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Dossier: 'MUSIC AND JUDAISM'

Proceedings, Colloquium Institutum Iudaicum 2003

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Editorial

The present volume opens with a ‘dossier’ which contains the papers of the colloquium “Music and Judaism” held in Brussels in November 2003. It was organised by the Institutum Iudaicum of Belgium, an inter-university working group subsidised by the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish Denominations of Belgium, with further support from the ‘Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Vlaanderen’, the ‘Fonds national de recherche scientifique’ and the ‘Communauté française de Belgique’. The organisers wish to express their sincere gratitude for this generosity.

As is usual in the Low Countries, lectures were given in the four languages that obtain: Flemish/Dutch, French, German, and English. In order to avoid linguistic multiplication, we chose English for a common language – and so does this Editorial.

The ‘dossier’ can only partially reproduce the riches the colloquium offered. Apart from some papers which could not be rendered in publishable form, a major lacuna concerns the unforgettable concert by the Danel String Quartet of Brussels. In the intimate library of the Dominicans in the Avenue de la Renaissance, they played for us the *Quartet Nr. 3 in D major*, Op. 44 nr. 1, by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) and the *Quartet Nr. 8 in C major*, Op. 66 (1959) by the Russian-Jewish composer Mieczyslaw Weinberg/Vainberg (1919-1996). – For those wishing to preserve an echo of the concert: the Mendelssohn Quartets Op. 44 nr. 1 and 2 are on a CD with the Danel: Eufoda 1355.

A large debt of honour is due to Mr. Frans Lemaire, whose vast erudition and network of relations only have made the colloquium possible, and who also took an important share in this publication. A specialist well-known among music lovers, musicians, and musicologists both in Belgium and abroad, Mr. Lemaire has written remarkable studies on the music in 20th century Russia and on the apparent links between the Jewish destiny and music. His paper on the role of the Jews in medieval Christian liturgical music and in the Lutheran Passions fits well in this journal of a theological faculty, the more so since he has also lectured on the subject on a conference in our Flemish-speaking department in 2005.

Related subjects are broached by Hans Hermann Henrix of Aachen, Germany, exploring the importance of being acquainted with Jewish

liturgy for the study of Christian liturgy, notably that of the Roman Catholic Church, and by Bert Groen of Graz, Austria, who analyses the dual role played by the people of Israel and its 'just ones' in Orthodox liturgy on the basis of his expertise in the matter.

Three further contributions discuss Jews making music. Hervé Roten of Paris sketches the lines along which the music of the Synagogue has evolved; Harry Halbreich of Brussels introduces us to two Jewish composers of the modern age; and the paper by Joseph Dorfman of Tel-Aviv, who sadly deceased in June 2006, speaks about his work as a Jewish composer who emigrated from the Sowjet Union to the State of Israel.

The first contribution in the dossier has an exemplary meaning both for history and theology. Joachim Braun deals with the question to what extent the Bible can serve as an historical source for studying Israel's musical culture in Antiquity. His answer is restrictive and reminds us that the prime source for ancient history is critical archaeology.

Otherwise, the issue brings in the harvest of fruitful thought of our colleagues. Anne Marie Reijnen offers important reflections on the profession of Jesus as Messiah in the post-Shoah era, thus felicitously complementing the inquiries into the role of the Jews in Christian liturgy and thought that were just mentioned. She gave the paper at another conference in our Faculty, held in common with the Faculty of Evangelical Theology of Heverlee, Belgium, in May 2007 under the title: "Christology in a Jewish Context".

Two public lectures pronounced at the opening of the academic years 2005 and 2006 follow. Christian Peeters, President of our Board of Administration and professor of linguistics at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, touches on a subject commonly cherished by Christian thinkers and Enlightenment thinkers since Jean-Jacques Rousseau; and Jean-Loup Seban contemplates Pierre Bayle's significance at the tercentenary of his death.

Jurjen Wiersma shares with us his reflections about a well-known but probably less practised subject: friendship; and Guy Liagre introduces the interesting topic of the distribution of the Holy Scriptures by Freemasons in the 19th century.

Finally, Christian Rouvière offers us a thoroughly researched treatise on a difficult but important subject both for Pastoral practice and for Practical Theology: the generalised anxiety disorder.

Peter Tomson,
editor in chief.