Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain Encyclopedia Article

Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain

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Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain

NIKODIMOS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN (c. 1749–1809), known also as the Hagiorite, Greek Orthodox spiritual father and writer. Nikodimos was born on the Greek island of Naxos and studied in Smyrna, where he was taught Latin, Italian, and French. His teacher was the famous monk Chrysanthos Aitolos (d. 1785). Nikodimos was influenced by the hesychast tradition, which stressed mental prayer, and by the Kollyvades movement, which emphasized strict adherence to the doctrinal and liturgical traditions of the church. At the age of twenty-six Nikodimos went to Mount Athos. Two years later, in 1777, Makarios of Corinth arrived there, and a fruitful collaboration between him and Nikodimos began. Together, they published the *Philokalia*, a collection of the writings and sayings of the great ascetic Fathers of the church. Nikodimos also published *Concerning Continual Communion*, in which he made the unusual recommendation to the Orthodox that they receive Holy Communion frequently, in accordance with the ancient Christian practice. In his *Handbook of Counsel* Nikodimos developed the practice of mental prayer. In the *Pedalion* (The Rudder) he collected and paraphrased the canons of the church. Finally, in addition to editing hymns and publishing exegetical works and lives of the saints, Nikodimos translated into Greek an Italian work by the Jesuit Giovanni P. Pinamonti (1632–1703) that was probably based on the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola. He also translated *Spiritual Combat* by Lorenzo Scupoli (c. 1530–1610) into Greek, calling it *Unseen Warfare*.

In 1955 the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople officially proclaimed Nikodimos a saint of the church, and his memory is commemorated on July 14. As a prolific writer, splendid theologian, and practitioner of the prayer of the heart, Nikodimos contributed greatly to the awakening of the Greek Orthodox people during the difficult years of the Ottoman conquest.

Bibliography

Several works by Nikodimos have been translated into English. These include Eugènie Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer's *Early Fathers from the Philokalia* (London, 1954) and the complete text of *The Philokalia*, translated and edited by G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware, 3 vols. to date (Boston, 1979–); and *The Rudder*, translated by Denver Cummings (Chicago, 1957). Two books about Nikodimos are Constantine Cavarnos's *St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite*, "Modern Orthodox Saints," no. 3 (Belmont, Mass., 1974), and my "St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite," in *Post-Byzantine Ecclesiastical Personalities*, edited by Nomikos Michael Vaporis (Brookline, Mass., 1978).