**Authoring :** *Sapkidi Olga*
**Translation :** *Κούτρας Νικόλαος*
**For citation :** *Sapkidi Olga , "Collection of Cappadocian folkloric and linguistic material", Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World, Asia Minor*
*URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=10090>*

## Summary :

The study of the living monuments of Cappadocia during the 19th and 20th centuries, the reasons for it and its results.

## Date

19th-20th century

## Geographical Location

Cappadocia

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### 1. First steps

Compared to an area such as the Pontus, which has a long tradition in living monuments, the first written evidence pertaining clearly to the Cappadocian region and people appear relatively early, with the publication of the *Ιστορική περιγραφή (...) της μεγάλης αρχισατραπείας Ικονίου* (Historical description of the great arch-satrapy of Ikonion) by the Metropolitan of Ikonion Kyrillos in 1815 at Constantinople by the patriarchal printing press. This work, which became a benchmark for later scholars, acted as one of the most important incentives to the study of the linguistic condition of the Cappadocians, although the book itself does not directly refer to it.

Everything started in an observation Kyrillos makes according to which the inhabitants of the village Sille used the ancient dialect of Laconia. This erroneous view, which had the colour of a foundation myth[1] for decades captivated local and foreign scholars, often leading to extreme views, like that of Pavlos Karolidis concerning the survival of the ancient Cappadocian language in the local idioms of the Cappadocians. Perhaps, though, this misunderstanding was necessary in order to draw interest to an area that until then was mainly known for its religious and ecclesiastical tradition, the monastery that afforded a certain prestige, an area the population of which was considered to be Turkish-speaking in its majority.

### 2. Discovery of Greek-speaking communities

In 1856, Nikolaos Rizos, attempting to revise "the erroneous ideas of the non-specialists"[2] who considered Cappadocia to be completely Turkish-speaking and moved, as a true patriot-scholar, by "patriotic debt",[3] publishes his Kappadokika in the printing press of the newspaper Anatoli. In this book, the author describes all the Greek-speaking communities he is aware of, singling out naturally his homeland Sinasos, the inhabitants of which "speak the Greek language rather well, while most do not speak the Ottoman language".[4] But it is mainly Rizos who brings forth the first meagre specimens of linguistic material from Cappadocia: two songs from Sinasos, the 'Εβράδυν παλιοβράδυν'[5] and the 'Επάνω βίγλα πάρθηκεν',[6] for which he writes "together with many others these are preserved and only known to women, who guard the ancient language of the inhabitants, which contains many ancient and curious phrases and words".[7]

Although this work is essentially a copy of the "writings of the venerable Kyrillos of Ikoniom [with additions] from the newspaper of certain lovers of knowledge and a monograph of Sinasos",[8] the specific directions it follows in a sense represent a turning point in Cappadocian scholarship, in the sense that they introduce what Evangelia Balta calls the "second phase" of interest in the living monuments of Cappadocia.[9] This stage, which dates from 1860 to 1890, is characterized by the gradual discovery of the region and its inhabitants by the expatriate scholars, who will promote the up to then unknown Greek-speaking communities, insisting on the collection of linguistic material and the formulation of an educational policy aimed at all costs at disseminating (to the Turkish-speaking) the (official) Greek language or 'correcting' the language of the in the Greek-speaking.

### 3. The issue of origins

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Early in the 1860s we have intense debates concerning the issue of the origins of the Cappadocians that motivating the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople and take as their point of departure the treatise of the German doctor and orientalist A. Mordtmann *Die Troglodyten von Kappadokien* (1861). This work argues that the autochthonous populations switched from the Cappadocian to the Turkish language without ever using Greek widely, but only as the language of the Church. On the occasion of this debate the need to collect and study the living monuments of the Greek-speaking populations and to seek out the ancient Cappadocian language is brought out, for everyone agrees that not enough of the latter survives. The research aims at proving that the contemporary Christian populations of the region (Greek-speaking or 'Turkicized' according to the terminology of the era) originates from the ancient Cappadocians, who, in turn, were the true heirs of Greek civilization via Alexander the Great.[10]

The troglodytic feud left its imprint on Cappadocian folklore through a series of consequences, the first of which was the impetus to the collection of linguistic and folkloric material from the Greek-speaking communities. A second consequence of this feud, connected to the first, was the total disregard, even contempt, with which the Orthodox but Turkish-speaking populations and their monuments were treated. And while in time there would be more incentives to study the customs, practices and oral tradition of the Cappadocians, silence will cover all things Turkish-speaking till the end, with very few individual exceptions. The last consequence that defines the largest part of Cappadocian folklore is the use of linguistic material in an imaginative yet wholly irrational manner, as in the etymological acrobatics of Pavlos Karolidis or in the case of Rizos Eleftheriades, who in his work *Συνασός, ήτοι μελέτη επί των ηθών και των εθίμων αυτής* (Synasos, or study on its customs), published in Athens in 1879, employs suspicious methods to prove that the acritic songs he publishes are related to the klephtika of Epirus, extracting the conclusion that "Sinasos preserves the most faithful images of the Homeric era".[11]

**4. Akritas**

These manoeuvres with respect to the acritic songs are of course not peculiar to Cappadocia, yet only in this case do they take on such dimensions. And yet, when Eleftheriades writes, the epic of Digenis Akritas has already been published by K. Sathas and E. Legrand in Paris (1875) and the influx of songs from the Pontus and the Aegean islands has begun. This event alone would be enough to encourage similar moves in the par excellence acritic region of Cappadocia imbuing the collecting of linguistic material with more heightened goals, especially when acritologists begin debating the historical precedence of the songs or of the epic and the need to collect more songs to fill in the gaps of the manuscript becomes more acute.

Still, most Cappadocian scholars, as well as the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople, are trapped in their momentum and continue to reproduce the same theories. Thus, seven years after the epic's publication, "in the report compiled by Athanasios Papapodoulos Kerameus the entire effort of the Association concerning the collection of living monuments is justified as a contribution towards the overturning of Fallmerayer's anti-Greek theories. Nothing is said of the needs of acritology, but it is revealing that Kerameus believes that the turn to the collection of linguistic material from the Hellenes of Asia Minor is essential".[12] A call follows to conduct linguistic research in the mountainous Christian villages of Cappadocia, Cilicia and Pamphylia, a call that must have been headed judging from the fact that in 1884 seven collections of Asia Minor material, three of which deal with Cappadocia, reach the Association. So, interest in the Akritas takes long to become instilled into Cappadocian literature; when this interest does finally become evident, it is once more 'imported': it is incited by the treatise of N. Polites on the Song of the Dead Brother, published in 1885 in the journal *Δελτίον Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρίας*, where the folklorist seeks to counter the theory purporting the Slavic origins of this Greek song. At that time, the Greek Philological Association, through Papadopoulos-Kerameus, "manages to combine the anti-Fallmerayer tendencies of folkloric study with acritic interests"[13] and to this end brings to the fore a version of the song taken from Karolidis' collection, which the Association had not published, deeming the publishing of the work The dialect spoken in Cappadocia and the traces of the Ancient Cappadocian language preserved in it to be more important. This work of Karolidis also received an award from the Association's committee, not so much for its theories, which did not enjoy wide support, but for the sheer volume of linguistic material contained therein; the collection of songs was finally sent to P. De Lagarde in Goettingen, who published it in 1886.

E. Balta believes that the stance of the Cappadocian scholars vis-à-vis their linguistic material is defined by their inferiority complex

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and attributes it to the fact that at that time the view of Paparegopoulos had become established, according to which Greeks were only those whose mother language was Greek to the exclusion of Tanzimat and Greco-Ottomanism. As a result "a large part of the Turkish-speaking yet Greek in conscience scholars feels unvindicated and disorientated (...). Cappadocians whose mother language was Turkish (like Karolidis, Levidis a.o.) will be forced to turn to new directions aiming at benefiting the community [and] through the foundation of the 'Association for the Dissemination of Greek Letters' (1869) and the rapprochement of Greece and Turkey during the premiership of Epameinondas Delegiorges a part of the community of will become autonomous and clash, almost cavalierly, with the Greek state".[14]

### 5. The poor relative

The psychological explanations adduced for the main tendencies in Cappadocian scholarship are naturally legitimate and it is true that the Cappadocian living monuments came to the public's attention thanks more to the efforts of European scholars than those of the locals: Lagarde published Karolidis' collection, Dawkins that of Levidis. The English Hellenist was the only person to systematically study the fairy-tales of the region. It is also true that the Cappadocians never succeeded in acquiring either a 'scholarship with pedigree', like the Pontiacs, who already in 1879 possessed books containing the genealogies of their scholars,[15] or a stable educational foundation: when Dawkins mentions the School of the Monastery of Timios Prodromos he says it was something like the school "Frontistirion" of Trebizond albeit on a smaller scale. He continues noting that the "Greek children from all places of central Asia Minor and Cilicia travelled there to study, and then dispersed into the villages, where the passed their lives as priests or teachers, often both in the smaller and poorer places".[16] Is perhaps precisely this habit of comparing Cappadocia to the Pontus, Athens, Constantinople or Europe that make it seem like the poor relative? For once, there was work done, and monumental at that, like the collections of linguistic material by Karolidis and Levidis, who Dawkins described as a paragon for the folkloric study of Asia Minor, a scholar who "focuses on the vernacular language and literature and allows not, like in most books of this kind, his space being taken up by descriptions of modern communities, schools, churches and local prokritoi".[17] Oddly enough, this work simply never found its way to the printing press due to the lack of the requisite funds.

This was also the case with the two volumes of the*Πραγματεία περί πολιτισμού* (Study on culture), published in 1899 by the same author, where all the prominent persons and scholars of Cappadocia are recorded "from ancient times to the modern era". A short examination of this work will lead to a series of important observation relevant to the subject under consideration. First, the vast majority of the scholars were priests. We also find several prokritoi (like Nikolaos Rizos) and doctors. All these are describes as scholars by the scholar Levidis, although many did not leave behind a single publication, not even notes. So what does their scholarship consist in? To their contribution, through their political and/or financial power, to the growth and establishment of Orthodoxy, the Christian ethic and Greek learning, in other words to the 'enlightenment' of the Cappadocians. Thus, for Nikolaos Rizos, who after the publication of his *Kappadokika* never studied living monuments again, Levidis writes: "his whole life was endless study, discussion and action aimed at bringing about progress and prosperity in his homeland".[18] One should, therefore, seek answers with respect to the stance the prokritoi-scholars maintained vis-à-vis the linguistic and folkloric material of Cappadocia in this aim and the channels used to achieve it.

### 6. Bodies and aims

The main body for the spread of Greek learning in Asia Minor, and in Cappadocia in particular, was the Church. The School of the Monastery of Timios Prodromos in Zincidere, established by Paisios II was originally pastoral, therefore aimed predominantly at the training of priests and not scholars in general, in a time during which the Protestants made intense efforts to proselytize mainly the Turkish-speaking Christian populations of Cappadocia. By the 18th century the Orthodox hierarchs responded through the publication of printed homilies written in Caramanli Greek; this activity continued in the 19th century through the newspaper Anatoli of Evangelinos Misaelides as well as through initiatives such as that of Levidis, who compiled and circulated various leaflets like the 'through the pulpit homilies for the benefit of illiterate priests' and the 'written texts for the combating of heterodox propagandists'.[19]

The Greek learning promoted by the Orthodox Church, therefore, predominantly aimed at the preservation of its flock. On their side,

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the teachers that embodied this effort, as well as the affluent expatriates which encouraged it, considered the dissemination of the 'proper' Greek language to the Turkish-speaking and the "inarticulate" Greek-speaking people to be synonymous to progress and civilization. In this climate, where the position of the Church is dominant (as well as in the expatiative reports of scholars on the Orthodox religious tradition of Cappadocia), there is little room for the systematic and exclusive engagement with living monuments. Tradition par excellence is that of the Church, and this is the tradition chiefly stressed by the collectors of folkloric material in their works.

Thus, a person like Ioakeim Valavanis, who authored one of the most important works on the everyday life of the Cappadocians in the second half of the 19th century, passes over no opportunity to describe in detail the devoutness of the Cappadocians and their respect for the Orthodox tradition.

Here we should also mention that the intended audience of Valavanis was predominantly that of urban Athens. These were the reviews the article "Καμπάνα του χωριού μου" (The church-bell of my village), published in *Parnassos* in 1881, received in the press: "his ethnological studies greatly contribute to the creation of a precise impression here in Greece on the national issues".[20] It is clear that Valavanis aimed at enticing his audience, making the Cappadocians likeable to the public, so as to make sure that books and other forms of aid will continue to flow into his homeland. For this reason he opted to employ the element of Orthodoxy, which was the stronger link of the Cappadocians with the rest of Hellenism of his time.

### 7. Scientific phase

Thus, until the late 19th century, while we have some noteworthy works recording linguistic and folkloric material by Cappadocian scholars, most important of which were those by Levidis who breaks the silence concerning the mores and the songs of the Turkish-speaking populations, their authors often could not get them published. Things begin to gradually change in the mid-1890s. With the spread of Greek learning already accomplished, the time is ripe for the establishment of the Club "Anatoli" and the subsequent publication of the periodical *Xenophanes*, which will showcase the most historical, geographical and linguistic studies on the area of Asia Minor. In 1906, on the occasion of the 16th anniversary of the Club 'Anatoli', Georgios Pachtikos conducts the 'Erasimolpoi' Company interpreting songs from Asia Minor and especially Cappadocia from the musicologist's collection, and is applauded enthusiastically by the Athenian audience. Something like this would have been unthinkable 20 years earlier.

This is because we are now in the third phase for the living monuments of Cappadocia, according to E. Balta, which begins after 1890, when Asia Minor "becomes part of the Irredentism ...) and is described as the first homeland of the Greek tribe and birthplace of poetry which contains the ideals of the Greek soul".[21] The work of Pachtikos belongs to this period, as well as that of Levidis as well, insofar as, while collected much earlier, it was processed after his retreat from active teaching, i.e. after 1889, when he was aware of all the evidence and theories concerning the acritic epic. At any rate it was during this phase that this work had an impact, through Dawkins' (1930) presentation, on a now mature enough to embrace it scientific community.

Of course, for all its completeness and innovative thinking in terms of the oral tradition, Levidis' work does not escape the established notions on the origins of the Cappadocians and adopts Karolidis' positions concerning the ancient Cappadocian language, "on which he knows more than anyone else and claims without proof that the Greek of the region resemble the Cappadocian language (...). This paves the way for what will follow in grammar, i.e. in the observation that Levidis was not well versed in the science of language as we define it ... and how could this be so? (...) Levidis' position, however, has one positive consequence: it obviated the temptation to present the local language as related, more than it really is, with ancient Greek".[22] These views aside, which fortunately did not negatively affect his collecting activities, the great innovation in Levidis' work is his engagement with the entire range of the Cappadocian oral tradition, whether Greek or Turkish-speaking, and especially with the salvaged by Dawkins fairy-tales of the Turkish-speaking which he collected and which provide us with the most complete picture of the living monuments, of Cappadocia in the 19th century.

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1. See citation “Foundation myth of Sille”

2. Ρίζος, Ν., *Καππαδοκικά, ήτοι δοκίμιον ιστορικής περιγραφής της Αρχαίας Καππαδοκίας και ιδίως των επαρχιών Καισαρείας και Ικονίου* (Κωνσταντινούπολη, τυπογραφείο Ανατολή, 1856), Προλεγόμενα, p. θ'.

3. Ρίζος, Ν., *Καππαδοκικά*, Προλεγόμενα, p. θ'.

4. Ρίζος, Ν., *Καππαδοκικά*, p. 87.

5. Ρίζος, Ν., *Καππαδοκικά*, p. 89-90.

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9. Αναγνωστάκης, Η. – Μπαλτά, Ε., *Η Καππαδοκία των ζώντων μνημείων (*Αθήνα 1990)

10. This view is supported already by Rizos in the *Καππαδοκικά*. See citation “Alexander the Great and Asia”.

11. Ελευθεριάδης, Ρ., *Συνασός ήτοι μελέτη επί των ηθών και εθίμων αυτής* (Αθήνα 1879), p. 78.

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16. Dawkins, R.D., "The recent study of Folklore in Greece", *Papers and transactions of the Jubilee Congress of the Folklore society* (1930), p.131.

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## Glossary :

tanzimat

The 19th-century reforms in the Ottoman Empire, which were inaugurated in 1839 with the edict of Hatt-i Şerif and came to an end with the Constitution of 1876. The reforms, which were considered an effort for the modernization and liberalization of the state, concerned every aspect of the political, social and economic life in the Empire. Of particular importance were the ones that equated legally Muslim and non-Muslim subjects.

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## Quotations

Foundation myth of Sille

«Εν τω μέσω της Κωμοπόλεως, εις επίπεδον τόπον, είναι ναός αρχαίος, επ' ονόματι του Αρχιστρατήγου Μιχαήλ […]. Λέγεται δε ότι εν τω άνω ειρημένω χειμάρρω κατώκουν ασκηταί, έχοντες τον εν μέσω ναόν του Αρχιστρατήγου [,,,]. Κυριευθέντος δε του Ικονίου υπό των Σελσούκων τούρκων, έφυγον εκείθεν οι ασκηταί, αφέντες τον τόπον έρημον. Βασιλεύσας δε ο Σουλτάν Αλαετίν εν Ικονίω επεχείρησε την οικοδομήν του, ήδη, σωζομένου Τζαμίου αυτού. Απέστειλεν, όθεν, ανθρώπους ίνα κατεδαφίσωσι τον ναόν του Αρχιστρατήγου, έρημου όντος, και να μετακομίσωσι την ύλην εις το Ικόνιον, ενώ δε επέβαλον τας χείρας εις καθαίρεσιν του ναού, φλόγες πυρός εξήλθον (κατά τον Κύριλλον) εξ αυτού και κατέκαυσαν τους παρεστώτας. Τούτο μαθών ο Σουλτάνος και φοβηθείς, παρητήθη του σκοπού, αποστείλας μάλιστα και επτά οικογενείας αιχμαλώτους Λακωνικάς διά να κατοικήσωσιν εκεί, προς περιποίησιν και λυχναψίαν του ναού. Οι χριστιανοί κάτοικοι της Σίλης ομιλούσι και την σήμερον την αρχαίαν Λακωνικήν διάλεκτον, ανάρθρως όμως και σολοικοβαρβάρως».

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*Ικονίου (*Κωνσταντινούπολη, τυπογραφείο Ανατολή, 1856), p. 132-133.

Alexander the Great and Asia

«Ο Αλέξανδρος μετέθεσε τρόπον τινά την Ελλάδα και την Μακεδονίαν εις την Ασίαν. Μικρόν δε μετά του θανάτου αυτού, η Ελληνική τέχνη και επιστήμη εθεραπαύθησαν τοσούτον υπό των κυριάρχων εκείνων εις τα κράτη αυτών, ώστε έκτοτε το πνεύμα και η κυριωτέρα δύναμις των Ελλήνων μετέστησαν εις την Ασίαν. Εντεύθεν το μέρος τούτο του κόσμου ωφελήθη εκ των κατακτήσεων του Αλεξάνδρου, η δε Ελλάς και Μακεδονία εξεναντίας εζημιώθησαν: η [...] Ανατολή εδέχθη Ελληνικόν πολιτισμόν και Ελληνικήν ισχύν, οι δε Έλληνες και Μακεδόνες προσέλαβον ουδέν άλλο, ή πλούτον και ακολασίαν».

Ρίζος, Νικόλαος, *Καππαδοκικά, ήτοι δοκίμιον ιστορικής περιγραφής της Αρχαίας Καππαδοκίας και ιδίως των επαρχιών Καισαρείας και Ικονίου (*Κωνσταντινούπολη, τυπογραφείο Ανατολή, 1856), p. ε'- στ'.