



Summary :

Priest from Magnesia, Asia Minor, who became metropolitan of Cydoniae in 1908 after he had been highly active in Macedonia. He died in October 1922 before the Kemalists forces, which had invaded Ayvalik following the retreat of the Greek army, killed him.

Other Names

Gregorios Orologas, Anastasios Antoniadis, Saatsoglou

Date and Place of Birth

1864 – Magnesia

Date and Place of Death

October 3, 1922, Ayvalik

Main Role

Metropolitan

1. Birth – Education – Preachings

Gregorios was born in 1864 in [Magnesia](#), Asia Minor, base of the [metropolitan of Ephesus](#). His secular name was Anastasios Antoniadis or Saatsoglou. He received his first education in his birthplace. In 1882 he was admitted to the [Theological School of Chalke](#), supported by the then metropolitan of Ephesus, [Agathangelos](#). When he entered the Theological School, he translated his surname from Saatsoglou to Orologas. He was a brilliant student and completed successfully his studies in 1889 by submitting the "inaugural dissertation" titled "The Holy Evangelists never disagreed over the Lord's last Passover (Easter)". In the last year of his studies, according to the old custom, he became a priest: he was ordained deacon and changed his name to Gregorios.

When he graduated, he served in various dioceses (Thessaloniki, Serres and Drama) initially as a deacon and instructor of religion and later as archimandrite, protosyngelos and preacher. He was among the first preachers who included the Demotic language in his preachings. His activities in key dioceses of Macedonia in a particularly crucial period, when the Greek-Bulgarian race in the region was very hard, contributed to the defence of Greek interests. During his stay in the Diocese of Drama he collaborated with the metropolitan, [Chrysostomos Calaphates](#), the subsequent Chrysostomos of [Smyrna](#).¹

2. Activities in the Diocese of Stroumnitsa

The [Ecumenical Patriarchate](#) appreciated his abilities and appointed him for a key diocese of Macedonia: the Diocese of Stroumnitsa and Tiberias. He was ordained at the patriarchal church of St. George at [Phanari](#), in the presence of the metropolitan of Ephesus, Ioakeim [Efthyvoulis](#). In the Diocese of Stroumnitsa he continued his actions against the activities of the Bulgarian Committee (Interior Revolutionary Macedonian Organisation). This resulted in an attempted murder against him: 75 komitadjis trapped and attacked the metropolitan's entourage, who were on their way back to Stroumnitsa from the village of Gabrovo, whose Slav-speaking inhabitants were brought back to the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the metropolitan (he detached them from the Bulgarian Exarchate). However, the metropolitan managed to escape, although four of his associates were seriously wounded.²

3. Activities in the Diocese of Cydoniae

The nationalistic activities of Gregorios in the Diocese of Stroumnitsa raised a political matter. The Patriarchate, following pressure by the Ottoman government, was compelled to transfer Gregorios on July 22, 1908, to the newly established [Diocese of Cydoniae](#) (established on April 22, 1908, after the diocese detached land from the Diocese of Ephesus, and holding the 85th position in the Syntagma of the Ecumenical Patriarchate). The inauguration of Gregorios in his new diocese was held on September 8, 1908, at



the metropolitan church of the Dormition in [Ayvalik](#) (Cydoniae). In the early years of his presence in the new diocese he tried to maintain and further develop the educational and charitable establishments of the city. The protosyngelos of the diocese, Arsenios Menexes from Dovitsa, Serres, was his capable and efficient partner in his work.³

But the period Gregorios shepherded the Diocese of Cydoniae was one of the most turbulent in the history of the Ottoman Empire, affecting extensively the political life of Ayvalik. The restoration of the 1876 Constitution in 1908 (it had been suspended when Abdul Hamid ascended the throne), as a result of the [Young Turk Revolution](#), had created increased expectations among the Greek Orthodox population of the city. Several “patriotic” manifestations of the Greek Orthodox were considered a threat to the stability of the Ottoman power, thus the martial law was implemented in the city (July-August 1909). Lots of Greek Orthodox inhabitants were persecuted and sent to prison in that period. Gregorios tried to intervene with the Ottoman authorities in order to save them. However, many of them, although the martial law was raised after a month, continued to be imprisoned in [Halicarnassus](#) prison. Gregorios supported the poorest of them, while in collaboration with the then Patriarch Ioakeim III (1901-1912, second term) he managed to free all the prisoners.

Gregorios admired Venizelos as a politician, particularly after the successful outcome of the Balkan Wars. He submitted a number of memoranda to the Greek Prime Minister and suggested that the latter should ask from the Ottoman government to grant Ayvalik the privileges the city had been enjoying before the 1821 War of Independence.

Nevertheless, the following years were more difficult for the city. In 1914, a few months after the Bucharest Convention, about 5000 out of a total of 35,000 Greek Orthodox of Ayvalik (mainly young men to be conscripted for military service) left the city of their own accord. In November 1915 the inhabitants of Ayvalik welcomed the refugees from [Moschonesia](#) and, as a result, the situation deteriorated with respect to living conditions. In that crucial period Gregorios wanted to relieve the poor and treat the sick, which he achieved thanks to the secret aid he received from the government of the National Defence of Eleutherios Venizelos and contributions from the wealthy members of the Greek Orthodox community. The Ottoman administration was aware of those actions. As a result, he was accused twice of high treason and was taken before [Smyrna's](#) court martial. The second time was more serious, because he was arrested at the moment (May 1917) the inhabitants of Cydoniae along with the refugees from Moschonesia were displaced to the hinterland of Asia Minor, where they were decimated because of famine, eruptive typhus and other hardships. Although the accusations against Gregorios were not proved the second time either, the court martial sentenced Gregorios to imprisonment. The metropolitan was confined in a house at [Pounta](#) until October 16, 1918 (when the Ottoman Empire capitulated in World War I).⁴

Gregorios returned to Ayvalik and tried to gather his decimated congregation again. He went for a while to [Constantinople](#), where he had been a synodal member, but he returned to his city again as soon as it became known that Ayvalik had been captured by the Greek army (May 19, 1919). Rarely did Gregorios leave his city again (short trips to Athens, Smyrna and Adrianople). However, during the [Greek occupation of western Asia Minor](#) the metropolitan disputed seriously twice with the High Commissioner [Aristeides Stergiades](#) (the first time he was suffering from hemiplegia, from which he recovered after months of treatment).⁵

4. Asia Minor Catastrophe and Gregorios' Death

The situation deteriorated when the Greek army started to withdraw and the Kemalists moved to the coasts of Asia Minor. Immediately after the public servants and the policemen left the city, Gregorios convened the dimogerontia and formed a civic guard to maintain the order and protect the people's properties. He also proposed that the [dimogerontia](#) should make the necessary recommendations to the people so that they could leave for [Lesvos](#). Not only did his words fall flat, but also the dimogerontia decided to prevent violently the inhabitants from leaving the city. On August 29, 1922, the first irregular bands (Tsetes) entered the city. The massacres had already started in nearby villages, whose populations streamed to Ayvalik. When the Turkish army arrived the martial law was implemented and all inhabitants were forbidden to leave. The male citizens were arrested and taken to the road leading to the village of [Freneli](#), where they were shot down with machine guns.

Under those circumstances, Gregorios tried to save the surviving Christians, women, elderly and children, by intervening with the Turkish authorities, which did not hesitate to humiliate him. After the inhabitants of Moschonesia were massacred (including



metropolitan [Ambrosios](#)), as it happened with the inhabitants of nearby villages, Gregorios managed to contact secretly the American Red Cross, which sent ships from Lesvos in order to carry the women and the children. The Turkish authorities agreed with this proposition: as a result, the largest part of the Greek Orthodox population of the city, 20,000 out of the 35,000, was saved by Greek ships under the American flag. Although he encouraged all the priests of the city to leave, Gregorios stayed back. But at the last moment, on September 30, 1922, while all priests were gathered on the waterfront ready to leave, they were arrested by the Turkish authorities along with the metropolitan and were taken to the prison beside the city hospital. They suffered horrible tortures there. On October 3 both priests and seculars were taken outside the city, on the road to [Agiasmati](#), where they all were massacred before **Gregorios' very eyes**. A grave was opened for Gregorios, where they wanted to bury him alive, but while he was being dragged by the soldiers he died, possibly from a serious stroke.⁶

In 1932, on the initiative of the then metropolitan of Mytilene, Iakovos of Dyrrachion, Gregorios' statue was put up in Mytilene, where members of Gregorios' congregation had escaped; the inscription on the statue read: "Metropolitan of Cydoniae, Gregorios. Martyred in 1922. The good shepherd laid his life down for the sheep (John 10:11)".⁷

1. Ιάκωβος Κλεόμβροτος, μητροπολίτης Σισανίου και Σιατίστης, *Ο εθνομάρτυς μητροπολίτης Κυδωνιών Γρηγόριος* (Athens 1956) pp. 7-8.
2. Ιάκωβος Κλεόμβροτος, μητροπολίτης Σισανίου και Σιατίστης, *Ο εθνομάρτυς μητροπολίτης Κυδωνιών Γρηγόριος* (Athens 1956) pp. 8-11.
3. Ιάκωβος Κλεόμβροτος, μητροπολίτης Σισανίου και Σιατίστης, *Ο εθνομάρτυς μητροπολίτης Κυδωνιών Γρηγόριος* (Athens 1956) pp. 11-13.
4. Ιάκωβος Κλεόμβροτος, μητροπολίτης Σισανίου και Σιατίστης, *Ο εθνομάρτυς μητροπολίτης Κυδωνιών Γρηγόριος* (Athens 1956) pp. 27-30.
5. Ιάκωβος Κλεόμβροτος, μητροπολίτης Σισανίου και Σιατίστης, *Ο εθνομάρτυς μητροπολίτης Κυδωνιών Γρηγόριος* (Athens 1956) pp. 32-41.
6. Ιάκωβος Κλεόμβροτος, μητροπολίτης Σισανίου και Σιατίστης, *Ο εθνομάρτυς μητροπολίτης Κυδωνιών Γρηγόριος* (Athens 1956) pp. 43-46, 52-53, 56-64.
7. Τσερνόγλου, Α. Γ., "Γρηγόριος ο Ωρολογάς", *Θρησκευτική και Ηθική Εγκυκλοπαιδεία* 4 (Athens 1964) columns 808-811.

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	Ιάκωβος Κλεόμβροτος, μητροπολίτης Σισανίου, Ο εθνομάρτυς μητροπολίτης Κυδωνιών Γρηγόριος , Αθήνα 1956
	Τσερνόγλου Α. , "Γρηγόριος ο Ωρολογάς", <i>Θρησκευτική και Ηθική Εγκυκλοπαιδεία</i> , 4, Αθήνα 1964, στήλες 808-811

Glossary :

	dimogerontia
Communal authority consisting of the elected community officials, known as <i>archontes</i> (potentates), <i>proestoi</i> (notables), <i>epitropoi</i> (wardens),	



dimogerontes or simply *gerontes* (elders).