriaque et par les slaves. Si le contenu textuel des traductions d'une part, les diverses versions musicales d'autre part, ont été parfois étudiés avec profit, il n'en va pas de même de la relation entre ces deux éléments.

Les travaux de Van Biezen, et plus tard de Arvanitis, ont démontré que les chants heirmologiques et stichérariques byzantins suivent un rythme poético-musical bien déterminé ; il devient dès lors intéressant d'étudier dans quelle mesure les traducteurs liturgiques ont essayé de le conserver.

Nous présenterons ici quelques tropaires pour une étude comparée du rythme poétique basée sur l'écriture neumatique byzantine et slave, en mettant côté à côté les textes et leur relation à la musique.