


Founding fathers of Greek history-writing in early modern Constantinople

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A crucial aspect of the intellectual field shaped by religious relations and conflicts following the Reformation was the domain of historiography, which involved the writing of works that aimed at edification and at the support of the doctrinal stances of opposing ideological factions. This article examines the positioning of early modern Orthodox reflections on the past. The scholars under consideration were the first Greek-speaking writers of early modern times to delve into the uses of historical documentation and raise inquiries concerning the nature and methodology of historical knowledge. The ‘idea of history’ built on the vita activa of key actors of the Orthodox community in the Ottoman Empire, contributing to discussions on identity in a world of competing empires and churches.

Keywords: Early modern Greek scholars – ecclesiastical history – debates on history writing – Patriarchs of Jerusalem Nektarios, Dositheos, and Chrysanthos (1661 - 1731) and their intellectual circle

When, after the middle of the seventeenth century, Dositheos of Jerusalem sat down to write his monumental twelve-volume *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem*, he was faced with a world very different from that known to the Byzantine predecessors lining his bookshelves. His was an ‘age of anxiety’ following the Muslim conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the elimination of Byzantium as a state power, made all the tenser by the rise of religious disputes in Western Christianity which also came to affect the Eastern Orthodox Church. In these circumstances, many Orthodox ecclesiastical authors perceived their work – the writing of historical and theological tracts – as a *calling*, given the broader leadership duties that they had undertaken. Before assuming their duties, these men had gone through the course of higher education, while, through their encounters and mutual influences, they formed intellectual circles – networks of

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intellectual or confessional relations marked by convergences and deviations.¹ It is in the context of this discursive community² comprising interrelating authors and texts that we may approach and interpret early modern historical literature and identity emerging in an Orthodox ideological milieu which, despite its distinctive character, did not differ dramatically from Catholic and Protestant history writing.³

Intellectual vocation and leadership in the Church

Dositheos of Jerusalem (1641–1707) was a central figure of the post-Byzantine and early modern Greek intellectual tradition of Constantinople. This tradition also included Meletios Pegas (1550–1601), Nektarios of Jerusalem (Dositheos' predecessor in the patriarchal see of Jerusalem), and the sixteenth-century circle of scholars in the patriarchal court of Jeremias II of Constantinople,⁴ and was arguably initiated by Gennadios Scholarios himself, the first patriarch of the imperial capital under Ottoman rule.⁵ Dositheos, in particular, had an intellectual vocation for history writing, though his education was not that of a typical student of Scholasticism and Neo-Aristotelianism.⁶ He had not made the educational rite of passage to Padua,

1 V. Kontouma, 'Recherches sur Dosithée de Jerusalem', *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses* 124 (2017) 207–18.

2 See the approach of, most influentially, Quentin Skinner in the field of the history of political theory: R. Whatmore, *What is Intellectual History?* (Cambridge 2016) 51–4.

3 On the West, see P. Polman, *L'élément historique dans la controverse religieuse du XVI^e siècle* (Gembloux 1932); G. Spini, 'The art of history in the Italian Counter Reformation', in E. Cochrane (ed.) *The Late Italian Renaissance 1525–1630* (London 1970) 91–133; A. Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley 1990) 149–51; I. Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation (1378–1615)* (Leiden 2003); S. Bauer, 'The uses of history in religious controversies from Erasmus to Baronio. Introduction', *Renaissance Studies* 35.1 (2021) 9–23.

4 On Jeremias II, Ioannes and Theodosios Zygomalas and their contact with Western clerical scholars see D. Wendebourg, *Reformation und Orthodoxie. Der ökumenische Briefwechsel zwischen der Leitung der Württembergischen Kirche und Patriarch Jeremias II. von Konstantinopel in den Jahren 1573–1581* (Göttingen 1986) and S. 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 1968) 238–58. For biographies and the bibliography of many such figures in the context of early modern Orthodox religious dynamics see G. Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453–1821): die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatorischen Konfessionen des Westens* (Munich 1988, Greek translation, Athens 2008). For an introduction to the political and intellectual context of the early modern Orthodox Church, see N. Chryssidis, 'The world of Eastern Orthodoxy', in H. Scott (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern History* (Oxford 2015) 626–51.

5 M.-H. Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (Vers 1400 - Vers 1472): Un intellectuel Orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'Empire Byzantin* (Paris 2008), esp. 111–22, and I. K. Hassiotis, 'From the "refledging" to the "illumination of the nation". Aspects of political ideology in the Greek Church under Ottoman domination', *Balkan Studies* 40 (1999) 41–55.

6 On Neo-Aristotelian studies in Greek intellectual contexts see C. Tsourkas, *Les débuts de l'enseignement philosophique et de la libre pensée dans les Balkans. La vie et l'oeuvre de Théophile Corydalée (1570–1646)* (Thessaloniki 1967). On the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ecclesiastical history with which Dositheos'

common among Greek intellectuals from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.⁷ He was instead instructed by his superiors in the Greek ecclesiastical and monastic hierarchy: a more traditional – Constantinopolitan, so to speak – educational channel. This provoked questioning of his erudition in sophisticated Phanariot circles.⁸ However, he was acknowledged to be a charismatic leader after he ascended to the patriarchal throne of Jerusalem in the year 1669, at the age of just twenty-eight.⁹ Like Pegas, the eminent theologian, Padua alumnus, Patriarch of Alexandria, and *locum tenens* of the See of Constantinople (1597-1598), Dositheos did not remain confined to his pastoral duties in the Holy Land. Rather, he apprehended the Orthodox Commonwealth in its amplitude, as comprising several centres of political influence imbued with a shared intellectual heritage.¹⁰ At the time, that world extended from Jerusalem and the ancient Christian lands of Syria and Palestine to the promising self-governed Orthodox principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as to Moscow, the Third Rome. Constantinople, where Dositheos resided for most of his life, was still the centre of the Orthodox spiritual and political network. Its government and safeguarding required – in his view – constant energy, a tireless transition from one centre to the other, a delicate and often perilous debate with secular authorities, foreign ambassadors and leaders of other confessional communities, and an engagement with political discourse, diverse ecclesiastical disputes, and theological questions.¹¹

work conversed, see n. 3 above and A. Grafton, ‘Church history in early modern Europe’, in K. v. Liere, S. Ditchfield, and H. Louthan (eds.), *Sacred History: uses of the Christian past in the Renaissance world* (Oxford 2012) 3–25; C. Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius, Counter-Reformation historian* (South Bend, IN) 1975; K. Sarris, ‘*Ἱερά Ἱστορία*. Οι αποκλίνουσες διαδρομές ενός είδους μεταξύ Ανατολής και Δύσης. Από την *Δωδεκάβιβλο* του Δοσίθεου Ιεροσολύμων στην *Εκκλησιαστική Ἱστορία* του Μελέτιου Αθηνών’ (PhD diss. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2010) 270–85.

7 Tsourkas, *Les débuts de l’enseignement philosophique*, 81–98 and A. Karathanassis, *Η Βενετία των Ελλήνων* (Thessaloniki 2010) 467–523.

8 Dositheos had studied at the Patriarchal School of Constantinople under the Padua graduate Nikolaos Kerameas. Kerameas appears to have been a stern traditionalist who mainly wrote controversial homilies listing the errors of the Roman Church, but whose Latin was as eloquent as his native Greek: Dositheos, *Τόμος Χαράς* (Rimnic 1705) f. ιγ’ and Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, 193–4. The best work on the Great School remains the two-volume *Πατριαρχική Μεγάλη τοῦ Γένους Σχολή* by A. Gritsopoulos (Athens 1966); see too A. Camariano-Cioran, *Les Académies princières de Bucarest et de Jassy et leurs professeurs* (Thessaloniki 1974).

9 A. Palmieri, *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique* IV 1788-1800; –, *Dositeo, patriarca greco di Gerusalemme (1641–1707): Contributo alla storia della teologia greco-ortodossa nel secolo XVII* (Florence 1909); N. Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance* (Bucharest 1935) 195–200 and 201–17; Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, 282–94; K. P. Todt, ‘Dositheos II. von Jerusalem’, in C.G. and V. Conticello (eds), *La Théologie byzantine et sa tradition* II (Turnhout 2002) 659–720.

10 P.M. Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth* (Aldershot 2007) and ‘Orthodoxy and the West: Reformation to Enlightenment’, in M. Angold (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge 2006) 187–209.

11 Ch. Papadopoulos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ἱεροσολύμων* (Jerusalem 1910) 538–605. See Dositheos’ own account of his journeys in ‘Περὶ τοῦ πόσουσ τόπουσ ἐπεριπατήσαμεν ἕωσ ἄρτι’, A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus,

It is remarkable that, by the eve of the seventeenth century, the Orthodox Church had succeeded in re-establishing its power and to some extent revitalizing the Greek world. Her revitalized activity and its confrontation with Catholicism and Protestantism required the elaboration of a historiography, a convincing authoritative framework of argumentation and discourse, without which her intellectual, educational, confessional or diplomatic activity would seem weak and insubstantial.¹²

In his own historical analysis in the *Τόμος Χαράς*, one of his compilations of Byzantine theological sources and ecclesiastical history texts,¹³ Dositheos pointed to the concept of authoritative *logos*, as well as its agent, a charismatic type of personality, imbued by the Holy Ghost and praised by the Prophets.¹⁴ The agent who bears the *logos*, the word of the Lord's exhortation, is chosen to become 'shepherd and priest, guard of the Orthodox nation, accountable for its misfortunes and injuries'.¹⁵ For Dositheos, it was by means of theological discourse and argumentation that charismatic persons such as Basil of Caesarea, Cyril of Alexandria and a great number of the Latin Fathers had confronted heresies and preserved the faith. On several occasions, Dositheos identified with these revered examples.¹⁶ He regarded his era as *a time to speak* (*καιρὸς τοῦ λαλεῖν*) (Eccl. 3:7). Silence in the face of heresies, toleration of novelties: these he deemed to be concession to corruption. The assumption of critical duties became part of self-fashioning: Dositheos presents himself as responding, on behalf of the Orthodox Church, urgently and ardently, against doctrines and practices of Western Christianity.¹⁷

Ανάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας I (Petersburg 1891) 302–7, and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem (Notaras), 'Ἐπιτομὴ κεφαλαϊώδης περὶ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἐν μακαρίᾳ τῇ λήξει γενομένου ἀοιδίμου Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων Δοσιθέου', in Dositheos of Jerusalem, *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχουσάντων* (Bucharest 1715) 12–13.

12 I. Kyriakantonakis, 'Dispute and erudition. Conflicting readings on Byzantine History in early modern Greek historical literature', in O. Delouis, A. Couderc, and P. Guran (eds) *Héritages de Byzance en Europe du Sud-Est à l' époque moderne et contemporaine* (Athens 2013) 161–78.

13 Dositheos published three such compilations of theological and historical tracts by major Byzantine authors, with his own introductions and comments: *Τόμος Καταλλαγῆς* (Jassy 1692); *Τόμος Ἀγάπης* (Jassy 1698); *Τόμος Χαράς* (Rimnic 1705, repr. Thessaloniki 1985). See N. Russell, 'From the *Shield of Orthodoxy* to the *Tome of Joy*: the anti-Western stance of Dositheos of Jerusalem (1641-1707)', in G. E. Demacopoulos and A. Papanicolaou (eds), *Orthodox Constructions of the West* (New York 2013) 74–82. See also S. Garnier, 'L' édition Dosithée des Opera omnia de Symeon de Thessalonique', *Annuaire de l' École pratique des hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses* 123 (2016) 215–28. On Dositheos' major historical work, the *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχουσάντων*, see Sarris, 'Ἱερὴ Ἱστορία' and below.

14 Dositheos of Jerusalem, *Τόμος Χαράς*, f. β'.

15 *Τόμος Χαράς*, f. β'. All translations from primary sources are my own.

16 Dositheos, 'Ἱστορία τῶν αἰρέσεων Βαρλαάμ καὶ Ἀκινδύνου', *Τόμος Ἀγάπης* (Jassy 1698) 1.

17 See Russell, 'The anti-Western stance of Dositheos of Jerusalem', 71–82 and O. Olar, 'A time to speak. The printing activity of Dositheos Notaras, Patriarch of Jerusalem', *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica* 15.2 (2011) 35–45.

The spirit of confrontation was characteristic of a practical rationale: an approach to the past as a narrative bearing on the current state of affairs.¹⁸ Thus, Dositheos sketched controversies between Rome and the Orthodox Church as a reflection of Byzantine historical precedents; for instance, those of Patriarch Photios' controversy with the Roman Church.¹⁹ Among the calamities inflicted on his contemporary Orthodox, Dositheos mentioned the propaganda activities of the Jesuits and the persecution of the Greek and Serbian churches in the Hapsburg Empire. His compilations aspired to shed light on the historical background of dogmatic and ecclesiastical controversies.²⁰

For Dositheos, two types of historical narration were to be distinguished.²¹ On the one hand, there was a simplified version of history, adequate for the wider public who had received no 'academic training'.²² Such was the *Τόμος Χαράς* and the other volumes of his compilations. On the other hand, the same historical material could be treated according to a scientific methodology of proof and reasoning. Dositheos points out that he used this method extensively in his *magnum opus*, the *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem*.²³ However, the two genres converged in the objective of exhorting and enlightening the Orthodox flock.

According to Chrysanthos Notaras, the author of the introduction to *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* and his successor as Patriarch of Jerusalem, historical learning is to be seen as a form of medication, and the historian should act in a manner like that of the physician, 'seeking healing herbs, not sharp irons and cauteries'.²⁴ In a period in which the Church could not rely on secular authority (that of a confessional state) for the suppression of heresy, such objectives of the clerical leaders and scholars became even more crucial. The significance of an extended historical project such as the *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* (1247 pages in folio in the edition of 1715/? 1722) is emphasized by Chrysanthos Notaras: 'like a rock, like a pillar of the Church, Dositheos mastered the art of spiritual healing'²⁵ by confronting what he regarded as the central theme in his book and the principal historical subject in general: the longstanding division between Eastern and Western Christendom.²⁶

18 Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 136-9. 'The subordination of historical evidence to dogmatic goals' distinguished the thought of European scholars taking part in the religious disputations of the Reformation period, Bauer, 'Uses of history from Erasmus to Baronio', 16.

19 *Τόμος Χαράς*, f. β' (2).

20 *Τόμος Χαράς*, f. β'.

21 *Τόμος Χαράς*, ff. γ'-ιβ' and 103-34.

22 'Οί μη ειδότες ἐπιστημονικὴν τινὰ δύναμιν', *Τόμος Χαράς*, f. β' (2).

23 Cf. Sarris, 'Ιερή Historia', 567-89.

24 Dositheos, *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 3 (text slightly paraphrased). For Chrysanthos Notaras' edition-publication of the *Ἱστορία* (also known as *Δωδεκάβιβλος*) see Sarris, 'Ιερή Historia', 67, 86-98. The work was republished in 1982-3: Sarris, 98.

25 *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 3-4 and ff.

26 See Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, 282-94 and Russell, 'The anti-Western stance of Dositheos of Jerusalem'.

Chrysanthos of Jerusalem (family name: Notaras, ca.1660-1731) was in the first decades of the eighteenth century the most influential leader of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. His prestige stemmed from his studies and academic peregrination in Europe, and his acquaintance with modern scientific thought, but also from his stern ‘Orthodox stance’ and opposition to Catholicism. He who was on friendly terms with Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, the first Phanariote prince to rule in Moldavia and later in Wallachia, as well as with Meletios of Athens, another important Greek ecclesiastical historian and geographer, offered further insights into the benefits of history.²⁷ In the preface to a peculiar (and perhaps allegorical) book about the enslavement of China by the Mongols, he praised history and reinstated the theory of its use by the protector of the people, whom he styles the ‘political man’.²⁸ Chrysanthos was highly conscious of his vocation. In his view, human intelligence could be enriched by every discipline and science, but it was the statesman, the political and/or ecclesiastical leader who contemplated the causes of things, who benefited most from historical learning:

It is for this reason that Thucydides, the wisest of Greek historians, hailed this learning as an eternal heritage, because it always bears excellent fruits of knowledge to mankind; while Cicero described it as a lesson in time and human conduct by which one is instructed in past incidents and discerns the forthcoming and the present. Plato, whose name is considered the greatest in wisdom, wrote that history means to know the causes of each thing’s coming to life and perishing, and the reasoning according to which each one exists.²⁹

For the wise, historical reflection originates in the description of past events as ‘animate images which one can see living before one’s eyes’.³⁰ We may therefore converse with the past; it is not something mute and static. By paying tribute to Byzantine historiographers, Chrysanthos invoked the glorious ‘kings of the Romans’ who trusted in the didactic and moral benefits of historical reading and urged their offspring to study ancient narratives.³¹

27 See P. Stathes, *Χρυσάνθος Νοταράς, ένας πρόδρομος του νεοελληνικού διαφωτισμού* (Athens 1999), which sees him as a precursor of the Greek Enlightenment. On the connection between Chrysanthos and Meletios of Athens see Sarris, ‘*Ιερή Historia*’, 67–79; on Meletios of Athens and his *Ecclesiastical History*: Sarris, ‘*Ιερή Historia*’.

28 Chrysanthos Notaras, ‘*Κιτάρια Δουλεύουσα*’, *Bibliothèque grecque vulgaire*, ed. E. Legrand, III (Paris 1881) xxiv–xliv, 337; See the same arguments in [Ambrosio Marliano], *Θέατρον Πολιτικὸν μεταλωτισθὲν ἐκ τῆς λατινικῆς παρὰ τοῦ Νικολάου Μανροκορδάτου* (Leipzig 1758) 61 and P.M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution. The making of modern Greece* (Cambridge MA 2013) 32–4.

29 ‘*Κιτάρια δουλεύουσα*’, 337 (text slightly paraphrased). For early modern uses of history as a rhetorical art (*opus oratorium maximum*), according to classical authorities, particularly Cicero, see Spini, ‘The art of history in the Italian Counter Reformation’, 94–7.

30 ‘*Κιτάρια δουλεύουσα*’, 337

31 ‘*Κιτάρια δουλεύουσα*’, 338. For history as a mirror for princes and a primary discipline for young people of noble origin, see L. K. Born, ‘Introduction’ to Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince* (New York 1936) 26–43. For post-Byzantine uses of such concepts, see K.N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική*

Before Dositheos and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem were elevated to Church leadership, other prelates had distinguished themselves in theological thought and other ecclesiastical genres by responding to a similar intellectual vocation. In a biographical sketch of Meletios Pegas, published with his book *Orthodox Christian Dialogue*, late sixteenth-century readers could find an ideal type of the erudite Orthodox clergyman.³² Meletios' studies at Padua and his call to the monastic state are praised. We are informed that, just a few years after the outbreak of the Reformation, Pegas wrote a great number of scholarly treatises against both the Protestants and the Papacy. However, according to his biographer, this great work remained unpublished – except for a discourse against Judaism in Greek and Russian.³³ The same person considered the publication of books to be an undertaking of urgent significance, particularly in countries dangerously affected by 'heresy'.³⁴

This account of Meletios Pegas' work introduces its readers to the ideological orientations of ecclesiastical writing in a period of religious dispute. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation were a breakthrough in historical studies, triggering a 'discursive explosion' of books and authors, of direct and indirect dialogues, of theses and counter-theses.³⁵ Controversial tracts abounded in the Byzantine Church.³⁶ However, the emergence of 'new heresies' revitalized the historical and theological argumentation articulated by Orthodox spiritual leaders and scholars. Ecclesiastical and doctrinal affairs formed the main axis of historical narration.³⁷ Conversely, religious disputes turned historical justification into a central component of intellectual life. The richer a text was in ancient ecclesiastical evidence (writers, documents), the more it was regarded a source of truth and authority.³⁸ Citing Eusebius of Caesarea

Βιβλιοθήκη Α' (Venice 1872) ρκστ' (an exhortation of the humanist Demetrios Rhalles to his son about the benefits of studying historical texts and Byzantine genealogy) and ρλε' (a similar address to the new generation by the sixteenth-century ecclesiastical dignitary Hierax Logothetes in the preamble of his *Chronicle of the rule of the Turks*); see also below on praises for Alexandros Mavrokordatos.

32 Meletios Pegas, *Διάλογος Ὁρθόδοξος Χριστιανὸς εἰς τὴν τῶν σπουδαίων ἀφέλειαν* (Vilna 1598); Podskalksy, *Griechische Theologie*, 132.

33 *Κατὰ Ἰουδαίων* (Lviv 1593). Pegas' major anti-papal thesis had been published by his nephew Kyrillos Loukaris and his collaborator Nikodemos Metaxas: *Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἐν εἰδεί ἐπιστολῶν* (Constantinople 1628). Pegas stood by Loukaris' side, anticipating his elevation to higher ecclesiastical office: E. Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique ou Description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs au dix-septième siècle* IV (Paris 1896) 214–15.

34 Pegas, *Διάλογος*.

35 See K. Sarris, N. Pissis and M. Pechlivanos (eds), *Confessionalization and/as Knowledge Transfer in the Orthodox Church* (Wiesbaden 2021) and more generally Bauer (ed.), *The Uses of History in Religious Controversies*.

36 T. M. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists. Errors of the Latins* (Chicago 2000). For the integration of Latin ideas by Greeks in the late medieval period, see M. Hinterberger and C. Schabel (eds), *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204-1500* (Leuven 2011).

37 Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 136–8.

38 On this spirit of antiquarianism in the case of ecclesiastical history, see Momigliano (n. 37) 137, 140–1, 149–150 and Grafton, 'Church history in early modern Europe', 4.

and seeing his *History* in a seventeenth-century context were still regarded as signs of scholarly scientific expertise.³⁹

Dositheos not only cited Eusebius but followed his scheme of ecclesiastical history, beginning with the birth of Christianity in the time of Augustus and Tiberius, then coming to the age of persecution, of the apologists and the dogmatic disputes, before presenting the triumph of Constantine's conversion. He also presented the historical course of the Church over the long Byzantine and, interestingly, the Ottoman periods. His extended historical narrative aimed at refuting theories supported by Roman Catholic scholars on the grounds that they had misread or deliberately misinterpreted patristic texts – in that regard, Dositheos criticized the Counter-Reformation ecclesiastical writers Bellarmine and Baronius and the Greek Roman Catholic humanist Leon Allatios for their historical methods.⁴⁰ Alongside the Father of ecclesiastical history, Dositheos and his colleagues extensively used the (Greek) works of Church historians Sozomen, Socrates and Theodoret, but sometimes also made reference to Latin sources. For instance, Meletios of Athens begins his own *Ecclesiastical History* with a citation of Augustine of Hippo,⁴¹ whose idea of history, as the road of man's redemption from sin, was rather different from that of Eusebius.

In line with the thought of Augustine, there was also a widespread perception, according to which historical causation, political and moral decline were interpreted on the basis of theodicy, of God's intervention in history.⁴² This rather vague idea was specified in different ways, without equal weight and significance always being given to it. For example, the fall of Constantinople, the most dramatic event in this historical sequence of theodicy, was for the most part explained in terms of the steady decline of the Byzantines, brought about by the combined expansion of their Muslim and Western Christian foes.⁴³ On this exegetical basis, authors like Pegas and Dositheos focused on the opposition between the Greek Church and Western Christendom – an opposition considered more important than the polarity between Christianity and Islam.⁴⁴

39 Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 149–51.

40 See e.g. Dositheos, *Ιστορία περί τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 50, 67, 91–3, 223; Meletios, *Εκκλησιαστική Ἱστορία* (Vienna 1783) 49–55.

41 Meletios of Athens, *Εκκλησιαστική Ἱστορία*, 2 (the author includes an extensive catalogue of those who contributed to the genre), with Sarris, 'Ἱερή *Historia*', 154–87.

42 For example: Nektarios of Jerusalem, *Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἀντίρρησης* (Jassy 1682), 187–208. He responds to the claims of the Franciscan Pedro Barnuevo that the Orthodox Church had fallen from divine grace and become morally and politically bankrupt by remaining 'schismatic' and not adhering to the union of the churches agreed by the Council of Ferrara-Florence. For a discussion of these perceptions by Dositheos, see below and *Τόμος Ἀγάπης*, 23–4.

43 Nektarios of Jerusalem, *Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἀντίρρησης*, 210–11; Theodosios Zegomalas, 'Ἱστορία Πολιτικῆ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως', ed. Martin Crusius, *Turcograeciae libri octo* (Basel 1584) 3–4, 8–11; cf. *Χρονικὸν τῶν Τούρκων σουλτάνων*, ed. G. Zoras (Athens 1958).

44 This trend in Greek ecclesiastical/historical writing can be found in many Byzantine authors after Photios, see above n. 36. But anti-Muslim rhetoric and accounts of Muslim persecution of Christians were

Differences in dogma and the state of the church often became objects of direct observation in the course of foreign travel.

Trajectories of knowledge and ecclesiastical politics

The travels of ecclesiastical scholars enabled their passage to a series of different states and stages, always linked to historical and institutional archetypes. The initiation into the world of knowledge and ecclesiastical erudition could be realized in two ways: a traditional-monastic trajectory, or a ‘neo-Aristotelian’ passage to Italy, particularly to Padua. The Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople was another centre of education.

Consider the biographical sketch, published posthumously in the edition of his tract against absolute papal primacy (*Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἀντίρρησις*, Jassy 1682), of Nektarios of Jerusalem (1602–1676).⁴⁵ From Crete, where he was born and received his early education, he was admitted to a spiritual centre of Eastern monasticism, Sinai, to follow the ascetic life.⁴⁶ He probably spent his entire youth in the monastery, but at the age of forty-five took the unusual decision to attend the lectures of the controversial peripatetic philosopher Theophilos Korydalleas in Athens.⁴⁷ Later, he travelled to Moldavia and Wallachia, where he made the acquaintance of the prince Vasile Lupu, and confronted Patriarch Ioannikios of Alexandria regarding the rights of the Sinai monks to celebrate the liturgy at their dependency (*metochion*) in Egypt.⁴⁸ In the meantime, he pursued historical knowledge and on return to Sinai wrote a history of Egypt ‘ranging from the ancient kingdom to the dissolution of the Arab rule by Sultan Selim’.⁴⁹ On election as Patriarch, he resumed his journeys as far as Hungary. This prelate did not neglect his diocese’s affairs, even on retirement from the patriarchal office. As he mentions, he was induced to write his tract against papal rule

by no means absent from the Orthodox literature, e.g. Meletios Pegas cited by Ath. Komninos Ypsilantis, *Εκκλησιαστικῶν καὶ Πολιτικῶν τῶν εἰς δώδεκα τὰ μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωσιν* (Constantinople 1870) 117.

45 Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique ou Description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs au dix-septième siècle* II (Paris 1894) 404-7; Nektarios of Jerusalem, *Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἀντίρρησις*, ‘τῶν κατὰ τὸν αἰοίδιμον Ἱεροσολύμων Πατριάρχην Νεκτάριον δίηγησις’, written by Dositheos of Jerusalem, Nektarios’ successor to the patriarchal office.

46 Nektarios offered a detailed account of the history of the Sinaitic community and monastic way of life in his *Ἐπιτομὴ τῆς Ἱεροκοσμικῆς Ἱστορίας* (Venice 1729, first edition: 1688) 75–232. See also Dositheos, ‘Ἱστορία τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους Σινᾶ’, ed. A. Papadopoulos Kerameus, *Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς τοῦ Ὄρους Σινᾶ* (Petersburg 1908).

47 At that time, Korydalleas was not the incontestable authority and leading figure of the nation’s scholarly life later presented in the historiography. He had been persecuted in Constantinople and was later dethroned from the diocese of Naupaktos: see Tsourkas, *Débuts de l’enseignement philosophique*, 35–7, 99–112.

48 Nektarios, *Ἐπιτομὴ τῆς Ἱεροκοσμικῆς Ἱστορίας*, 215, 220–1.

49 Published in his *Ἐπιτομὴ*, 222–412. M. Manousakas, ‘Ἡ Ἐπιτομὴ τῆς Ἱεροκοσμικῆς Ἱστορίας τοῦ Νεκταρίου Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ αἱ πηγαὶ αὐτῆς’, *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 1 (1947) 291–332. K. Sarris, ‘Nektarios of Jerusalem’ in D. Thomas and J. Chesworth (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A bibliographical history, X Ottoman and Safavid Empires (1600–1700)*, (Leiden 2017) 308–18.

as an *ad hominem* treatise against ‘the theses presented to him’ (*πρὸς τὰς προσκομισθείσας θέσεις*) by the Franciscan Abbot of Palestine, the Spaniard Pedro Barnuevo.⁵⁰ In the same work, he also denounced the agenda and conduct of Latin friars in Jerusalem, who triggered hostility against the Orthodox Church in order to gain control of the holy shrines – a long-standing controversy about which Nektarios knew from the testimonies of his predecessors, in particular through the writings of Paisios, Theophanes III and Sophronios IV.⁵¹

Chrysanthos Notaras described the journeys that Dositheos of Jerusalem undertook while he was a deacon of Patriarch Paisios (he had been ordained in 1657 in Constantinople).⁵² He accompanied his mentor to Asia Minor, the lands of the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea, to modern-day Georgia and Armenia and every land on the Danube. As an archdeacon of Nektarios, and later as Metropolitan of Caesarea (the diocese of the Church historian Eusebius) and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos followed the itinerary from the Holy Land to Constantinople, Adrianople, and then to the Danubian principalities. He is presented by Chrysanthos as a prelate in constant motion. Travel, with its opportunity for consulting manuscripts and collecting books, became a stimulus to writing.⁵³

On the basis of his prestige in the Orthodox world, Dositheos of Jerusalem influenced spiritual affairs in Jassy and established the printing press of the Abbey of the Apostles Peter and Paul of Cetățuia, administered by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.⁵⁴ A sense of vocation pervades his publishing activity, which was set in motion by a realization about the shortage of printed books and the poor dissemination of ideas in Greece:

In the year 1680, in a course of a stay in Jassy we regretfully found out that the Moldavians had a printing press while the Greeks did not [...] thereupon God sent to us a certain Wallachian, a monk called Metrophanes, who knew the art of printing and built a printing press for us, and we provided him with consumables and paper as well as the book of Nektarios of Jerusalem *Against*

50 Nektarios, *Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἀντίρρησις*, 215. F. Gabriel, ‘Tradition Orientale et *Vera Ecclesia*: Une critique Hiérosolymitaine de la Primauté Pontificale. Nektarios, de Jassy à Londres (v. 1671–1702)’ in M. H. Blanchet and F. Gabriel (eds), *Réduire le schisme? Ecclésiologies et politiques de l’Union entre Orient et Occident, XIII–XVIII siècle*, (Paris 2013) 197–238.

51 Nektarios, *Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἀντίρρησις*, 218; cf. Gabriel, ‘Tradition Orientale et *Vera Ecclesia*’, 199–208; Papadopoulos, *Ιστορία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ἱεροσολύμων*, 487–510, 535–8.

52 Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, ‘Ἐπιτομή κεφαλαιώδης περὶ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ Δοσιθέου’, *Ιστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχουσάντων*, 12–13; see also Dositheos, ‘Περὶ τοῦ πόσου τοῦ ἐπεριπατήσαμεν ἕως ἄρτι’, 302–7.

53 A. Karathanassis, *Οἱ Ἕλληνες λόγιοι στη Βλαχία (1670–1714)* (Thessaloniki 1982) 111–14.

54 Gabriel, ‘Tradition Orientale et *Vera Ecclesia*’, 208–12 and Russell, ‘The anti-Western stance of Dositheos of Jerusalem’, 75. Also: *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* IV, 1798 and G. Zaviras, *Νέα Ἑλλάς ἢ Ἑλληνικὸν Θέατρον* (Athens 1872) 265–73.

the authority of the Pope, which was, against all odds, published and distributed free of charge.⁵⁵

In the years following that publication, Dositheos undertook to edit a great number of Byzantine theological works, which, as already mentioned, he published in three volumes printed between 1692 and 1705. His intellectual vision included the idea that the Leichoudi brothers, who were assigned to teach Greek and Latin letters, would make another journey to Moscow to establish an academy for clerical scholars.⁵⁶

Dositheos never crossed the borders of the Orthodox world, but his nephew Chrysanthos made a grand tour of the centres of Western European academic life. Recalling that period of his life, Chrysanthos stressed the ability of men of intellect – the citizens of the Republic of Letters – to overcome dogmatic divisions through debate. He referred to debates that he had in Italy, France, Germany, Poland, and above all in Paris ‘with several doctors of sacred theology, extensively, and in particular with Louis Ellies Dupin, doctor of theology at the Sorbonne, most learned in the history of ecclesiastical Synods, the Holy Fathers and the ecclesiastical historians’.⁵⁷ In the course of this journey, Chrysanthos realized that a great number of Western scholars, and almost the entire French Church, Gallican as it was, departed from the ‘vain credences and fallacy’ of the Popes, who were responsible for the secession of many great nations of the Western Church and the emergence of heresies, ‘such as those of the so-called Protestants’.⁵⁸

Another member of the Christian elite of Constantinople and one of Dositheos’ closest strategical and ideological allies was Alexandros Mavrokordatos (1636-1709). Educated in Padua and Bologna, he had studied medicine and developed a wide range of academic interests. Apart from his doctoral thesis on the circulation of the blood and his interest in Aristotelian philosophy, he wrote a sacred history of the Jews and an unpublished Roman history.⁵⁹ Moreover, he became a high official of Ottoman diplomacy. In the introduction to his *Sacred History* (a conventional work of religious history), Mavrokordatos presents a grim view of Greek intellectual life in the Ottoman territories: the travels the Greeks made for commercial reasons had insignificant educational benefits, and the nation was, for the most part, struggling for survival.⁶⁰

In that light, Mavrokordatos stated the benefits of historical knowledge: that it dissolves ‘the fog of oblivion’ and unveils past events, but also the regimes and polities

55 *Ιστορία περι τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 1236.

56 N. Chrissidis, *An Academy at the Court of the Tsars. Greek Scholars and Jesuit Education in Early Modern Russia* (DeKalb IL 2016).

57 [Chrysanthos of Jerusalem: introduction] *Ιστορία περι τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 4.

58 *Ιστορία περι τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 5.

59 Ch. Minaoglou, ‘Ο Αλέξανδρος Μαυροκορδάτος ο ἐξ ἀπορρήτων ὡς ἱστοριογράφος’, in N. Mavrelos et al. (eds) *Ο πρόμιος Διαφωτισμός στην εποχή των πρώτων Μαυροκορδάτων* (Athens 2021) 84–108.

60 Alexandros Mavrokordatos, ‘Ο τῆς συγγραφῆς σκοπός’, *Ιστορία Ἱερὰ ἦτοι τὰ Τουδαϊκὰ* (Bucharest 1716) f. H’.

by which the world is governed.⁶¹ Mavrokordatos also explained that, in his case, writing was the product of prolonged travel around Europe and beyond, as well as extensive reading of ‘most of the texts written in the European, Latin, Greek, Persian, Arabian and Turkish languages’.⁶² The axis of historical narration should not, Mavrokordatos continues, be that of a linear ecumenical chronicle, merging and confusing histories of different nations. Instead, history should be divided by historical subjects and with each nation and country treated separately and systematically if one wishes to learn ‘the authorities of each realm, their rising, conduct, change, perishing, as well as the life, fate and manners of each ruler’.⁶³

These notions and more practical orientations may be compared to Renaissance historical principles, and Mavrokordatos inaugurated a new era in the intellectual, political and ideological life of the Greek Orthodox community, which in the lifetime of his son Nikolaos coincided with the Ottoman Tulip Period.⁶⁴ In fact, many Greeks regarded Mavrokordatos as a sort of *pater patriae*, who contributed, through an indomitable *vita activa*, to the spiritual revival of his community in the late seventeenth century.⁶⁵ Some of Mavrokordatos’ works on rhetoric, grammar and philosophy were disseminated as part of the curriculum in Greek schools. On the other hand, it seems that, unlike popular chronicle writings,⁶⁶ his historical and moral treatises and letters were addressed to an emerging elite – mainly in fact members of

61 Mavrokordatos, ‘Ο τῆς συγγραφῆς σκοπός’, f. Η’.

62 Mavrokordatos, ‘Ο τῆς συγγραφῆς σκοπός’, f. Η’. The author’s views on education are reflected in his *Φροντισματά* (Vienna 1805); see Gritsopoulos, *Μεγάλη τοῦ Γένους Σχολή* I. 231–47.

63 Mavrokordatos, ‘Ο τῆς συγγραφῆς σκοπός’. To that end, he also wrote histories of the Romans (*Ρωμαϊκὰ*) and the Moesians (*Μοισικὰ*) and possibly histories of the Greeks and the Syrians, Minaoglou, 85 and D. Tzelepis, ‘Το χειρόγραφο των Ρωμαϊκῶν του Αλέξανδρου Μαυροκορδάτου στην Βιβλιοθήκη της Ρουμανικής Ακαδημίας’, *Ο πρόμιος Διαφωτισμός στην εποχή των πρώτων Μαυροκορδάτων*, 109–26.

64 E. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago 1981). J. Bouchard, ‘Nicolas Mavrokordatos et l’ époque des tulipes’, *Ο Ερανιστής* 17 (1981) 120–9.

65 *Ἱστορία Ἱερὰ*, f. Α’–Ζ’ (discourse in praise of Alexandros Mavrokordatos written by Iakovos Argeios and epigram by Hierotheos bishop of Dristra). Cf. Kitromilides, ‘Orthodox identities in a world of Ottoman power’, *Orthodox Commonwealth*, 7–11. D. Livianos, ‘Pride, prudence and the fear of God: the loyalties of Alexander and Nikolaos Mavrokordatos (1664–1730)’, *Dialogos* 7 (2000) 1–22 and the analysis by C. Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism* (Cambridge 2012) 53–6, in the context of humanist patriotism in early modern Europe.

66 Among the Greek chronicle writers of the period prior to Mavrokordatos, Hierax Logothetis (who died at the beginning of the seventeenth century) and Mattheos Kigalas (1590–1642) made extensive reference to the practical aspects of historical writing by denouncing exquisite language and rhetorical eloquence (for the purposes of history). While Hierax simply aimed to provide a summary of the Turkish advance, Kigalas entered into a major historical narration by no means lacking in historical sophistication: *Νέα Σύνομις διαφορῶν ἱστοριῶν* (Venice 1638). On this, see P.M. Kitromilides and I. Kyriakantonakis, ‘Matthaios Kigalas’, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, 200–8 and compare R. Paun, ‘Pseudo-Dorotheos of Monemvasia’, in the same volume.

his own family – who would be interested in grasping the principles of government they needed to implement.⁶⁷

The recording of intellectual life of modern Greeks was also a historical genre focusing on bibliography and biography of scholars, which appeared in the time of Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, the son of Alexandros, and ruler of Wallachia (1670–1730). Under his auspices, a ‘concise enumeration of previous and present time scholars’ was prepared, to be included in Johann Albert Fabricius’ *Bibliotheca Graeca* (published in 1722).⁶⁸ At the same period, Alexandros Helladios, a scholar who had studied at Oxford, reacted against pejorative views of Europeans (particularly Protestants) held on the state of learning in Greece by writing his *Status Praesens Ecclesiae Graecae* (Nuremberg 1714). This enumerated Greek achievements and educational institutions, such as the presses of Constantinople and Wallachia and the Greek schools and academies and their teachers and curricula.⁶⁹

Echoing the views of his patron, Prokopiou, the author of the ‘concise enumeration’, argued that judged by the standards of philosophical learning, rhetorical eloquence and mastery of the classical languages, Dositheos of Jerusalem was poorly educated.⁷⁰ He praised Theophilos Korydalleus, by contrast, for his mastery of Aristotelian philosophy and his eloquent Greek translation of the commentaries of Cremonini. Unsurprisingly, Prokopiou reserved the most extensive and enthusiastic comments for the ‘philosopher-rulers’ Alexandros and Nikolaos Mavrokordatos.⁷¹

Nektarios and Dositheos tended to disapprove of ‘Neo-Aristotelianism’ on the grounds of their general objections to Western thought.⁷² However, it seems that their objections were mostly rhetorical, given that both writers could not but acknowledge that the post-Byzantine academic establishment of Constantinople could hardly have existed without the educational passage to Italy, and to Padua in particular, of most of its members: these included their closest allies in the cause of Orthodoxy, such as Georgios Koressios, Meletios Syrigos, Nikolaos Kerameas and Alexandros Mavrokordatos. Of course, Dositheos also made reference to these scholars’ theses against papal and Protestant propaganda and their interest in reinforcing the Church

67 C. Th. Dimaras, ‘Alexandre Mavrocordato, Machiavel et Rochefoucauld. Notes de lecture’, *O’Eρανιστής* 4 (1966), 1–5.

68 Dimitrios Prokopiou, ‘Επιτετημένη ἐπαρίθμησις τῶν κατὰ τὸν παρελθόντα αἰῶνα λογίων Γραικῶν καὶ περὶ τινῶν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι ἀνθούοντων’, *Bibliotheca Graeca*, ed. A. Fabricius, v. XI (Hamburg 1722) 776–8; Karathanasis, *Ἑλληνες λόγιοι στη Βλαχία*, 173–80 and S. Athini, ‘Οἱ βιο-εργογραφικοὶ κατάλογοι: ιστοριογραφία καὶ ταξινόμηση τῆς λογιόσυνης (1722–1872)’ in A. Katsigiannis, D. Polychronakis and K. Chrysogelos (eds) *Ο Χριστόφορος Φιλιτᾶς καὶ ἡ συγκρότηση τῆς Νεοελληνικῆς Φιλολογίας τὸν 18ο καὶ 19ο αἰῶνα* (Athens 2022) 203–30.

69 Karathanasis, *Ἑλληνες λόγιοι στη Βλαχία*, 148–50.

70 ‘Επαρίθμησις’, 778. This is remarkable because Dositheos had been a close ally of Nikolaos Mavrokordatos’ father, Alexandros.

71 ‘Επαρίθμησις’, 793

72 Dositheos, *Τόμος Ἀγάπης*, 6–7, f.

of Constantinople by analysing the Schism of the Churches from a historical and doctrinal point of view.⁷³

Reflections on the *ars historica*

Dositheos composed his own catalogue of scholars (*de viris illustribus*), focusing for the most part on each author's struggle for doctrinal correctness and the safeguarding of the Orthodox Church's rights.⁷⁴ In this tradition, he could include Kyrillos Loukaris for his fervour in confronting the Jesuits – despite his subsequent confession of clearly Calvinist doctrines.⁷⁵ The proliferating literature of anti-Western treatises, illustriously represented by Dositheos himself, was an Orthodox imprint of the history of European religious disputes and an ideological medium of the Greeks during and even after Ottoman rule. Within this ideological framework, one can trace the early modern Greek Orthodox historical narratives' reflections on a series of questions of collective identity – primarily the safeguarding of Orthodoxy (of the Orthodox faith and the administrative autonomy of the Church) in the face of the predicament of Ottoman rule and Western challenges from Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.⁷⁶

The *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* (*Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*), published in Bucharest in 1715/1722,⁷⁷ constituted the *magnum opus* of this intellectual tradition. Its documentation followed the principles of ecclesiastical history, citing a plethora of early Christian and Byzantine sources. There can be little doubt that the author intended to produce a scholarly work that would provide an Orthodox response to similar grand projects of historical literature of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.⁷⁸ After all, in addition to Orthodox Church historians and theologians, Dositheos conversed, as already pointed out, with Roman Catholic authorities, such as Bellarmine and Baronius, on a series of complicated matters of ecclesiastical history including the alleged papal primacy.⁷⁹

73 Dositheos, *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 1178–9.

74 Many writers followed this pattern: A. Demetrakopoulos, *Ὁρθόδοξος Ἑλλάς ἤτοι περὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῶν γραμμάτων κατὰ Λατίνων καὶ περὶ τῶν συγγραμμάτων αὐτῶν* (Leipzig 1872) and Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, 72.

75 Dositheos, *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 1178–9; See also *Τόμος Ἀγάπης*, 547, 552, with V. Tsakiris, 'The "Ecclesiarum Belgicarum Confessio" and the attempted "Calvinisation" of the Orthodox Church under Patriarch Cyril Loukaris', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 63 (2012) 475–87.

76 Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, 181–329.

77 See above n. 24.

78 Dositheos of Jerusalem, *Τόμος Χαρᾶς*, f. γ'; Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, 181–329. Cf. D. Kelley, *Faces of History. Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven 1998) 162–87.

79 *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, first book: chapters XVI, XVII; third book: chapters, III, IV. Bellarmine composed extensive *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei adversus hujus temporis Haeticos* (Ingolstadt 1586, 1588, 1593). Along with Antonio Possevino, he was the Jesuit mastermind to deal with the 'Oriental Christians': Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, 121–8; G. Hofmann, 'Il Beato Bellarmino e gli Orientali', *Orientalia Christiana* 8.6 (1927) 260–307; and more

However, according to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, Dositheos' successor to the patriarchal throne and associate of his grand historical project, this was a work addressed to the faithful. For this reason, in his editor's introduction, Chrysanthos referred to Dositheos' prudent decision to write in a clear and concise manner, 'shedding light on concepts by using few words in simple language, not in obscure archaic Greek'.⁸⁰ Debates on the lucidity of historical writing can be traced in earlier popular readings such as the widely read *Historical Book* of 'Dorotheos' of Monemvasia. Its first editor (1631), Apostolos Tzigaras, considered that, since history was beneficial for the people, literary and sacred sources within a historical work should be intelligible and therefore appear in translation.⁸¹

In addition to clarity and simplicity of style, the division of texts into books and chapters was also deemed valuable. According to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, the *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* was not a universal history on the medieval model, structured on the basis of overarching concepts and chronological categories such as 'the six eras or the four empires'.⁸² Instead, it followed a line of political events since the time of Christ and Augustus. This structure aimed to facilitate the readers' understanding. They might also benefit from the originality of the book and its account 'of things unheard, of every kind of story and narration of agents, times, places, subjects and symptoms occurred in several periods'.⁸³

The introductory promise of a comprehensive historical narrative 'of matters unheard and peculiar', of a compilation of 'all kinds of stories, times and places',

generally: Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity*, 227–36. On Baronius see Bauer, 'Uses of history'.

80 [Chrysanthos of Jerusalem: introduction], *Ιστορία περι τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 10; see also Russell, 'The anti-Western stance of Dositheos of Jerusalem', 72. See also Notaras' similar thoughts in 'Κιττία δουλεύουσα', 338–9.

81 Apostolos Tzigaras, 'Τοῖς ἐντευξομένοις τῇ παρουσίᾳ ἱστορικῆ βιβλῶ', Dorotheos [Derotheos] of Monemvasia, *Βιβλίον Ἱστορικὸν περιέχον διαφόρους καὶ ἐξόχους ἱστορίας ἀρχόμενον ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου μέχρι τῆς ἀλώσεως Κωνσταντινουπόλεως καὶ ἐπέκεινα* (Venice 1814; first edition: 1631) 5. This related to the translation of the sacred scriptures long forbidden by the Church, Samuel Mesemvrias, 'Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν ἐπομένην ἀντίρρησιν' in *Ἀντίρρησις Μητροπολίτου Κυζίκου Ματθαίου πρὸς τὴν ἀπολογίαν περι τῆς εἰς τὸ χυδαῖον μεταφράσεως τῶν Ἱερῶν Γραφῶν* (Constantinople 1841) α'–ζα'.

82 Cf. P. Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London 1969) 14–15. This kind of literature was often more apocalyptic-eschatological than properly historical, at least in Byzantium; see the classic study by A. Argyriou, *Les exégèses grecques de l'Apocalypse à l'époque turque* (Thessaloniki 1982). See further O. Olar, 'Paisios Ligarides', *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, 286–91 and 'Prophecy and history. Matthew of Myra, Paisios Lygaridis and Chrysanthos Notaras' in R. Paun (ed.), *Histoire, mémoire et dévotion : regards croisés sur la construction des identités dans le monde orthodoxe aux époques byzantine et post-byzantine*, (Seyssel 2016) 364–88. In fact, Chrysanthos Notaras denounced apocalyptic writing such as Paisios Ligarides' popular *Book of Prophecies* as mere waste of time, Olar, 'Prophecy and History', 365–6.

83 [Chrysanthos of Jerusalem: introduction], *Ιστορία περι τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 10; Compare: 'For it is the rare that is precious', Plato, *Euthydemus 304b* quoted by Chrysanthos Notaras, 'Κιττία δουλεύουσα', 340.

seems to hark back to medieval-style chronology and universal history.⁸⁴ Yet the editor makes clear that the *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* has a central subject and purpose: to present the confrontation between the Orthodox and Roman Churches and the way in which their schism had marked the course of Christianity up until the author's own time.⁸⁵ It was, therefore, a work of seventeen centuries of ecclesiastical history, which also provided an account of the political framework within which the grand questions that Dositheos touched upon had emerged.

In the Christian historical providence, the Church and its doctrine had spread in the unified ecumenical Roman Empire. However, almost from the beginning ecclesiastical history was marked by heresies and schisms undermining ecumenicity. That process culminated in the division of the Christian oecumene in two distinct religious and political centers, the Western–Roman and Eastern–Greek Churches.⁸⁶ Both were threatened by heresies and ‘wars between nations’, but it was mainly the Church of Constantinople that faced the ordeals of changes in worldly fortunes as Byzantium waned and was sacked by Latins and Ottomans. Dositheos works to demonstrate that, despite these challenges, the Orthodox had preserved the only ecumenical true Church.⁸⁷

Nektarios of Jerusalem also referred to the interrelationship between sacred and secular history. In principle, he distinguished between these two orders of historical discourse and deemed that ecclesiastical history had higher aims.⁸⁸ On his account, from antiquity to his own time, historians had written about republics and realms in order to praise and to reveal the changes of fortune; or they wrote about warfare between nations and rulers, in order to praise virtue. The most important affair for a historian, however, is to be able to consider the works of Divine Providence that lead to a blessed future life.⁸⁹ In a treatise on the offices of the Great Church (*Συνταγματίον*), Chrysanthos Notaras adumbrated a similar perception of historical order. The affairs worthy of preservation in memory are

the great acts of men and particularly those securing the nations' courses or those contributing to their flourishing, that is, the statesmanship or command in arms, the ruling of cities and their seizures, the laws, the arts and legislatures.

However, the most memorable matters of knowledge are

the relating to the Divine sphere and serving the highest of the rational faculties, being inherent to the truth and maintaining justice; together with,

84 See, for example, the characteristic title of (Pseudo-) Dorotheos' *Historical Book* (n. 81).

85 [Chrysanthos of Jerusalem: introduction], *Ιστορία περί τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχεσάντων*, 10–11.

86 *Ιστορία περί τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχεσάντων*, 10–11. See also: Nektarios of Jerusalem, *Περί τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἀντίρρησις*, 120 f. (debate on the nature and historical character of the True Church); Gabriel, ‘Tradition Orientale et Vera Ecclesia’, 217–23.

87 Cf. Russell, ‘The anti-Western stance of Dositheos of Jerusalem’.

88 Nektarios, *Ἐπιτομή τῆς Ἱεροκοσμικῆς Ἱστορίας*, 2–4; cf. Meletios of Athens, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία*, I, 2–3.

89 Nektarios, *Ἐπιτομή τῆς Ἱεροκοσμικῆς Ἱστορίας*, 2.

what is most significant, the affairs pointing those in earthly realms towards the heavens.⁹⁰

Ecclesiastical offices were deemed higher and more worthy of distinction because they derived from something eternal. Therefore, historical knowledge would become more important when it referred to religious matters and contributed to the preservation of sacred memory.⁹¹ In fact, similar perceptions of history – its understanding as a ‘theatre of godly justice and providence’ and its relation to justification and moral exemplification – were propounded in virtually every work of the period that professed historical knowledge. The introductory comments of Arsenios Kalloudis, a monk from Crete who had studied and taught in Italy, to the account of his own ‘pilgrimage’ (*Proskynetarion*) to Holy Lands are noteworthy in that regard.⁹² His view of history was extremely practical and moralistic in that he placed, above all the historian’s craft, the preservation of sacred memory and the stability and coherence of ecclesiastical doctrines. For Kalloudis, the most significant historical text was the Gospel, but, like Dositheos, he also pointed to the use of ecclesiastical histories for the protection of the articles of faith and of Church rituals against heretics.

Beyond this, Chrysanthos Notaras highlighted an interpretative aspect in history writing: any discourse conferring learning ought to be recorded and interpreted correctly, in the same way that the Church Fathers interpreted the Divine Word. This was also the vocation of the writers of ecclesiastical and political history, ‘to draw words spoken, to depict morals, views, wishes, as well as every experience and idiom’.⁹³ Of course, this was not considered to be a matter of private judgement; rather, authors had to work within an intellectual tradition, adhering to a sequence of previous interpretations and conversing with their agents. Dositheos’ historical work is considered to be such a conversation with tradition:

He follows a golden line reaching back to the Holy Apostles and numerous Holy Fathers and the most ancient historians, in order to seal and validate every pronouncement and common tenet of the Catholic Church [...]; authoritatively deducing from written testimonies and every precedent and historical recording of ecclesiastical affairs that the Catholic Church was administered by many rulers and not by one, that is, the bishop of Rome.⁹⁴

90 Chrysanthos, *Συνταγματίον περι τῶν ὀφφικίων, κληρικῶτων καὶ ἀρχοντικῶτων τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἀγίας Ἐκκλησίας* (Targoviste 1715; second edn: 1778) κβ’–γ’.

91 *Συνταγματίον*, κβ’–γ’.

92 Arsenios Kalloudis, *Προσκυνητᾶριον τῶν Ἱερῶν Τόπων* (Venice 1683) 1-10; see also (Pseudo-) Dorotheos, *Βιβλίον Ἱστορικόν*, 5–6; *Θέατρον Πολιτικῶν μεταγλωττισθὲν ἐκ τῆς λατινικῆς παρὰ τοῦ Νικολάου Μανροκορδάτου*, 311.

93 *Ἱστορία περι τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 8.

94 *Ἱστορία περι τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 3–4.

Dositheos was oriented toward a concrete purpose and method. In order to document ‘words spoken’, he used ecclesiastical records and documents, namely the proceedings of Church Councils. These, if interpreted correctly, could constitute historical evidence. Chrysanthos considers interpretation to be just as important as the research and collection of evidence, because there had been a line of false commentary and historical speculation based on the same historical material. Furthermore, interpretation would test the validity of historical sources and would distinguish the authentic from the forged.⁹⁵

The whole process was acknowledged to be intellectually demanding: we are not speaking of simple debates about the moral uses of history or the elegance of style and the choice between vernacular and archaic languages. Approaching ecclesiastical and doctrinal sources and documents was a laborious endeavor, calling for expense and learning. Because Dositheos of Jerusalem was not fluent in Latin, he had to have many historical texts translated, after collecting them from various places in the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁶ His analysis and documentation had to be convincing even for Western authors of different historical views. Such a style of argumentation would in fact only be intelligible by trained elites in the Churches of Constantinople and Rome. As already pointed out, Dositheos considered his *opus magnum* to be addressed to ‘trained readers who possessed scientific ability’.

When he approached subjects relating to the Roman Catholic Church, such as papal policies and doctrinal settlements, he looked to Western scholars. This method demonstrates his thoughtful quest for a scholarly foundation for his work. According to Dositheos, arguments about the dogmatic errors of the Popes could be made explicit by readings of the Latin Fathers, ancient ecclesiastical sources, and the proceedings of a number of Councils summoned in Italy. For instance, most of the Western Fathers, let alone their Eastern counterparts, would not have been able to endorse the novelties of the ‘recent’ papal monarchy, subsequent after the reform of Pope Gregory VII.⁹⁷ Deconstructing competing discourses ‘from the inside’ was not uncommon in ecclesiastical history and writers of the opposing side were prepared to do the same, citing Byzantine authors to consolidate their positions on the errors of the Eastern Church.⁹⁸ Ideology and interpretation were thus interrelated. Dositheos of Jerusalem repeatedly blamed the Jesuits (notably Bellarmine), alongside Baronius and

95 This issue was raised by several writers of history. According to Agapios Loverdos (1720-1795), a rector of the Greek College of Venice, the validity of sources was the main challenge to the historian’s craft. The divergence that readers trace in different historical versions of the same events signified the falsity of some of them. What is more, prejudice corrupted historical truth: ‘Imagination, preconception, inclination of the heart distort intellect’, ‘Περὶ τῆς ἱστορίας τοῦ κόσμου’, in *Βιβλος χρονικὴ περιέχουσα τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς Βυζαντιδος* (Venice 1767).

96 Dositheos of Jerusalem, *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 4.

97 *Ἱστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 788–9. Cf. W. Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London 2003) 152–6.

98 Kyriakantonakis, ‘Conflicting readings on Byzantine history in early modern Greek historical literature’.

the Greek Roman Catholic scholars Leo Allatius and Petros Arkoudios, for misconceiving or more often deliberately misinterpreting prominent Church scholars.⁹⁹ Accordingly, Jesuit historiography had crudely interfered with texts, such as Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, in order to present them as foundations of their ideology.¹⁰⁰ The authority of this early medieval author, the father of English history, was not in question. But what had he really written? The disputed issue was the authenticity of Bede's writings as presented by later Roman Catholic scholars. For instance, he could not have written so extensively in favor of papal primacy, because this tenet had (it was argued) not yet emerged at the time (the seventh to eighth century).

In this context, Dositheos' historical criticism was founded on the (claimed) inconsistency between Bede's text (as projected by the Roman Catholics) and the period in which that author had lived.¹⁰¹ Another principle of historical criticism that he put forward was that the sources' authority depended on their chronological proximity to the events they related. A writer such as Eusebius of Caesarea was to be considered more credible when he recounted events of his own time and when not refuted by other scholars.¹⁰² However, Dositheos acknowledged the way that disputed issues might produce divergent historical accounts. Comprehensive citation of these different versions (even if they opposed each other) was another interpretative principle to which he wished to adhere.¹⁰³ Historical accuracy could, in his view, be cemented if authors used as many sources and documents as possible. These could be edicts, proceedings of Councils, encyclical letters and works of historians – the constituents of Church tradition and aspects of Dositheos' hermeneutic circle, his essential intellectual background.

An example of Dositheos' application of these principles of historical criticism was his view on the 'Donation of Constantine' and the special relationship of the Emperor to Pope Sylvester I, on the grounds of which the Pope was granted supreme authority in Western Europe. While Lorenzo Valla had established his famous demonstration of the Donation's forgery on textual criticism, Dositheos mainly drew on historical and historiographical arguments. According to him, that text and historical proposition had been invoked neither by ancient authors contemporary to the incidents narrated, nor by a series of Latin sources/authorities of the history of the papacy (such as the writings of Pope Damasus, Liberatus of Carthage, Anastasius Bibliothecarius and Bartolomeo Platina).¹⁰⁴ Even the authors who referred to that theory, such as Theodore Balsamon and (Pseudo-) Scholarios, described it in a variety of ways, which

99 See above n. 40. Dositheos' *Τόμος Καταλλαγῆς* focused on responding to Allatius' works *De ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua consensione libri tres* and *Enchiridion de Processione Spiritus Sancti*: Russell, 'The anti-Western stance of Dositheos of Jerusalem', 78; Podskalsky, *Theologie*, 213–9.

100 Dositheos of Jerusalem, *Ιστορία περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων*, 38–40, 238.

101 Dositheos, *Ιστορία*, 38.

102 Dositheos, *Ιστορία*, 81; cf. Burke, *Renaissance Sense of the Past*, 11–13.

103 Dositheos, *Ιστορία*, 188.

104 Dositheos, *Ιστορία*, 82; A. Grafton, *The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 2007) 35–7.

was also (according to Dositheos) an indication that it was a forgery. According to Dositheos, the theory had never been invoked in the framework of imperial-papal relations, and even in the Council of Ferrara-Florence the Roman Catholic side had made no reference to it. Finally, some of Dositheos' arguments for the inauthenticity of the text of the 'Donation' are similar to those used by Valla: for example, the document spoke of the Pope's authority over 'the four patriarchates', but at the time it was purportedly written the Patriarchate of Constantinople had not yet been established.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

The confessional and political agenda of the authors discussed in this paper centred on Orthodoxy came to be recognized as a legacy for the identity of Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire, as well as for the Greek ethnicity striving to establish itself as a cultural and political entity. Over an extended period, these scholars were acknowledged as respected figures and symbols of strong leadership, refusing to compromise with the spiritual, academic, and political stagnation experienced by the Orthodox community during the first centuries of Ottoman rule.

But what was the impact of these historical works on Greek or Eastern European historiography, let alone the broader genre of ecclesiastical history? This question represents a distinct research topic, as these works, particularly Dositheos' contribution, served as sources for later historians of the Church and the Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire. Subsequent authors did not adopt Dositheos' conception of ecclesiastical history in its entirety; nevertheless, there is little doubt that Phanariot and Church historians of the eighteenth century, such as Athanasios Komnenos Ypsilantis, had studied the *Δωδεκάβιβλος* and other works of the same period and type. They would use these materials and cite them accordingly.¹⁰⁶ This observation applies to subsequent Greek writers, including those of the 'romantic years' of national histories (such as Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos and Konstantinos Sathas), as well as the prolific Greek intellectualism of Constantinople in the nineteenth century, notably exemplified by the works of Manuel Gedeon.¹⁰⁷ Later Greek theologians and ecclesiastical historians too drew on the Orthodox literature of the seventeenth century.

In the context of these reception case-studies, the historiography produced by Orthodox seventeenth and early eighteenth-century scholars can be seen as having

105 Dositheos, *Ιστορία*, 82–6. For Protestant and Catholic debates over legends and forgeries in Church history, cf. S. Bauer, 'Pontianus Polman re-imagined: how (not) to write a history of religious polemics', *Renaissance Studies* 35. 1 (2021) 37–41.

106 Komnenos Ypsilantis, *Τὰ μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωσιν*, 165–9, 798.

107 Ph. Vapheidis, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία*, III (Constantinople 1912). See also G. Afthonidis, 'Πρόλογος τοῦ ἐκδότου' in Komnenos Ypsilantis, *Τὰ μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωσιν*, γ'–β'.

anticipated contemporary discussions on a range of topics. These include the survival of Greek education and culture under Ottoman rule, the role and authority of the Church within the Ottoman political and administrative system; Orthodox interactions with Western confessions and the conflict with Catholic propaganda, or the theme of Greek anti-Westernism.

Romanian historians too studied the works of Dositheos and his associates, in view of the connections between the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Phanariot intellectuals with the boyars in the Danubian Principalities. The longstanding Romanian interest in ‘Byzance après Byzance’ and the ideological implications of the ‘Great Constantinople’, justified those studies.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, there were instances in which ecclesiastical intellectuals from the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches engaged in dialogue with the works of the authors here discussed.¹⁰⁹ This dialogue took the form of either seeking to refute Orthodox arguments or utilizing them to support their own positions. In both cases Orthodox scholars received recognition from their Western counterparts.

All in all, this body of literature sheds light on the long seventeenth century of religious dynamics, a period that many previous researchers of modern Greek history have regarded as ‘precursory’ or ‘preparatory’. However, this era, with its intriguing blend of conviction and realism in the conduct of state and church politics, is worthy of study in its own right.

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108 Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance*, chapters II and IV.

109 Gabriel, ‘Tradition Orientale et *Vera Ecclesia*’, 212–7.