



Summary :

A prelate who started off as a deacon in the ecumenical patriarchate, then served as metropolitan of Smyrna, finally ascending to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople. As the metropolitan of Smyrna he saw to the repair of many churches and the education of the Greek Orthodox community, while as ecumenical patriarch he served in a very difficult period, when the Greek War of Independence was underway.

Other Names

Vdellas or Avdellas

Date and Place of Birth

Naxos – 1st half of the 18th century

Date and Place of Death

Smyrna - 1842

Main Role

Greek-Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople

1. Birth – career

Anthimos was born on the island of [Naxos](#). He was a deacon in the ecumenical patriarchate when Neophytos of Smyrna held the patriarchal throne (1789). In 1791 he was appointed Megas Archidiakonos, received the honorific office of [portaris](#), while in April 1797 he became [protosynkellos](#).

2. Metropolitan of Smyrna

In May of the same year he was elected [metropolitan of Smyrna](#), where he succeeded [Gregorios V](#), who subsequently received the patriarchal title for the first time. In Smyrna he first arrived as metropolitan on June 11th 1797. The inhabitants of [Smyrna](#) dubbed him Vdellas or Avdellas, because his eyebrows were shaped like a leech (*vdella*) Anthimos saw to the repair of the church of [St. Fotini](#), which was severely damaged during the revolt that came to be known as "[Rempelio](#)", while he supervised the construction of the church of St. Constantine and st. Helen in Bunarbaşı (1799), the church of the St Apostles (Peter and Paul) in [Koukloutzas](#) (1801) and of the church of St. John the Theologian in the Apano Machalas quarter (1804). He also supervised the renovation of the church of St Theodore Stratelates in Agria of [Old Phocaea](#) (1802).

Anthimos showed special care for the education of the city's Greek Orthodox community. He reconstituted the Greek School of Apano Mahalas, while he sought to consolidate the operation of the [Philological Gymnasium](#). During this period P. Rodokanakis, F. Kapparis, X. Toumtzoglou, [K.M. Koumas](#) and the renowned scholar [Konstantinos Oikonomos](#) were the commissioners of the Gymnasium. Anthimos, however, clashed with Oikonomos, and as a result the latter launched frequent attacks against him in his writings.

While Anthimos held the metropolitan throne of Smyrna, the Ottoman authorities made frequent 'forays' against the diocese and other churches in the city. The reason behind this 'persecution' was his friendship (as in the case of Gregorios V) with the ruler of Wallachia Konstantinos Georgiou Chantzeris, who was beheaded in February of 1799. Anthimos made great efforts and in several occasions diverted considerable sums of money to the powerful political circles of [Constantinople](#) (Istanbul), managing not only to have these attacks stop, but also to secure the issuance of the 'commandments' of the then sultan Selim III concerning the protection of Smyrna's churches.

When the Greek War of Independence broke out Anthimos was arrested (31st of March 1821) and was led to Constantinople, where he remained incarcerated for 7 months. In October 1821 the holy synod elected him [metropolitan of Chalcedon](#) and in July of



1822 he succeeded the late [Eugenios](#) (1821-1822) to the patriarchal throne.

3. Ecumenical patriarch

The period of Anthimos' patriarchate was especially hard due to the continuation of the Greek War of Independence. According to Manouil Gedeon,¹ Vasiliki, the famous wife of Ali paşa Tepelenli surrendered herself to him, together with her brother Simos and the chieftain Thanasis Vagias.

During his time in office, Anthimos managed to preserve the autonomy of the Cyprus Archbishopric, as well as its privileges; these were critical times, for the Ottomans had conducted executions of prelates and notables on the island, while certain members of the synod pushed for the abolishment of the Archbishopric. During the same period he refused to allow the English Protestant missionaries to publish a translation of the Holy Writ in the "vulgar language" using the patriarchal printing press, notwithstanding the fact that they were supported by certain members of the upper clergy (like e.g. Ilarion of Tirnovo, who had served as abbot in a dependency of the Sinaitic community in the Balat quarter of Constantinople, and the synod member Chrysanthos of Serres).

Apparently this affair was the cause of Anthimos' removal from office in July of 1824. His stance caused his opponents inside the holy synod (including some lay members) to coalesce: under the leadership by Ieremias they accused the patriarch of fomenting the Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire (an accusation related with Anthimos' decision to accept the payment of a debt owed by the two Serbian metropolises, of Belgrade and Užice, to the ecumenical patriarchate by the leader of the Serbian Uprising, Miloš Obrenović).

4. After the patriarchal term

Anthimos at first sought refuge at Skoutari and was subsequently exiled to [Kaisareia](#) of [Cappadocia](#), where he remained locked up in the [monastery of St. John Prodomos](#). In December of 1825 he was finally given permission to settle in Smyrna, where he occupied a small apartment in the Apano Machalas quarter. In 1831 and 1833 he served as a *locum tenens* of the metropolitan throne of Smyrna. During his stay at Smyrna, Anthimos regularly attended church services. He finally passed away in August of 1842 in the hospital of the Greek Orthodox community (known as the [Greek Hospital](#)), while he bequeathed his entire estate to the churches and the city's charitable institutions. The then metropolitan of Ephesus and future ecumenical patriarch [Anthimos VI](#) officiated at his solemn funeral. Anthimos was buried in the church of St John the Theologian. A large painting portraying him survived until the advent of the [Asia Minor Catastrophe](#) in the room of the board (*epitropikon*) of the said temple.

5. Evaluation

[Manouil Gedeon](#) writes of patriarch Anthimos III: "Anthimos of Smyrna, was a flamboyant man in terms of his physique, but rather buoyant in his spirit; he was devout and god-fearing, and he adored the holy chants and the ecclesiastical liturgies. He was moderately educated, but in his speech he was gentle and sweet. This is why the Christian flock loved him extremely, and they thronged the patriarchal temple during the matutinal and the nocturnal ceremonies, and in Saturday's vespers, and on every festive occasion; they took great enjoyment in the lengthy chants, through which the choristers sought to please the patriarch and the people".² Zacharias Mathas says of Anthimos III: "A man of flimsy education, but of sweet disposition, a regular church-goer and a man of the people, although sometimes he was too keen to curry favour of the mob. Yet, considering the dreadful conditions which prevailed during his time in office, what worth-while deeds could he have carried out? His mildness and his comportment did, indeed, help greatly for, over time, the Turkish wrath was mollified".³

1. Γεδεών, Μ., *Πατριαρχικής Ιστορίας Μνημεία* (Athens 1922), pp. 7-11, 36-39.



2. Γεδεών, Μ., *Πατριαρχικής Ιστορίας Μνημεία* (Athens 1922), pp. 7-11.

3. Μαθάς, Ζ., *Κατάλογος ιστορικός των πρώτων επισκόπων και των εφεξής Πατριαρχών της εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Αγίας και μεγάλης του Χριστού Εκκλησίας 2* (Athens 1884), p. 288.

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	Σολομωνίδης Χ. , <i>Η Εκκλησία της Σμύρνης</i> , Αθήνα 1960
	Γερμανός μητροπολίτης Σάρδεων και Πισιδίας , <i>Συμβολή εις τους Πατριαρχικούς καταλόγους Κωνσταντινουπόλεως από της Αλώσεως και εξής, τόμ. Α-Β</i> , Κωνσταντινούπολη 1935, 1938
	Μαθάς Ζαχαρίας , <i>Κατάλογος ιστορικός των πρώτων επισκόπων και των εφεξής Πατριαρχών της εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Αγίας και μεγάλης του Χριστού Εκκλησίας, 2</i> , Κατάστημα Ανδρέου Κορομηλά, Αθήνα 1884
	Γριτσόπουλος Τ. , "Άνθιμος Γ'", <i>Θρησκευτική και Ηθική Εγκυκλοπαιδεία 2</i> , Αθήνα 1963, 764-765

Webliography :

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Glossary :

	portaris (or ostiarios, or pyloros) Ecclesiastical office, usually accorded to chanters or lectors (<i>anagnostes</i>) and more rarely to deacons or priests. Portaris was to dismiss the non-faithful from the church, to keep the baptized and the catechumenes separately and to hold the staff of the archpriest.
	protosynkellos The protosynkellos was the assistant and often the successor of the Patriarch or the archbishop, as he was a person with great influence. Until the 5 th c. the title of the synkellos was used for the same office. In the course of time, the synckllos undertook more responsibilities and this resulted in the creation of the titles of the protosynkellos and the great protosynkellos. The latter in the Paleologean era signified the protosynkellos of the Patriarch.

Quotations

Evaluations of Anthimos

«Άνθιμος ό από Σμύρνης, άνήρ έπίδεικτικός μέν τῷ σώματι, κούφος δέ πάνυ τῷ πνεύματι· άλλως δέ εὐσεβής και θεοσεβούμενος, και άκρως έραστής τῶν ιερῶν μελωδιῶν και τῶν εκκλησιαστικῶν παρατάξεων. Γραμμάτων πείραν εἶχε μετρίαν, πολλήν δέ τήν ήμερότητα και γλυκύτητα έν ταῖς όμιλίαις. Διό και ύπερβαλλόντως ήγάπα αυτόν ό χριστιανικός λαός, και πάντοτε παμπληθής συνέρρεεν εις τόν πατριαρχικόν ναόν έκ νυκτός, έν ταῖς έθθιναῖς τελεταῖς, και εις τόν έσπερινόν του Σαββάτου και τῶν έορτασίμων ήμερῶν, τερπόμενος ταῖς μακραῖς ψαλμωδίαῖς, δι' ὧν έφιλοτιμούντο και οἱ ιεροψάλται εὐαρεστεῖν τῷ τε πατριάρχη και τῷ λαῷ».

Γεδεών, Μ., *Πατριαρχικής Ιστορίας Μνημεία* (Αθήνα 1922), σελ. 7-11.

«Άνθρωπος όλιγογράμματος μέν, αλλά γλυκός τὸ ήθος και φιλακόλουθος και δημοτικός, κάποτε δέ ύπερβολικός ίσως όχλοκόλαξ. [...] πλὴν άλλ' ώφέλησε μεγάλως δια τής αυτού ήπιότητος και συμπεριφορᾶς προς τήν ήρέμα, δια του χρόνου,



καταπίπτουσαν τραχύτητα τῆς τουρκικῆς ὀργῆς».

Μαθάς, Ζ., *Κατάλογος ιστορικός των πρώτων επισκόπων και των εφεξῆς Πατριαρχών της εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Αγίας και μεγάλης του Χριστού Εκκλησίας*² (Αθήνα 1884), σελ. 288.