

Philip P. Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Germans, 1941-1944*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1966. Pp. xii + 375.

Destiny or chance has often singled out Chios for a special role. Under the Ottoman Empire the island enjoyed unusual prosperity and privileges as an appanage of the Empress-mother of the Sultan, because the ladies of the harem were gluttons for mastic gum, Chios' chief product. It was from Chios, too, that the first Greeks came who held the influential posts of dragoman at the Ottoman court. In the Greek war of Independence fate struck back: the massacre of 1822 earned for the island a more gruesome fame, immortalised in Delacroix's famous picture. More recently the island's location, almost within a stone's throw of the Turkish coast, ensured it the misfortune of a very late and grudging cession to independent Greece.

In modern times, Chios has had the distinction, shared by hardly any other region of Greece, of producing a scholarly historian equally at home in his own language and in English, who has devoted his life to research into his native island's history. A long series of admirable works by Mr. Philip Argenti is now crowned by this new book. It fully maintains the high standard of its predecessors.

The common experience of enemy occupation in Greece was modified in Chios by two factors: its size and its location. It was too small to sustain guerrilla operations, or open hostilities of any kind against the Nazis. On the other hand, its proximity to neutral Turkey made communication with the outside world fairly easy. This facility was skilfully used by an organisation under a local doctor, Dr. Zyonaris, for the purpose of intelligence and escape.

The obverse of proximity to Turkey was remoteness from the Greek mainland. This gave an advantage to the Germans, who controlled the principal communications over both the collaborating government, whose writ virtually ceased to run in the island, and the resistance organisations with their headquarters either in Athens or the Greek mountains. Nevertheless, two of the principal organisations, EDES and ELAS, both established themselves in Chios. But they soon agreed to combine forces under the senior officer on the island, Lt. Col. Elias Kanavoutsis, who was politically neutral though a royalist in sentiment.

As a result of this prudent move, the Communists were prevented from gaining control. When Chios was liberated from the Germans — not by British forces, but by the Greek Sacred Company under British

command — the Communists' attempt to seize power was suppressed after a brief but bloody struggle. Mr. Argenti confirms that the Chiots' loyalty to the Western allies never wavered, even when the R.A.F. unfortunately bombed a Swedish Red Cross supply-ship in the island's harbour.

The book is written with Mr. Argenti's customary common sense and scrupulous accuracy, supported by substantial documentation, which occupies more than half the book, in Greek and German. One small error deserves to be corrected at once. He describes the arrival on the island in December 1943 of a mysterious party of four men, who said they were an American, an Englishman, a New Zealander and a Greek, abandoned there by the *caïque* on which they were crossing from the mainland to Turkey. Mr. Argenti gives as one reason for suspecting their *bona fides* "the difficulty of explaining the presence of an American in a party fleeing from Greece." But there were in fact already scores of Americans in Greece in December 1943. Apart from the officers in the Allied Military Mission to the Greek Resistance who had arrived since September, there were dozens of U.S. Air Force crews shot down in raids on the Piraeus. One of the main activities of the Resistance in that winter was to rescue and repatriate them, in some cases by sea across the Aegean. One hopes that the Germans, who eventually captured the four men, did not share Mr. Argenti's unjustified scepticism.

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I. McD. G. Stewart, *The Struggle for Crete, 20 May-1 June 1941: A Story of Lost Opportunity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966. Pp. xii + 518.

It is always difficult for those taking part in a battle to know exactly what is going on. The classic example is that of Fabrice, the hero of Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme*, who spent the rest of his life trying to make sure whether or not he had taken part in the battle of Waterloo. In the case of Crete in May 1941, one can be in no doubt whether or not one was on the island at the time. (Personally, I had the peculiar experience — I cannot now remember why — of breakfasting with General Freyberg on the morning of the first German parachutists landed). But it was quite another matter to understand