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COMMUNICATION

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF HISTORICAL SCIENCES

THE historical congress inaugurated in Rome on April 2 of the present year, and concluded on April 9, had been conceived by a committee of private citizens as early as 1901, and had been definitely announced for the spring of 1902. In fact elaborate preparations had already been made and numerous subscriptions from foreign scholars had been received, some foreign delegates from America and Australia had even set out upon their way to Rome, when in January, 1902, an announcement of the indefinite postponement of the congress was issued in consequence of grave differences of opinion which had arisen between members of the executive committee. In Italy considerable mortification was felt over what some high-minded or perhaps highly irritated individuals declared to be discreditable to the nation. To-day, however, looking back over the eight days of learned sessions and of brilliant festivities that constituted the congress of 1903, Italian and foreign delegates agree that the postponement cannot be considered other than fortunate; for it gave wider publicity to the invitations issued to scholars and time for further preparations both in organization and in the publication of works undertaken in honor of the occasion.

After the dissensions of 1902 the government took up the congress, and it was under its patronage that it was carried through. Government patronage never fails to find its critics, who charge it with fettering that which it supports, but it would be difficult to say in what way the Italian government fettered the historical congress of 1903. It should be borne in mind that education in Italy is under government control, that the universities and great libraries are government institutions, and that in consequence a considerable proportion of the Italian scholars who participate in an historical congress are, in their capacity of professors and librarians, government officials. In these conditions government patronage has only advantages to offer in such an undertaking. Certainly the congress of 1903 was organized on the broadest lines and with the fullest tolerance of opinion. The foreign delegates present numbered over 300 and the total membership of the congress reached 1,500. The liberal discount of 60 per cent. granted by the government upon railway fares within the borders of Italy greatly facilitated attendance and doubtless induced many scholars to take this opportunity of visiting the Eternal City. Of the 300 foreigners present the greater number were Germans, although England and France were also liberally represented. From the United States the Italian scholar and historian William Roscoe Thayer represented both the government, as delegate of the American

Historical Association, and Harvard University. No other American official delegates were enrolled, in fact no other Americans were present excepting three or four residents of Rome who took no active part in the congress. This fact is significant as marking the almost complete lack of intellectual intercourse between Italian and American scholars to-day, and the unmistakable lack of interest in Italian studies prevailing in the United States. In Italy, as in America and elsewhere, German thought and German methods of scientific research exercise an enormous influence, but Italian scholarship is far from servile, and, it should be unnecessary to add, the results of its researches carried on in the fields of medieval and modern history, as well as in archæology, science, and art, are of primary importance. German scholars are the first to recognize and utilize the fruits of Italian studies; Americans are too frequently content to receive them at second-hand through German channels, perhaps disguised under the German mark. With such conditions existing, it is to be regretted that the recent congress at Rome has proved a valuable opportunity neglected — excepting the earnest work of Mr. Thayer — for widening the too narrow existing channels of direct communication between scholarship of Italy and that of the United States.

The distinguished historian and publicist Senator Pasquale Villari served as President of the Congress, which was largely organized by his former pupil Professor Giacomo Gorrini, director of the archives of state of the ministry of foreign affairs, who was general secretary of the executive committee. The ministries of public instruction and of foreign affairs in 1901 together appropriated \$2,400 for the expenses of the congress. The remaining expenses were met by the enrolment fee of \$2.40 paid by each member. But if the acts of the congress are to be published as announced, it is probable that the ministries will have to make some further appropriation. The King and Queen of Italy honored the inauguration in Campidoglio with their presence, and later gave a dinner at the Quirinal to 140 of the more prominent delegates, including those who represented foreign governments. The municipality gave an elaborate reception at the Capitoline Museums, and the Minister of Public Instruction gave another reception on the Palatine. Professor Domenico Gnoli, the cultured head of the National Library “Vittorio Emanuele,” prepared and opened to the congress a splendid exhibition of maps and engravings of Rome in all ages, collected during a long term of years and including Professor Lanciani’s colossal map, *Forma Urbis Romæ*, here mounted for the first time. The Royal Academy of S. Cecilia gave an interesting choral concert in the Theatre Argentina illustrating the development of three centuries of Italian sacred music from Palestrina to Rossini. Altogether the entertainment and hospitality offered to the members of the congress was hearty and of a high order.

The congress was divided into eight sections as follows: I. Classical and Comparative Philology; II. Medieval and Modern History; III. History of Literature; IV. Archæology, Numismatics, History of Art, History of Music and the Drama; V. History of Law and of Economic

and Social Sciences ; VI. History of Geography and Historical Geography ; VII. History of Philosophy and of Religion ; VIII. History of Mathematical, Physical, and Natural Sciences and of Medicine. The sections met separately, some of them further divided into groups, and held daily sessions, nominally from 9 till 12 in the morning and from 3 till 6 in the afternoon. At the preliminary meetings the Minister of Public Instruction, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Syndic of Rome, and Theodore Mommsen were elected honorary presidents ; Adolf Harnack (Berlin), Paul Meyer (Paris), James Bryce (London), Basile Modestov (St. Petersburg), and Ludwig Pastor (Vienna) vice-presidents.

At the inauguration at Campidoglio on April 2 addresses were delivered by the Syndic of Rome, the Minister of Public Instruction, Senator Villari, and Professor Fredericq (University of Ghent). The address of Villari was an excellent sketch of the development of history in Italy in the nineteenth century, and will be printed in full in the *Nuova Antologia* of May 1.

In the regular sessions which followed, among the better-known scholars not already named who participated were : from England, Frederick Pollock, Frederic Harrison, John Mahaffy, Sir Alfred Lyall, and Oscar Browning ; from France, G. Monod, Maxime Collignon, Paul Sabatier, and G. Bonet-Maury ; from Germany, Ludwig Stein, Otto Harnack, Harry Bresslau, Otto Gierke, and Franz Buecheler ; from Italy, Alessandro d'Ancona, Domenico Comparetti, Benedetto Croce, Adolfo Venturi, Giovanni Monticolo, and Guido Mazzoni. Prominent also were Professors Petersen and Hülsen, Professor Ludwig Pastor, and Abbé Duchesne, the distinguished heads of the German, Austrian, and French historical schools in Rome, highly esteemed by Italian scholars for their earnest and thorough work, and by reason of their official positions the natural centers about which their respective countrymen at the congress could group themselves. Russia, Austria, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, several South American republics, and other countries were also represented by one or more delegates. The papers read related to a great variety of subjects, a few to subjects of too secondary and minute a character to be appropriate for a congress, but the greater number of interest, and some of the first importance. The greater proportion were delivered in Italian, but several also in French, German, English, and Latin. Of most general interest to foreigners were, perhaps, those by Professor Boni, who has charge of the excavations of the Roman Forum and of the reconstruction of the campanile of St. Marks in Venice. Numerous votes of recommendation were passed by the different sections, relating especially to coöperative bibliographical undertakings, to the publication of manuscripts, and one of special importance to the desirability of uniform legislation in different countries providing for the opening of state archives for the study of contemporary history. With reference to bibliographical works it should be said that several important indexes of Italian historical reviews and of the publications of Italian historical societies were prepared especially for

the congress, and many copies were distributed gratis to the delegates. The most animated discussion upon the votes of recommendation was that relating to the entire republication of Muratori's *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, undertaken recently by the courageous publisher Scipione Lapi, of Città di Castello, directed by the able scholar Vittorio Fiorini, and containing a brief preface by Carducci. The minister of public instruction has subsidized the work with a gift of \$400 for each of the volumes, of which several have already been published. The work is beautifully printed, and is edited by many of the best scholars in Italy. The publisher wished a vote of encouragement, but this was opposed by members of the Istituto Storico Italiano, which also receives a subsidy from the government for similar publications. The Istituto men declared that Lapi's edition would duplicate in some of its volumes works already undertaken by the Istituto, and for some of which it possessed indispensable manuscripts. An amusing feature of the animated discussion which was raised was the fact that Professor Fredericq, who is described as "having presided with singular ability," did not understand a word that was said. The discussion closed with a simple vote of "commendation for republications of Muratori."

For a summary of the proceedings of the congress in its different sections the historian may be referred to the *Rivista d'Italia* for March-April, and to a more extended article in a number of the *Archivio Storico Italiano* which has not yet been published.

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