



Summary :

Cappadocian scholar and teacher at the "Megali tou Genous Scholi" ("Great School of the Nation", the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchal High School) in Constantinople. He was one of the most important collectors of 'living monuments' of Cappadocia in the late 19th century. Valavanis was awarded a prize twice by the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople for his educational work and compilations.

Date and Place of Birth

1858, Aravani, Cappadocia

Date and Place of Death

1921, Constantinople

Main Role

Scholar

1. Early Years and Education

Ioakeim Valavanis was born in 1858 at Aravani of [Cappadocia](#). His father, Dimitrios Balaban, who was a fishmonger, [migrated](#) along with his big family to the then thriving Taurus Mine ([Buğamaden](#)), which he sold the fish he brought from a lake near [Ikonio](#) (Konya). Despite the economic distress of the family, 'father Valavanis [...] took particular care of them so that all his children would be educated, even his girls, which was very rare at the time'.¹ After young Ioakeim received his primary education,² he went [to Constantinople](#) to 'learn a craft' under the protection of his compatriot Ch. Kazoglou, a wholesaler of iron goods. Although the information is contradictory as regards the kind of responsibilities he had in his patron's business,³ the sources agree about his poor performance: the trainee, always absorbed in reading a book, could not fulfil his duties. That is why 'his boss, Ch. Kazoglou, as well as his intimate persons and his compatriots thought they had better send him to a school'.⁴ As a result, either because he was offered a scholarship by the Patriarchate in the years of [Ioakeim II](#)⁵ or through Kazoglou's help,⁶ Valavanis managed to complete his studies at the 'Megali tou Genous Scholi' (Great School of the Nation, the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchal High School). He then studied at the University of Athens⁷ before he was proclaimed doctor of philosophy in 1889.

2. Educational Work

After he graduated from the University of Athens, Valavanis worked as a teacher, originally in private schools in Athens and later in [Constantinople](#), where he permanently settled possibly shortly before 1890. It was then that he married Polyxeni Gerardou,⁸ with whom he had five children. Between 1892 and 1895, he published the *Neoelliniki Kivotos* (Modern Greek Ark), a three-volume annotated anthology of modern Greek prose writers and poets, who were taught in Greek schools. Other educational books by Valavanis are the *Apanthismata Ellinikon Grammaton* (Anthologies of Greek Literature) and the *Anagnosmatarion ek tou Irodotou* (Reading-book from Herodotus), which was awarded a prize by the [Greek Philological Association of Constantinople](#) during the Karapaneion competition of 1894. In Constantinople he taught at the [Zografeion Lyceum](#), the Greek-French Chatzichristos Lyceum and the [Ioakeimeion Girls' School](#), before he was offered the post of professor of Modern Greek and Composition in 1903 at the [Great School of the Nation](#). As a teacher, he is said to have had a "brilliant character, mild spirit and teaching abilities";⁹ he struggled to encourage his students, who, like himself, came from distant regions of the empire¹⁰ and were often poor. It is said that in 1919 Valavanis tried to become a professor at the University of Athens, but Eleutherios Venizelos dissuaded him from leaving Constantinople, which 'was going to be captured by Greece'.¹¹ As a result, Valavanis remained there until he died, in 1921.¹² He was buried at the Şişli cemetery of Constantinople; his relics were deposited to the mausoleum built at Şişli by the graduates of the Greek higher schools in memory of their professors.

3. 'Living Monuments' and Works



During his studies, Valavanis cooperated with several newspapers and journals, particularly *Parnassos* of Athens, and published studies and translations. In 1891, those writings were published in Athens under the title *Mikrasiatika* (Asia Minor Studies). They referred to the life of the people of his birthplace and aimed to “present as through a kaleidoscope entirely Greek lands, which since centuries belong by right to Hellenism and lay at the slopes of Mounts Taurus and Argaeon, at the shores of the rivers Kydnos and Alys, by golden Paktolos and Homeric Skamandros”.¹³ This book includes popular and religious traditions, myths, anecdotes of Nasreddin Hoca, ethnographical descriptions, etc.: a wealth of information valuable for their rarity as well as their vividness. Thus, based on a short story of questionable literary quality, the author composed the *Selides ek tou oikogeneiakou viou ton en Mikra Asia Ellinon* (Pages from the Family Life of Asia Minor Greeks), a remarkable study on the daily life of the Cappadocians of the second half of the 19th century, mainly describing the [migration](#) of the male population. This work, as well as his unpublished manuscript *Glossarion Aravaniotikon* (Dictionary of the dialect of Aravanio) that was awarded a prize in 1892 during the Zografeion competition of the [Greek Philological Association of Constantinople](#), established him, along with his contemporaries [Anastasios Levidis](#) and [Georgios Pachtikos](#), as an important collector and student of the so-called ["living monuments" of Cappadocia](#).

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1. Φωστέρης, Δ.Π., ‘Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνης’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* 6 (1955), p. 377.
 2. There is very little information on education at the Buğamaden in the specific period. Until the early 1870s, it seems that there was only one school of mutual teaching. Then two four-grade primary schools and a *scholarcheion* (middle grade between primary and secondary education) were established, at which Balabanes may have been a pupil. See Χατζηκυριακίδης, Κ.Σ., *Το μεταλλείο Ταύρου (Μπουγά Μαντέν)*, 1826-1924 (Thessaloniki 1999), pp. 129-131.
 3. According to Fosteris, Kazoglou was a well sinker and hired Valavanis to teach him his craft; see Φωστέρης (Fosteris), Δ.Π., ‘Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνης’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* 6 (1955), p. 378. According to Martoglou, Μάρτογλου, Ευ., ‘Από τον Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνη, καθηγητήν μου στην Μεγάλη Σχολή’, *Δελτίον Μεγαλοσχολιτών* 3 (Athens 1952), p. 82, Kazoglou wanted Valavanis to become involved in trade. This second piece of information seems to be more realistic, taking into account the fact that Valavanis reports Kazoglou as an ironmonger and not as a well sinker.
 4. Φωστέρης, Δ.Π., ‘Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνης’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* 6 (1955), p. 378.
 5. Φωστέρης, Δ.Π., ‘Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνης’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* 6 (1955), p. 378.
 6. According to Martoglou, Μάρτογλου, Ευ., ‘Από τον Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνη, καθηγητήν μου στην Μεγάλη Σχολή’, *Δελτίον Μεγαλοσχολιτών* 3 (Athens 1952), p. 82. See quotation ‘The Inattentive Craftsman’.
 7. At this point, the information is again contradictory: according to Martoglou (see quotation ‘The Inattentive Craftsman’), Kazoglou continued funding Valavanis, while, according to Fosteris, the latter managed again to be granted a scholarship in a competition. See Φωστέρης (Fosteris), Δ.Π., ‘Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνης’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* 6 (1955), p. 378.
 8. His wife was the sister of K. Gerardos, owner of the newspaper *Tachydromos* (Postman), where Valavanis published some of his studies.
 9. *Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια* 6, p. 509, see entry ‘Βαλαβάνης Ιωακείμ’.
 10. See citation ‘Be Proud!’.
 11. Φωστέρης, Δ.Π., ‘Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνης’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* 6 (1955), p. 380, where it is reported that the then Minister of Education and publisher of the newspaper *Patris* (Fatherland), S. Simos, introduced him to Venizelos.



12. The one and only issue of the journal *Meletai* (Studies), published in 1921, mentions Valavanis. See Gritsopoulos, G., *Πατριαρχική Μεγάλη του Γένους Σχολή*, Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Φιλεκπαιδευτικής Εταιρείας 59, vol. II (1971), p. 321.

13. Valavanis, I., *Μικρασιατικά* (Athens 1891), p. 5.

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| | Βαλαβάνης Ιωακείμ , <i>Μικρασιατικά</i> , Αδελφών Περρή, Αθήνα 1891 |
| | Γριτσόπουλος Τ. , <i>Πατριαρχική Μεγάλη του Γένους Σχολή Β'</i> , Αθήνα 1971, Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Φιλεκπαιδευτικής Εταιρείας 59 |
| | Μάρτογλου Ευ. , "Από τον Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνη, καθηγητήν μου στην Μεγάλη Σχολή", <i>Δελτίον Μεγαλοσχολιτών</i> , 3, 1952, 80-82 |
| | "Βαλαβάνης Ιωακείμ", <i>Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια</i> , τομ. 6, Αθήνα 1955, 509 |
| | Φωστήρης Δημήτριος , "Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνης", <i>Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά</i> , ΣΤ', 1955, 377-380 |
| | Μπαλτά Ε., Αναγνωστάκης Η. , <i>Η Καππαδοκία των «ζώντων μνημείων»</i> , Αθήνα 1990 |

Quotations

The Inattentive Craftsman

‘Το κατάστημα του Χρ. Κάζογλου είχε μεγάλη κίνηση, μα ο μικρός Ιωακείμ δεν είχε καθόλου το νου του στο μαγαζί, μα στα βιβλία του, που διαρκώς τ’ άνοιγε και μπροστά ακόμη στο αφεντικό του, και την ώρα της δουλειάς. Ο Κάζογλου απελπίσθηκε. Τον φώναξε μια μέρα στο γραφείο του και του είπε: "Κρίμα που σ’ έφερα από το Αραβάνι. Εσύ δεν έχεις σκοπό να γίνεις άνθρωπος, ας σε μάθω τουλάχιστον γράμματα στη Μεγάλη Σχολή". Και τον εσπούδασε δαπάναις του τον Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνη, στη Μεγάλη Σχολή, και κατόπι φιλολογία στο Πανεπιστήμιο [...]’.

Μάρτογλου, Ευ., ‘Από τον Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνη, καθηγητήν μου στην Μεγάλη Σχολή’, *Δελτίον Μεγαλοσχολιτών* 3 (1952), p. 80.

‘Be Proud!’

‘Δεν ξέρω γιατί, ανάμεσα στους καθηγητές μου ξεχώριζα ως πιο ήρεμο, μελίχιο, προσηνή, καταδεκτικό, σαν πατέρα μου, τον Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνη [...]. Εμπήκε, θυμάμαι, ένα πρωινό του Οκτωβρίου [1909] στην τάξη –μας έκαμνε Νεοελληνικά και εκθέσεις– [...] και άρχισε: “Ε, εσύ Ευριπίδη Μάρτογλου [...] τι κάθεται, κακομοιριασμένος επαρχιώτης; Πάρε θάρρος, και μαζί μ’ εμένα όλοι οι επαρχιώται της τάξεως και της Σχολής. Είσαστε οι καλύτεροι μαθηταί εδώ μέσα, οι πιο προκομμένοι, οι πιο φιλότιμοι, οι πιο συμπαθείς, γιατί ξεκινάτε από τα βάθη της Μικρασίας, έρχεσθε μονάχα παιδιά εδώ, να σπουδάσετε με χίλιες στερήσεις. Οι περισσότεροι και εργάζεσθε μετά τα μαθήματα. Ψηλά λοιπόν το κεφάλι! Σταθήτε περήφανα και μη φοβάστε τίποτα! Σας έχουν πάρει τον αέρα αυτοί οι Κωνσταντινουπολίται συνταξιώται σας [...] πρωτευουσιάνοι πλούσιοι αυτοί, επαρχιώται πτωχοί σεις. Μέσα στα σπίτια τους αυτοί, μέσα στα αγαθά τους, έρημα φτωχά εσείς, μαθηταί και βιοπαλαισταί σεις. Πάρτε κουράγιο, αγαπητά μου παιδιά, που φθάσατε από τις απόμερες επαρχίες με ένα όνειρο και έναν σκοπό, να γίνετε άξιοι Μεγαλοσχολίται.



Σταθήτε με υπερηφάνεια και αυτοπεποίθηση μέσα στη Σχολή που είναι και φιλόστοργος μητέρα του πτωχού και διατηρήσατέ την σ' όλη σας τη ζωή όταν θα φύγετε από την Μεγάλη Σχολή”.

Μάρτογλου, Ευ., ‘Από τον Ιωακείμ Βαλαβάνην, καθηγητήν μου στην Μεγάλη Σχολή’, *Δελτίον Μεγαλοσχολιτών* 3 (1952), pp. 80-81.