

EUSTRATIOS ARGENTI

A Study of the Greek Church
under Turkish Rule

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BY

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Eustratios Argenti
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By Ware, Kallistos
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I AM deeply grateful for the invaluable assistance which I have received from Dr. P. P. Argenti. Learning of my interest in Orthodox theology, he generously placed at my disposal all the material relating to Eustratios Argenti which he had collected, in particular microfilms and transcripts of manuscripts in Hungary, Athens, Alexandria, and elsewhere. He has offered me advice on many points of detail, and saved me from numerous mistakes.

My thanks are due to Dr. Henry Chadwick and Mr. W. Jardine Grisbrooke for their kind advice and encouragement.

The greater part of Chapter III, section (ii), originally appeared as an article in *Chrysostom*. I am grateful to the Editor for permission to reproduce it here.

The first draft of this book was written in the spring of 1960, when I was Jane Eliza Procter Visiting Fellow at Princeton Graduate College. I must express my gratitude to Princeton University for hospitality, and to the Librarian of Princeton Theological Seminary for permission to use his admirable library.

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NOTE

WHEN books appear in the bibliography, they are cited in the notes by author and title (or short title) alone; for full details of the edition consulted, see the bibliography.

In the transcription of Greek names I have tried, so far as possible, to reproduce the original spelling; but where there is an accepted English form (e.g. Cyril, Peter, Athanasius, Cerularius), it has been adopted. This involves, as I am painfully aware, a certain lack of uniformity, but it seemed on consideration the least inconvenient method.

Introduction to the 2014 Reprint Edition

I AM BOTH GRATIFIED and surprised that, fifty years after its first appearance, a proposal has been made to reissue my monograph *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule*. It is encouraging to find that there is a continuing interest in Orthodox theology during the Ottoman period, and more particularly in the contribution made by the Chiot writer Argenti. *Eustratios Argenti* was originally published in 1964 by the Clarendon Press, the academic branch of the Oxford University Press. It was then reprinted photographically in 1977 by Eastern Orthodox Books (Willits, CA), but most of this re-edition was later destroyed in a warehouse fire. In the present reprint by Wipf and Stock (Eugene, OR), the text of the 1964 publication has been left unchanged, but I have taken advantage of the opportunity to add a new introduction.

Without attempting a comprehensive overview, let me mention some of the leading studies on Greek Orthodoxy during the Turcocratia that have appeared during the past half century. To the best of my knowledge no major work relating to Argenti himself has been published since 1964. One new piece of evidence, however, has been kindly brought to my attention by Metropolitan Athenagoras (Peckstadt) of Belgium. On 16 September 1720 Argenti was admitted as a student in the University of Leiden, Holland, which was under Protestant and more particularly Calvinist auspices. His enrolment is recorded in *Album Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae MDLXXV – MDCCCLXXV* (The Hague: Martin Nijhoff, 1875), col. 869.

This fills a significant gap in our information about Argenti's studies in the West. It fits with the fact, already known to us, that in

1719 he was journeying from Venice to Innsbruck (Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, p. 45). Hitherto it was not definitely established to what university or universities he was attached. It has been speculated that he went to Halle in Saxony (*Eustratios Argenti*, p. 45), and this may well be the case, although it is not supported by any specific evidence. The *Album Studiosorum* provides us with a firm date and place, although it does not indicate how long he remained at Leiden. It is of course possible that he also pursued studies elsewhere in Western Europe.

The best general account of Greek Christianity during the Ottoman era to be published in English since the appearance of my book on Argenti is Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968): see Book II, pp. 165-412. This is still of great value. It relies, however, mainly on Western rather than Greek sources and, as its title indicates, it deals primarily with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It is for the most part a 'diplomatic' history of the Patriarchate's relations with the West, and it says relatively little about the daily life and personal spirituality of Orthodox Christians during the Turcocratia.

On the wider history of the Greek people during the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, a basic work of reference is A. E. Vachopoulos, *Ιστορία τοῦ Νεοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ*, 8 volumes (Thessaloniki, 1961-88). This has been partly translated into English: see in particular the second volume of the English version, *The Greek Nation, 1453-1669. The cultural and economic background of Modern Greek Society* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976). Regrettably the author, while undoubtedly learned, shows a lack of sympathy for the Church.

Much information on the cultural background of the eighteenth-century Greek world is shed by the writings of Paschalis M. Kitromilides: see *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the culture and political thought of south-eastern Europe*, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS 453 (Aldershot/ Burlington: Ashgate, 1994); *An Orthodox Commonwealth: Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe*, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS 891 (Aldershot/ Burlington: Ashgate, 2007); *Enlightenment and Revolution. The Making of Modern Greece* (Cambridge, MA/ London: Harvard University Press, 2013). Although referring mainly

to the period after Argenti's death, these works also shed light on the *milieu* in which Argenti himself lived and worked.

Bibliographical details about Greek theological writers in the post-Byzantine era are provided by Gerhard Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453-1821). Die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatorischen Konfessionen des Westens* (Munich: Beck, 1988). There is an updated Greek translation by Georgios D. Metallinos, *Ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ Θεολογία ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας 1453-1821. Ἡ Ὀρθοδοξία στὴ σφαῖρα ἐπιρροῆς τῶν Δυτικῶν δογμάτων μετὰ τὴ Μεταρρύθμιση* (Athens: Morphotiko Idryma Ethnikis Trapezis, 2005). On Eustratios Argenti, see in the German edition, pp. 331-5; in the Greek translation, pp. 413-18. Podskalsky's encyclopedic survey supersedes the work of Martin Jugie, of which I made use when writing my book on Argenti in the early 1960s. I wish that his *Griechische Theologie* had been available to me at that time!

Less thorough than the work of Podskalsky, yet nevertheless useful, is George A. Maloney, *A History of Orthodox Theology since 1453* (Belmont: Nordland, 1976). Also helpful are the two opening chapters of Yannis Spiteris, *La teologia ortodossa neo-greca* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 1992). There are many references to theological authors in G. P. Henderson, *The Revival of Greek Thought 1620-1830* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1970). The Orthodox Confessions of Faith from the post-Byzantine epoch – often described as the Orthodox 'symbolical books' – are conveniently collected in Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss (ed.), *Creeeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 1 (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 385-635.

The discussion of Orthodox- Catholic relations in *Eustratios Argenti*, pp. 16-33, is supplemented by my article 'Orthodox and Catholics in the seventeenth century: schism or intercommunion?', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Schism, Heresy and Religious Protest*, Papers read at the Tenth Summer Meeting and the Eleventh Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), pp. 259-76. For Catholics and Orthodox in Argenti's homeland, see Philip P. Argenti, *The Religious Minorities of Chios: Jews and Roman Catholics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), especially pp. 287-94, 359-66.

The aspect of Argenti's career that continues to attract the greatest attention is his involvement in the rebaptism controversy at Constantinople during the 1750s. On this, see Evangelos A. Skouvaras, *Στηλητευτικά Κείμενα τοῦ ΙΗ' Αἰῶνος (Κατὰ τῶν Ἀναβαπτιστῶν), Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 20 (Athens, 1967). On the activities of Auxentios of Katirli (*Eustratios Argenti*, pp. 71-72), there is an important study by Joseph Vivilakis, *Αὐξεντιανὸς Μετανοημένος [1752]* (Athens: Academy of Athens, 2010), which discusses in detail the whole dispute. For the *apologia* of Patriarch Kallinikos IV (*Eustratios Argenti*, pp. 77-78), see his lengthy (not to say interminable) poem *Τὰ κατὰ καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἐξορίαν ἐπισύμβαντα*, ed. Agamemnon Tselikas (Athens: Morphotiko Idryma Ethnikis Trapezis, 2004).

The concept of economy (*Eustratios Argenti*, pp. 83-86) is analysed at length by F. J. Thomson, 'Economy: An Examination of the Various Theories of Economy Held within the Orthodox Church, with Special Reference to the Ecumenical Recognition of the Validity of non-Orthodox Sacraments', *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 16 (1965), pp. 368-420. Briefer but more illuminating is the discussion by John H. Erickson, *The Challenge of Our Past: Studies in Orthodox Canon Law and Church History* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991), pp. 115-32. See also his essay, 'On the Cusp of Modernity: The Canonical Hermeneutic of St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite (1748-1809)', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42:1 (1998), pp. 45-66, where he calls in question the use made by Nicodemus of the distinction between 'strictness' and 'economy', which I myself follow (*Eustratios Argenti*, p. 83).

Valuable insights on the rebaptism issue can be found in Georgios D. Metallinos, *I confess One Baptism... Interpretation of Canon VII of the Second Ecumenical Council by the Kollyvades and Constantine Oikonomos*, translated by Priestmonk Seraphim (Athos: St Paul's Monastery, 1994). I have updated my own treatment of this question in my contribution to the 2009 International Medieval Congress at Leeds, 'The Rebaptism of Heretics in the Orthodox Canonical Tradition', in Andrew P. Roach and James R. Simpson (ed.), *Heresy and the Making of European Culture: Medieval and Modern Perspectives* (Farnham/ Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 31-50. See also my remarks in 'The Fifth Earl of Guilford and his Secret Conversion to the Orthodox Church', in Peter M. Doll (ed.), *Anglicanism*

and Orthodoxy: 300 Years After the 'Greek College' in Oxford (Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 289-326, especially pp. 302-9. Compare George Dion Dragas, 'The Manner of Reception of Roman Catholic Converts into the Orthodox Church with Special Reference to the Decisions of the Synods of 1484 (Constantinople), 1755 (Constantinople) and 1667 (Moscow)', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44 (1999), pp. 235-71.

Finally, following the example of Saint Augustine, I wish to conclude with a *retractatio*. In my epilogue (*Eustratios Argenti*, pp. 170-5) I fear that I was overenthusiastic in the defence of my protagonist. Comparing Argenti with two other figures from eighteenth-century Greek Orthodoxy, Saint Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain and Eugenios Bulgaris (or Vularis), I acknowledged the greater significance of Nicodemus *vis-à-vis* Argenti; and there certainly my views have not changed. But I was less than just in what I said about Bulgaris, whom I compared unfavourably with the Chiot theologian. Nicodemus and Bulgaris have both contributed positively, in their different ways, to the renewal of Orthodox thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This cannot be claimed to the same degree for Argenti. He was a loyal defender of Orthodoxy during a period of oppression and suffering for the Greek Church, and he has true value as a typical and at the same time articulate spokesman of his era. I do not regret having written about him. But, while he displays the better qualities of Greek polemical theology during the Turcocratie, he also illustrates its limitations. He was not able to transmit in its fullness the creative vision of traditional Orthodoxy.

Kallistos [Timothy] Ware
Metropolitan of Diokleia

INTRODUCTION

FOUR centuries of Turkish rule have left—for good or evil—a permanent mark upon the Greek Orthodox world. It is unfortunate that contemporary writers, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, usually pass over the Ottoman period of Orthodox history and seriously underestimate its importance. For without taking into account the way Greeks thought and felt under Turkish domination, and the way their theology developed between 1453 and 1821, it is all but impossible to understand the present condition of Greek Orthodoxy.

The subject of this book, Eustratios Argenti of Chios (*c.* 1687–*c.* 1757), is in many ways typical of the Turkish period. The most eminent Greek theologian of the eighteenth century, he displays both the limitations and (more notably) the good qualities of Orthodox religious thought at that time. His writings, like those of most Greek theologians between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, are devoted almost entirely to polemics. Today discussion between east and west is normally carried out in a different spirit and with a different emphasis, and there must be few if any who wish to revive the bitter and aggressive style of an earlier era. Yet past controversy has still its relevance, for Orthodox of the present time have by no means abandoned all that Argenti and other such authors had to say.

Argenti is chiefly remembered as the author of a long dissertation concerning the Eucharist—probably the most elaborate polemical work on this subject ever composed by an Orthodox writer. He also made a decisive contribution to the Baptism Controversy at Constantinople in the 1750s. The issue at stake in this dispute—is it necessary to baptize Latin converts anew when receiving them into the Orthodox Church?—today seems at first sight remote and academic. But it is an issue which involves fundamental questions regarding the validity of non-Orthodox sacraments and the status of other Christian Churches in Orthodox eyes; and these are questions which inevitably arise in the ‘ecumenical’ situation of the present day, whenever Orthodox and non-Orthodox encounter one another.

The one existing study of Argenti, *Βίος Εὐστρατίου Ἀργέντη τοῦ Χίου Θεολόγου*, by A. K. Sarou (Athens, 1938), is written with care and is full of detailed information; but Mrs. Sarou limits herself to biographical and bibliographical matters. The present book is somewhat wider in scope. First, an attempt is here made not only to describe Argenti's life, but to assess his achievement as a theologian and to compare his views with those of other Greek writers at this time. In the second place, I have used several of Argenti's works to which Mrs. Sarou did not have access, most notably his essay on purgatory and his three treatises on the Papacy.

I have found Martin Jugie's great work, *Theologia Dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium ab Ecclesia Catholica Dissidentium* (Paris, 1926-35), most valuable as a general guide to Greek theological writing since the fall of the Byzantine Empire; there are times, however, when it must be used with some caution. The only full-scale study of the Orthodox Church under the Turks which has so far appeared in English is T. H. Papadopoulos, *The History of the Greek Church and People under Turkish Domination* (Brussels, 1952). The author has collected much curious and interesting material, but his conclusions, particularly on ecclesiastical issues, are often open to question. Because so little has been published about Orthodoxy in the Ottoman period, I have felt it desirable to begin this book with a fairly long chapter on the general religious situation in which Argenti was brought up; and I have described in detail the relations which prevailed between Orthodox and Roman Catholics in the Turkish Empire, in order that the anti-Latin polemics of Argenti and his contemporaries may be placed in their proper historical context. In this way I hope that the present book will provide a picture not only of Eustratios Argenti himself, but also of the Greek Orthodox world as a whole during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

I

THE BACKGROUND

How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!
How is she become as a widow, she that was great among
the nations!

LAMENTATIONS i. 1.

(i) *Orthodoxy under Islam*

The long centuries of Ottoman rule were a disheartening era for the Greek nation and the Orthodox Church. Friends and visitors from the west, recalling the position once enjoyed by the Church in the Byzantine Empire, sadly compared its former greatness with its subsequent degradation. 'It doth go hugely against the grain', wrote Edward Browne on his arrival in 1677 as chaplain to the English Embassy at Constantinople, 'to see the crescent exalted everywhere, where the Cross stood so long triumphant: and I could wish this mighty tyrant turned upside down, but that 'tis only a silly wish and hath nothing in it: but really it would grieve any Christian in the world to see this grand empire in such hands as it is, and the Stately Church of Santa Sophia so abused, and a most pleasant fruitful country possessed by infidells.'¹ A century before, Martin Crusius complained: 'Alas! unhappy Greece . . . no more is any free breath drawn there; there are no schools, no learning; the ancient glories remain no longer; with difficulty they scrape together the tribute which they have to pay; in place of the saving Gospel of Christ they have the accursed Koran; where once the voice of Basils, Nazianzens, and Chrysostoms made God's oracles resound, there the prophets of Mohammed, hateful to God, now cry aloud.'²

But Crusius in his indignation exaggerates: the situation, although depressing, was never as desperate as his words suggest. Greek writers of today usually speak as if Turkish domination meant utter slavery both of soul and body; yet in fact the Turks displayed on the whole a remarkable tolerance,

¹ Letter quoted in G. Williams, *The Orthodox Church of the East in the Eighteenth Century*, p. xv.

² *Germanograecia*, p. 18.

not least in religious matters. Islam in 1453 was far more generous to its Christian subjects than Christians of western Europe were towards one another in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Since Mohammedans regard the Bible as a holy book and Jesus Christ as a prophet, the Christian religion from their point of view, although incomplete, is not entirely false, and Christians, being a 'People of the Book', are not to be treated on a level with mere pagans. They are not to be converted at the point of the sword nor persecuted, but can continue undisturbed in the exercise of their faith, so long as they remain submissive and acknowledge their subjection to the power of Islam. Such were the principles which Mohammed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, put into effect in 1453. The Orthodox Church, in other words, was allowed to survive, but its members were kept in a position of permanent inferiority, maintained like sheep or cows for the support of their Moslem masters. Turkish tolerance had thus its disadvantages: it deprived the Greeks of the more heroic ways of witnessing to their faith, while exposing them to the demoralizing effects of a steady social pressure.

The Turkish state was a theocracy, and as such admitted no distinction between religion and politics, so that if Christians were to be recognized as an independent religious faith, it was also necessary for them to be organized as an independent nation, an *imperium in imperio*. The Orthodox Church under the Turks became in this way a civil as well as a religious institution—the *Rum Millet*, the 'Roman Nation', with the Patriarch of Constantinople as both civil and religious head. On other occasions when one people has conquered another, the two have in course of time become so fused that all distinction between them is eventually lost; but on Turkish principles a difference of religion set up an absolute barrier between the conqueror and the conquered. The *Millet* system made it possible for the Greek people to endure as a distinctive unit through four centuries of alien rule; but by preserving Greek national consciousness, and yet keeping the Greeks for ever in a position of subjection, it made revolts inevitable. Hence it is that, in spite of Turkish tolerance, the story of Turkish rule is in its later stages one long chronicle of bloodshed, of patriotic uprisings followed by savage reprisals.

But if Greek Orthodoxy was enabled to survive under the Ottomans it paid a heavy price. The outward restrictions which the Turks imposed were, it is true, depressing rather than intolerable. The taxes of which Crusius complains were certainly severe, but the most objectionable item—the levy of Greek children for the Sultan's Janissary guard—fell into disuse in the early part of the seventeenth century. Christians had to wear a distinctive dress and were not allowed to serve in the army. They must not attempt to convert a Moslem to their faith, must not seduce or marry a Moslem woman, revile or show disrespect for the Prophet or the Koran, make an alliance or treaty with a nation outside Moslem territory. They were permitted to display little or no outward sign of their religion; Sir Paul Rycaut, an English resident in the Levant during the seventeenth century, speaks of:

... the Mysteries of the Altar conceal'd in secret and dark places; for such I have seen in Cities and Villages where I have travelled, rather like Vaults or Sepulchres than Churches, having their Roofs almost levelled with the Superficies of the Earth, lest the most ordinary exsurgency of structure should be accused for triumph of Religion, and to stand in competition with the lofty Spires of the *Mahometan* Moschs.¹

Such were the outward restrictions. But far more serious than this was the inner decay which the Orthodox Church suffered as a result of its relations with the Turkish government. Intrigue, simony, and corruption dominated the higher administration of the Church. Each Patriarch of Constantinople on his election required a *berat* from the Sultan, as a confirmation of his spiritual and secular authority. It quickly became the regular practice for him to pay a large fee in order to obtain this official recognition, and it was therefore in the financial interests of the

¹ *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches*, pp. 11–12. See also Thomas Smith, *An Account of the Greek Church*, p. 51: 'Christianity here, as to the exterior part of it, being reduced to the same state and condition, as it was before the times of *Constantine the Great*.' Joseph Georgirenes, Archbishop of Samos, writes in the same way: 'Nor is it expedient in that Country, that any thing which concerns the Christian Religion should make any outward appearance of Magnificence, or costliness, least it should provoke the envy and avarice of their proud Masters to Sacrilegious rapine' (*A Description of the Present State of Samos*, p. 12). Compare Peter Hammond, *The Waters of Marah*, London, 1956, pp. 21–22, on the 'secret' churches of Kastoria.

government to change the occupier of the see as frequently as possible. The Sultan had no difficulty in finding excuses for the deposition of the Patriarch. Among the Metropolitans who composed the Holy Synod, there was normally a number of parties, each anxious to secure the throne for its own candidate and willing to reward the civil authorities generously for their co-operation. The Sultan had only to encourage one of these groups in its agitation and then yield to its demands.

Patriarchs were removed and reinstated with bewildering rapidity. 'Out of 159 Patriarchs who held office between the fifteenth and the twentieth century, the Turks have on 105 occasions driven Patriarchs from their throne; there have been 27 abdications, often involuntary; 6 Patriarchs have suffered violent deaths by hanging, poisoning or drowning; and only 21 have died natural deaths while in office.'¹ In the seventy-five years between 1625 and 1700 there were fifty Patriarchs: an average of eighteen months each.² At any given moment there was usually a number of ex-Patriarchs living in exile, who were often recalled to resume office once more; some even occupied the Patriarchate on four or five distinct occasions. Many Patriarchs were men of ability and deep sincerity, but they were the victims of a system which they could do little to improve.

Western visitors were not slow to comment on the pernicious effects of the bribery and intrigue which prevailed in the Church. Sir George Wheeler says of the Patriarchs:

The Authority which they thus obtain by Simony, they maintain by Tyranny: For as soon as they are promoted, they send to all their Bishops, to contribute to the Sum they have disbursed for their Preferment, and such as deny, they depose and send others to their Charge. Again, the Bishops send to their inferiour Clergy; who are forced to do the same to the poor People, or to spare it out of their Wives and Childrens Mouths. But many times they engage for more, than they can perform; and bring the Church so much in debt to the *Turk*, that its Ruin is daily threatened thereby; which, without *God's* great Mercy uphold it, cannot long subsist.³

¹ B. J. Kidd, *The Churches of Eastern Christendom*, p. 304.

² See A. K. Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, p. 242.

³ *A Journey into Greece*, p. 195 (quoted in part by P. Sherrard, *The Greek East and the Latin West*, pp. 102-3).