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## COPTIC MUSIC.

Professor Ernest Newlandsmith, of Mount Carmel, has recently given in Cambridge, Oxford, and London lecture-recitals on Coptic Music. He believes that, by means of the researches which he has conducted during the past few years into Coptic Music, he has found something that long antedates Christianity in Egypt, something that is, in fact, quintessentially Egyptian. He has transcribed seven manuscript volumes of the music which he heard sung to him in Egypt, and this is, he claims, of such depth and originality as may possibly supply a new idiom to Western musicians.

At the Oxford lecture-recital, which was presided over by Professor Griffiths, the Egyptologist, and was attended, among others, by Professor Einstein, Professor Lindman, Professor Zimmern, and Dr. Blackman, Mr. George Cattaul, taking the place of the Egyptian Minister, said:—

“The Egyptian Minister has asked me to convey to you his deep regret that he has been prevented at the last moment from attending this meeting, all the more because he has a great personal interest in the researches and discoveries of Professor Newlandsmith.

“It is with a real pride that all Egyptians have heard that such a musician, such a scholar and such a thinker as Ernest Newlandsmith has devoted more than three years to investigate the traditional music of the Coptic Church, and they welcome his assertion that, beneath the veneer of Arabic and Turkish influences, this music is derived, like much of the ritual of the Church itself, from existing pre-Christian worship, that is, in all probability, from the very music which was played and sung in the Ancient Pharaonic Temples. If this is so, it will of course mean, from the musical point of view, a discovery of considerable significance, as it demolishes the theory that great music is comparatively a modern art, and it would also mean that the themes which survived in the Coptic Liturgy are some of the oldest human melodies. However, such a link with the past, far from being a surprise to us, seems to come as one more proof of the fact that despite the superficial variations which occurred in the life of Egypt, its more essential traits remain unchanged, and amidst so many counteracting influences and borrowed garments, the very soul of primitive Egypt still lives in its art and music.

“This is why we feel so grateful to Friar Newlandsmith who, with the help of my distinguished countryman, Mr. Ragheb Moftah, has brought to light these essential revelations, especially as, in devoting himself to this task, he has had to give up for a time the dear hermitage of Mount Carmel, where, faithful to such great Biblical examples, he has been meditating and contemplating, far from this world of turmoil, the verities of the Divine Plan.”

Mr. Ragheb Moftah also spoke. He pointed out that in the Coptic churches the Mass was sung throughout; the priests' part in the Liturgies of Saint Cyril and of Saint Gregory was set to difficult music, while the rest was simply intoned. These two masses were used only on special occasions. On the other hand, a third Liturgy, that of Saint Basil, was in general use all the year through, and in this the priest's part was intoned like the rest. In all three, the responses for the deacons and for the congregation had the same music wherever the words were alike. The most notable music of the Coptic Church, however, was that of the hymns, and showed two principal varieties:—(1) That for hymns belonging to the Mass; this naturally varied with the occasion, as for particular feasts, or seasons, such as Lent, Advent, and so forth; and (2) that for hymns belonging to other services where there was no Mass—evening and midnight hymns, hymns for Good Friday, and so forth. Amongst the singers these hymns are known as the Coptic music, the hymns themselves being written in Coptic. Their numbers exceeded two hundred, and some were long enough to fill twelve pages of the large sheets of music.

Beside the Coptic hymns there were seven hymns known as “the Greek.” The words are Greek, though Coptic words might be substituted for the Greek. One hymn, indeed, had two alternative tunes, respectively Coptic and Greek.

Out of all of them, Mr. Moftah continued, there was only one hymn which had alternative Arabic and Coptic words, but its music was Coptic. One hymn seemed to carry a date. It was called “the hymn of the Invention of the Cross.” According to the legend, when Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, rediscovered the Cross in A.D. 326, the Emperor commanded that a special hymn should be composed. The hymn as we now found it was evidently composed of elements selected from other Coptic hymns.

Mr. Moftah then spoke of his association with Professor Newlandsmith in investigating this unwritten Coptic music, and in recording it in precise notation.